

I. INTRO: *Dispensationalism & The Church* by Daniel Ridinger

A. Last Sunday night we looked at a lesson entitled, *Introduction To Dispensationalism*. [Dispensationalism is the most popular kind of premillennialism.]

B. *D* believe that Christ will come again to set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem & reign a literal 1K years. They appeal to Rev.20:4-6 in order to substantiate their view of an earthly millennium.

C. Cf Overhead chart

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II. CHURCH IN THE DISPENSATIONAL SCHEME

A. Mk.1:15

1. *D* believe that kingdom was *at hand* in the sense that it was to be established immediately. But they say that the kingdom's establishment was *postponed* because the Jews rejected Jesus. In its place, as a *temporary substitute*, the church was established until Jesus comes again to set up His earthly kingdom.

2. *D* contend that the church was not the subject of OT prophecies.

a. *the Church was in no sense a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy and promises but something entirely new....*¹

b. *From the moment Christ bowed His head and yielded up His spirit to the Father, all the glories of the kingdoms spoken of by the O. T. seers and prophets have been held in abeyance...The prophetic clock stopped at Calvary. Not one tick has been heard since.*² [This is another way of saying that the kingdom instead of the church was the subject of OT prophecies.]

3. They also believe that the preaching of the gospel during the *church age* is not an effort to save all men, but rather for the specific purpose of witnessing & calling a definite number who are to compose the body of Christ.³

B. Implications of *D* teaching about the church:

1. God & Christ were surprised that Jesus was rejected by the Jews. Christ would have established an earthly kingdom during His first advent, but changed His mind when the Jews rejected Him. Thus, He *postponed* the kingdom's establishment.

2. The church is an *accident*, an *interlude*, an *afterthought*, a *parenthesis*, a *stop-gap* measure that God took until the kingdom can be established.

3. The church is not the subject of OT prophecies.

4. The church & the kingdom are 2 different, unrelated entities.
5. The church will be superceded by the kingdom.

 ---Thus, the church in the *D* scheme.

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III. CHURCH IN GOD'S SCHEME

A. Q: Where does the church fit into God's *purpose*?

B. Eph.1:3-14

1. In these verses: a. God, the Father is declared to be the *source* of *all* spiritual blessings (1:3-6). b. Jesus the Son, is the *channel* of God's blessings. God's purpose is *summed up* in Christ (1:7-12). c. The Holy Spirit, is the *earnest of our inheritance* (1:13-14).

2. Notice, the word *purpose* is found in vss.9 & 11.

a. The word *purpose* summarizes God's initiative & God's activity which embraces time & eternity. It involves the activity of the Godhead in the scheme of redemption to reconcile to Himself both Jews & Gentiles in *one body*.⁴

b. Also, observe that God's *purpose* to bless those *in Christ* was made *before the foundation of the world* (1:4).

C. D affirm that the church is involved in God's *purpose*. The question that needs to be asked to *D*, however, is, *Was the church involved in God's eternal purpose?*

1. Dispensationalists say, No!

2. But, that conflicts with the teaching of God's Word (Eph.3:1-11, 8-11).

a. Vss.8-11, teaches that the church was involved in God's plan - His *eternal purpose*. God planned the church prior to the Creation of Gen.1.

b. *The doctrinal section of Ephesians pictures the church as decreed from eternity and destined for eternity*.⁵

D. Additional Questions that we should ask:

1. Is the church the result of God changing His mind, because Jesus was rejected by the Jews? ANS: No! The church is a part of God's eternal purpose. Its existence attests to God's manifold *wisdom* (Eph.3:10).

2. Will the church be supplanted by the establishment of an earthly kingdom by Christ at His Coming? ANS: No! (Eph.3:20-21) [Glory will be given to Christ in the church *unto all generations for ever and ever*.]

 ---Thus, the church was involved in God's *eternal purpose*. The church was planned by God in eternity.

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IV. CHURCH IN PROPHECY

A. There are several OT prophecies about the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

1. 2 Sam.7:12-16
2. Is.9:6-7
3. Dan.2:1ff [Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:31-35). The Interpretation (2:36-45)]

---The kingdom was foretold by the OT prophets.

B. Q: What about the church? D aver that the church is an *accident*, an *interlude*, an *afterthought*, a *parenthesis*, a *stop-gap* measure that God took until the kingdom can be established. They believe the church was not involved in God's eternal purpose & thus, the OT prophets are silent about the church.

C. Search the Scriptures, but you will not find a single instance of the word *church* in the OT. [We note a reference to the *church in the wilderness* (Acts 7:38). This refers to the people *called out*, the assembly of mixed multitude, that came out of the Egyptian bondage.]

D. Q: Does the fact that the church is not mentioned by name in the OT prove that it was not the subject of prophecy? ANS: No!

E. Consider, if we can establish that the kingdom in the NT is the same as the church, then we will have proven that the kingdom & the church are one & the same. Therefore, the OT prophecies relating to the kingdom are also prophecies about the church.

F. Proof that the church & kingdom are the same in the NT.

- The saved are:
 - members of the church (Acts 2:41, 47).
 - members of the kingdom (Col.1:13; 1 Th.2:12; Rev.1:9)
- The Lord's Supper:
 - taken by members of the church (Acts 2:42; 20:7)
 - commanded for members of the kingdom (Mt.26:26-29)
- Jesus is the:
 - Head of the church (Eph.1:22-23; 5:23)
 - King of the kingdom (Jn.18:36; Acts 2:34-36; Rev.19:16)

- The blood of Christ washed members of the:

church (Acts 22:16; Rom.6:3-4)
kingdom (Rev.1:5-6)

- A person is baptized into the:

church (1 Cor.12:13)
kingdom (Jn.3:5)

- The church is described as the:

church of the firstborn (Heb.12:23)
kingdom which cannot be moved (Heb.12:28)

---Thus, the church was the subject of OT prophesy.

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CONCL:

¹“PREMILLENNIALISM, TRUE OR FALSE?” edited by Wendell Winkler “The Church In The Eternal Purpose” by Avon Malone (Winkler Pub. Co: Ft. Worth, TX 1978), p.90

² Ibid, p.90

³FWL “Difficult Texts Of The New Testament Explained edited by Wendell Winkler, “Premillennialism Defined, Delineated, Developed And Defeated” by Thomas B. Warren (E. Edwin Manney Co: Ft. Worth, TX, 1981), pp.10-11

⁴PREMILLENNIALISM, TRUE OR FALSE?” edited by Wendell Winkler, p.92

⁵Ibid, p.94