

I. INTRO: *Introduction to Dispensationalism* by Daniel Ridinger

A. The OT pointed to Christ's Coming. The Gospel Accounts affirm that the Messiah has Come. The Epistles & the Book of Revelation reveal that Jesus will come again.

B. Ja.5:7

C. About 1 out of every 25 verses in the NT refers to the Lord's 2nd Coming.

D. There has been throughout the centuries an interest in the 2nd Advent of Christ. Some have even set dates for His Coming.

1. William Miller (7th Day Adventist founder): May 21, 1843/Oct. 22, 1844
2. Charles Taze Russell (JW's founder): Invisible coming in 1874. Changed the date to 1914.
3. Harold Whisenant: *88 Reasons Why Christ Will Come Back In 1988*

E. As the new millennium approached, the change from the 20th Century to the 21st Century, many books & articles appeared, warning about the Lord's imminent coming ie, many were predicting that Jesus was coming soon!

Introduction To Dispensationalism We will consider: (I) Millennial Views (II) Facts About *D* (III) Tenets Of *D* Purpose: Informative. To have better understanding of *DP*.

DISCUSSION:

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II. MILLENNIAL VIEWS

A. *Millennialism* is the belief in a *thousand-year period of holiness mentioned in Revelation 20, during which Jesus and his faithful followers are to rule on earth.*¹

B. Rev.20:4-6

C. Different of kinds millennial views.

1. Postmillennialism is the belief that the 2nd Coming will take place after, not before the thousand year reign. *PMs* contend that the millennium is a time when righteousness will prevail due to the preaching of the gospel. They expected the world to get better, but it has instead deteriorated. This position has lost influence.

2. Amillennialism is the view that the millennium is not literal. But rather a figurative representation of the battle of the forces of evil with the good.

3. Premillennialism is the belief that Christ failed to set up His kingdom, because the Jews rejected Him. Furthermore, they advocate that Christ will come again to establish an earthly kingdom & reign on earth for 1,000 years.

D. Today, the most popular kind of premillennialism is dispensationalism. [Hal Lindsay wrote a book entitled The Late Great Planet Earth in the 70's, which sold millions. He has since revised it & written other books which have been million sellers. The most popular dispensational books today are the Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye & Jerry B. Jenkins.]

III. FACTS ABOUT DISPENSATIONALISM

A. Recent In Origin, Comparatively

1. Premillennialism developed in the 2nd century A.D., but gradually disappeared after the 3rd century.²

2. *D* is of a more recent origin, comparatively speaking. John N. Darby (1800-1882) popularized the theory. C. I. Schofield made widely available in the footnotes of the Schofield Bible.

B. Dispensations Of Dispensationalism

1. Dispensationalists teach that all human history can be divided into 7 successive ages which correspond to the 6 days of creation & the 7th day on which God rested.

- a. The 1st day, *the age of innocence*, from Creation to the Fall.
- b. The 2nd day, *the age of conscience* from the Fall to the Flood.
- c. The 3rd day, *the age of human government* from the Flood to Abraham.
- d. The 4th day, *the age of promise* from Abraham to the Law at Mt. Sinai.
- e. The 5th day, *the age of law* from Sinai to Calvary.
- f. The 6th day, *the age of grace* from Calvary to Christ's coming to establish an earthly kingdom.
- g. The 7th day, *the age of the kingdom* from Christ's 2nd coming to the end of the millennium when eternity begins.

C. Scenario Of Dispensationalism

1. According to dispensationalists, several events will occur before Christ returns.
 - a. Signs, such as wars, earthquakes, famines, floods & other disasters they say, indicate that the Lord's Coming is near (Mt.24).
 - b. True believers will be secretly & suddenly *caught up* into heaven. They call this *the Rapture*.
 - c. A time of intense persecution will take place against those who are being converted on earth. This is called *the Great Tribulation*. [During this time the old Roman Empire will be revived in Europe. A great evil world ruler will arise — the Antichrist! The Jews will return to Palestine where many will be converted to Christianity. The temple will be rebuilt & the Old Testament sacrificial system will be restored.]
 - d. A great battle will be fought at Megiddo in Palestine between *the Antichrist* & his army, the *kings of the East* & their armies. This great battle is called *Armageddon*.
 - e. Christ, after defeating the Antichrist, will rule on earth with the saints for a literal 1,000 years in Jerusalem.
 - f. At the close of the millennium, the wicked dead will be resurrected, the Judgment will occur & eternity will begin.

 ---Thus, some facts about *D*.

IV. TENETS [BELIEFS] OF DISPENSATIONALISM

- Notice some general beliefs of *D* & brief counter-arguments from a Biblical perspective.

A. Christ's Mission = Failure

1. *D* advocate that Jesus came to earth the first time to establish an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem.

2. They advocate, however, that Jesus did not know the Jews would reject Him as the Messiah. Hence, they believe Jesus' mission was a failure.

3. Refutation: Lk.9:20-21

B. Church & Kingdom = Same

1. *D* teach that God set up the church as a substitute when Jesus was rejected by His people.

2. The church in the dispensational scheme is viewed as a *parenthesis*, an *afterthought*, an *accident*. They do not believe that the church was prophesied in the OT. This places the church in an inferior position.

3. Refutation: Dan.2:44; Mt.16:18-19; Acts 20:28

C. The Jews = God's Chosen

1. *D* believe that fleshly Israel is still God's chosen people & that God has an exalted role for them.

2. Along with this belief, *D* aver that God will reestablish His political rule over the land of Palestine.

3. The return of the Jews to Israel is viewed as a sign of the coming end. [This is one of the reasons why some denominations are helping Jews financially to return to Israel.]

4. Refutation: Gal.6:16; 1 Pt.2:9

D. Signs As Portents To 2nd Coming

1. *D* believe that signs will warn of the Lord's Coming. Mt.24 is used as a guide to the signs of the end of time.

2. Refutation: Mt.24:44; 1 Th.5:2

E. The Rapture

1. *D* teach that the 2nd Coming will be Jesus *coming for* His people. They say it will be *secret*, *silent* & *selective*. [a. *Secret* because it will happen w/out anyone's knowing until it is over. B. *Silent* because it will be noiseless. c. *Selective* because only the righteous will be *caught up* with the Lord. It will leave the world to continue on its course.]

2. Thus, *D* do not believe that Christ's 2nd Coming will be the end of the world. But rather, the beginning of the final phase of earth's history.

3. Refutation: 2 Pt.3:9-12

F. The Tribulation

1. *D* advocate that before Jesus comes to establish an earthly kingdom to reign for 1,000 years that a period of *great tribulation* - a time of intense persecution will occur.

2. Refutation: God's people will suffer persecution (2 Tim.3:12). But the Bible is silent about a period of *great tribulation* before Jesus' Coming.

G. The Antichrist

1. *D* maintain that after the *Rapture* & during the *Tribulation* that a evil person will arise to rule the world - *the Antichrist*.

2. Refutation: Antichrists were present in the 1st century (2 Jn.7).

H. 1,000 Year Earthly Reign Of Christ

1. Dispensationalists believe that establishment of the kingdom was *postponed* when the Jews rejected Jesus.

2. They aver that Jesus' 2nd Coming (actually this would be the 3rd coming) will usher in the kingdom & that He will reign for a literal 1K years.

3. Refutation: Jn.18:36; Col.1:13

 ---Thus, some of the *D* tenets.

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CONCL:

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Preached: Oliver church of Christ, Rogersville, AL (9/29/02, PM)

¹American Heritage Dict, "millennialism"

²Wayne Jackson, *Battle Of Armageddon*, p.3