

## WAR OF THE WORLDVIEWS #37

### “The 5<sup>th</sup> Column of Dispensationalism”

#### I. Introduction

##### A. The Concept of The 5<sup>th</sup> Column

- **The greatest threat to the Church is not from without but from within**
- The enemy within is a “5<sup>th</sup> Column”, a “Trojan horse”
- In the New Testament, and down through church history, the 5<sup>th</sup> Column is the “leaven” of false teaching.
- In our day, especially in the American Church, there is no greater enemy of the Kingdom of God than the dangerous doctrines of Dispensationalism

**What *evolution* is to the biblical worldview of creationism and *socialism* is to the biblical worldview of civil government, so is dispensationalism to the biblical worldview of God’s plan for the end-times.**

It is a fundamental error that has put God’s people into spiritual paralysis and hindered the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

And yet, it is embraced and believed by the vast majority of American Christians. My experience is that most churchgoers are dispensationalists without even knowing what it is!

I imagined MAD magazine cover boy Alfred E. Neuman saying...

**“When I got saved, I couldn’t even spell ‘Dispensationalist’; but now I realize I are one.”**

##### B. And No Wonder!

1. Probably 90% of American Christians are Dispensational because that’s all they’ve ever heard!

2. When we came to Christ in 1971, we joined a good Southern Baptist church, knowing little or nothing about the Bible.

3. But almost immediately we began to hear sermons and messages about the soon coming great tribulation, the appearance of the Antichrist, and the nearness of the any-minute “rapture” of the Church!

**a. The best-selling no-fiction book IN THE WORLD in that decade was “The Late Great Planet Earth” by Hal Lindsey. 28 million copies sold!**

b. Everybody was reading it including me! (I bought a case of books and was giving them out to everyone.)

4. And why not? It was exciting to think that Jesus was coming back any minute to rescue the church before the Great Tribulation and that Jesus would eventually fix everything!

**a. Nobody wanted to be “Left Behind”;** which became a series of fictional novels with dispensational themes by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins and sold over 80 million copies!

5. It’s so easy to “go with the flow” when it comes to the Bible; you figure, “If most people believe it, it must be right”. But I was actually reading my Bible! Every day. And even then, it took me *10 years* to be delivered from Dispensational teaching and realize what a 5<sup>th</sup> column it is in the Church world today.

6. Since then I’ve tried to run back into the burning house and rescue as many as I can.

So here’s a crash course in Dispensationalism...

**What is it?**

**What’s wrong with it?**

I want to show you 3 fundamental errors that Dispensationalism has spawned within the modern American Christian churches and why it really, really matters in the War of the Worldviews...

(Don’t be surprised how close to home this may hit)

## **II. A Crash Course in Dispensationalism:**

### **A. 1<sup>st</sup> Error: It is Unbiblical in Its Very Foundation**

(Let's begin with the *definition*)

**Dispensationalism is a theological system that teaches that the Bible is best understood in the light of a number of successive administrations of God's dealings with mankind, which it calls 'dispensations'**

1. Our first warning flag is right here: Dispensationalism is a "system" that teaches that God deals with mankind is "a number of successive administrations"; in other words, God deals with men in *different ways* in different times down through history.

a. There is disagreement within dispensationalists as to how many "different ways" there are, but most teach that there are SEVEN:

### **The 7 Dispensations**

- God's first dealing with man is in Adam in an age of INNOCENCE; man is tested, but he fails the test; so God judges the man by driving him out of the Garden of Eden.
- Then God moves on to dealing with man through his CONSCIENCE. But man fails this test again and God judges mankind by sending the flood, and moves on to dealing with man in Abraham in a dispensation of HUMAN GOVERNMENT....which fails...so God moves on to a dispensation of dealing with man through LAW...which fails...so God moves on to GRACE; etc., etc.

(If this sounds confusing, it's because it IS confusing;  
it's nothing less than a spiritual version of evolution!)

