

Chapter Twenty-One

Dispensationalism

Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth

The other creation of the theologians is a relatively new one. Many Protestants I talk to who belong to this camp are surprisingly uninformed about it. It is not uncommon to hear Bible teachers describe different “dispensations” or “time periods” of how God deals with people here on planet Earth. This scheme of dividing the Word of God according to epochs of differing approaches by God to solving the problem of man’s sin and redemption is actually a young one in the history of theological “traditions of men”. It is only a few hundred years old! Consider the ramifications of anything “new” in terms of “the faith once delivered unto the saints”. Can anything “new” actually be “true”? Just a question to ponder.

If we accept the premise that God does not change (i.e. that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever) and also that “The

Faith” was “once for all delivered” then there can be no “new gospel”.

All God's truth is ancient.

C.H. Spurgeon said:

"There shall be no new God, nor new devil, nor shall we ever have a new Saviour, nor a new atonement. Why then should we be attracted by the error and nonsense which everywhere pleads for a hearing because they are new? To suppose the Theology can be new is to imagine that the Lord himself is of yesterday. A doctrine lately true must of necessity be false. Falsehood has no beard, but truth is hoary with age immeasurable. The old Gospel is the only Gospel. Pity is our only feeling toward those young preachers who cry: 'See my new Theology!' in just the same spirit as little Mary says: 'See my pretty new frock!'"

Dispensationalism was created as a reaction to what was perceived as error with the first approach, that of Replacement Theology. Instead of having Israel totally replaced by the entity called the church, this new view sought to return to a more authentic grammatical, historical interpretation of the Bible. At least, that was the theory. This approach to understanding Scripture, however, is predicated on the rigid assumption that

all interpretations must adhere to the requirement to completely separate any and all references between Israel and the church. The approach begins with this unflinching bias and thereby distorts the understanding of many Scriptures. This system divides the Word of God into different time periods where, essentially, the rules are different. It is taught that there was a linear period of time they call Law that was suspended to allow for the next time period called Grace. Accordingly, we are, therefore, now in the age of grace or the church age. According to this “tradition of men”, after the supposed rapture of the church, God will again resume the age of Law with Israel.

Many problems are spawned by this error in thinking. It assumes that God changes His mind. Do we not understand that He “changes not” and that “He is the same, yesterday, today and forever”? See Hebrews 13:8, Malachi 3:6, James 1:17, Numbers 23:19, Isaiah 40:8, Psalm 102:25-27, 2 Tim 2:13, Isaiah 40:28, Psalm 119:89, Psalm 33:11, Psalm 90:2, Psalm 119:90, 1 Tim 1:17, to name a few.

One question to ponder is if, despite all the references just mentioned, you still believe that God does change, consider the ramifications to your current pet theology. For the sake of argument, let's say God had Plan A, called Law. Since that didn't work out, He created Plan B, called Grace. What would prevent God from reaching a point where He decides that, in

His opinion, Plan B, called Grace, wasn't working out to meet His expectations so He decides to change again and come up with Plan C, something totally different yet? I know this line of reasoning sounds silly and it is but that is the point, is it not? God does not change. Period.

The other problem with this false bifurcation of the Word of God is that it completely separates Law (meaning Torah or instruction) from Grace as if His teaching could be against His grace or the other way around. It forces the conclusion that there “was no Grace in the Old Testament” a preposterous argument. It also equally asserts there is no Law (teaching) in the New Testament.

Consider a very partial list of the Scriptures that speak of God's grace in the Tanach “Old Testament”:

- Genesis 6:8
- Genesis 12:3
- Genesis 50:20
- Exodus 4:12
- Judges 10:16
- Joshua 2:11

- Psalm 51:1

This false assumption regarding law and grace finds its way into Bible translations as well. Consider John 1:17. The King James translation has it, “For the law was given by Moses *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” The translators have inserted the word *but* in the text. The fact is it is not in the Greek text and most modern translators have corrected this error. By adding the simple word “*but*” within the sentence, the entire sense is changed from one of **continuity** where the promise of grace and truth by Moshe is realized in Yeshua, to that of **contrast** which separates law from grace. This is only one example of how bias in translation can have profound effects on our understanding of the Word of God.

Let us examine what the Scriptures themselves clearly teach and submit our theology to that as the final and absolute determiner of truth.

Consider the commentary provided by the Messiah Himself. In John 10:16 He states, “I have other sheep which are not of **this fold**. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become **one flock** with **one shepherd**.” He is speaking with His Jewish disciples, those who are of “this fold”. He is telling them that there are other sheep not from “this fold”, meaning gentiles. These believing gentiles are to be **brought**

in with the goal of having **one flock** with **one shepherd**. Do you see the unity pictured here? Not one flock replacing the other flock as in Replacement Theology. Not two flocks as in Dispensationalism. One flock with one shepherd.

Consider the Apostle Paul and his teaching in Romans 11. He uses the olive tree as his teaching example of how this relationship between Israel and the gentiles works. Rather than replacing Israel or setting it aside, he sees a single tree into which gentiles are grafted in.

Replacement theology would picture it differently. It would cut down the olive tree (Israel) and plant a new tree (the church, the New Israel) in its place.

Dispensationalism would picture it differently. It would leave the olive tree standing where it is, ignore it, and plant a new tree (the church) next to it.

Dispensationalism is the modern, errant theological invention based entirely upon the traditions of men that spawned the relatively recent errant teaching of the "pre-tribulation rapture of the church". The pre-tribulation rapture theory is the fruit of the poisonous tree of Dispensationalism and should be rejected in total. It is teaching not supported by the Scriptures but by a twisted hermeneutic that ignores context and represents a significant distortion of the teaching of the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul would cringe at these misrepresentations of his otherwise clear teaching picture. He described these believing gentiles not in terms of replacement or something new and separate but actually “grafted in” to the **same olive tree** and sharing in the same richness. It is the perfect illustration of Jews and gentiles together as a foreshadowing of the final salvation when Paul says “All Israel will be saved.”