

#29 THE DOCTRINE OF DISPENSATIONS

30 PRACTICAL DOCTRINES YOU NEED TO KNOW | DR. RANDY WHITE

TWO MAJOR THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

- There are two major theological frameworks for the interpretation of Scripture.
- Covenant Theology makes two presuppositions:
 - That God made a covenant of works with Adam: do not eat from the forbidden tree and you will remain saved.
 - That after Adam sinned, God made a covenant of redemption in which He sovereignly determined to save some of Adam's race by the works of Jesus.
 - All of Scripture is read under the lens of the covenant of redemption, thus all of Scripture is about how God is saving mankind.
 - These presupposed covenants (which are purely speculation) have caused untold confusion in the interpretation of Scripture.
 - How were pre-cross men and women saved?
 - Am I a Christian?
 - What works must I do as a Christian?
- Dispensational Theology attempts to approach the Scripture with no presuppositions required and then read it *literally, grammatically, and historically*. With this framework:
 - It is not talking about salvation unless it is talking about salvation.
 - It is not placing a requirement on me unless it is placing a requirement on me.

WHY IS IT CALLED DISPENSATIONALISM?

- When you read the Bible *literally, grammatically, and historically* (let's call this "normally"), you discover that at certain points a revelation was made which is so fundamental that you must create a "barrier" from one section of the Bible to the next. This is the essence of dispensationalism.
- It is impossible to read the Bible "normally" without recognizing that the fundamental truth of this new revelation changes everything from that point forward.
- You can call this new era whatever you want: a section, a time-period, an era, a stewardship, a chapter, an administration, an economy, a dispensation, etc.
- The word *dispensation* is used a number of times in the King James Bible, and thus *dispensationalism* is the word that has most often been used to describe those who read the Bible normally.
 - Ephesians 1:10 speaks of the **dispensation of the fulness of time**.
 - Ephesians 3:2 speaks of the **dispensation of the grace of God**.

AT WHAT POINT DOES A NEW DISPENSATION BEGIN?

- There is no predefined criteria for a dispensation because dispensationalism has *no creed but the Bible*. Therefore, the division and the number of

dispensations can vary from one teacher to the next. The important point is that *you* see a change taking place in the Scripture when you read it *normally*.

- Here is a chart that shows *my view* of dispensations:

Event	Passage	Name
Creation	Genesis 1:1	Innocence
The fall	Genesis 3:7	Conscience
The flood	Genesis 9:1	Government
The call of Abraham	Genesis 12:1	Promise
The giving of the Law	Exodus 20:1	Law
The removal of the Law	Acts 13:38-39	Grace
The restoration of the Law and the "Day of Jacob's Trouble."	1 Thessalonians 4:17, Matthew 24:13	Tribulation
The Second Coming and subsequent judgment.	Revelation 20:1	The Kingdom of God (i.e.: the millennium)
The new heaven and new earth	Revelation 21:1	Eternity future

- The views of other dispensationalists on the beginning and ending of dispensations may differ. There is not a "normative" dispensational view because dispensationalism is a method of reading the Bible, not a set of charts.

WHAT DOES A NEW DISPENSATION DO AND NOT DO?

- It does recognize the fundamental change that a new revelation brings to a person's right-standing with God from that point forward.
- It does not answer:
 - How a person is saved in that dispensation (because the Bible is about God's activity with all of creation, not just about God's salvation of individuals).
 - What aspects of life carry-over into the new dispensation. This must be answered by careful study of the Scripture.

THE BLESSING OF READING THE BIBLE DISPENSATIONALLY

- You fulfill the command of 2 Timothy 2:15.
- You are not bound to a presuppositional or creedal model of understanding of Scripture.
- You are welcomed and encouraged to recognize contradictions with Scripture and can do so without bringing shipwreck to your faith. Dispensationalism resolves these conflicts.
- You can learn what the Bible requires of you, and what it does not. This frees you from guilt, from the manipulation of preachers, and from bondage to that to which you do not need to be bound.