2. What's wrong with that? A lot!

**3. God does not deal with man on the basis of dispensations; He deals with man on the basis of COVENANTS!**

a. Open your Bible to the Table of Contents. It has TWO PARTS not 7! The Word of God consists of the Old Covenant (Testament) and the New Covenant (Testament).

b. The Dispensational system chops up the Bible into 7 sections and portrays God as ever-changing in how He deals with man down through history. *But God Himself denies this claim...*

In the Old Testament and the New Testament:

**I am the Lord. I change not.**

**Malachi 3:6**

**Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

**Hebrews 13:8**

c. God has not changed His mind 7 times in His dealings with men!  
He deals with men on the basis of His covenantal Word, which does not change!

### **B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Error: It Makes A Sharp Distinction Between Israel and the Church**

1. Dispensationalism draws a sharp distinction, both historically and theologically, between Israel and the Church.

a. The late Charles Ryrie, a major spokesman for Dispensationalism, puts it this way:

**“This is probably the most basic theological test of whether or not one is a dispensationalist, and it is undoubtedly the most practical and conclusive. The one who fails to distinguish Israel and the Church consistently will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions; and one who does will.”**

**Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism**

2. This system teaches that God basically has TWO different peoples, (Israel and the Church), and that His plan for Israel and for the Church are not the same!

3. Beloved, this is a *staggering error of the highest order* that presents an account completely in conflict with the scriptures!

4. What is the truth? God only has ONE people!

**Old Testament Israel is called  
“the church in the wilderness”**

**Acts 7:38**

**The New Testament church  
is “the Israel of God”**

**Galatians 6:16**

a. The Hebrew word for “church” (quahal) is used to describe the nation of Israel many times in the Old Testament!

b. In the biblical worldview, the Church is composed of saved people called “Israel” in the Old Testament and the “Church” in the New Testament;

**In the Old Testament,  
Israel is called a “kingdom of priests” and a holy nation”..**

**Exodus 1:6**

**In the New Testament,  
the Church is called a “holy nation” and a “kingdom of priests”.**

**2 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6; 5:10**

c. So does God have 2 “holy nations”? Two “kingdoms of Priests”?

5. Of course not! Why? Because God has joined all who believe in Christ, God’s Messiah, Old Testament and New Testament, into ONE BODY! Here are Paul’s words to the Gentiles in the Greek church in Corinth...

**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.**

**1 Corinthians 12:13**

**a. Are there TWO “Bodies” of Christ? Is Christ divided?**

6. Of course not! God has one people! BELIEVERS! It is not, nor has it ever been a matter of how you are born after the FLESH! God has one people who are born of the SPIRIT!

**The Church does not “replace” Israel! The Apostle Paul says we who believe have been “grafted” into Israel! Romans 11:19.**

7. Dispensationalism’s distinction of Israel and the Church is blown sky high in one passage from Paul’s letter to the Gentile church in Ephesus:

**Ephesians 2:11-18  
(Emphasis Added)**

**11** Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

**12** That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

**13** **BUT NOW** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

**14** For **he is our peace, who hath made both one,** and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

**15** Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; **for to make in himself of twain one new man,** so making peace;

**16** And **that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross,** having slain the enmity thereby:

**17** And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

**18** **For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

a. And the cherry on the Sundae, in Ephesians 3:6, where Paul prayed that this Gentile church would understand the mystery revealed in Christ, of how God would bring them into believing Israel...

**That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:  
Ephesians 3:6**

8. What can we add to that? Nothing! So Dispensationalism is wrong in its 2 main points:

### **Review**

**1. God does NOT deal with men in 7 Dispensations; He deals with men by Covenant**

**2. There is no distinction between Israel and the Church within the one Body of Christ!**

But the biggest error of Dispensationalism is found in its eschatology, which refers to its view of the “end times” or “last days” or the “coming of Christ”.

And this is the error that is TODAY most paralyzing the American church and hindering the advancement of the Kingdom of God...

### C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Error: The Dispensational View of the Last Days and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming

1. In the days to come, I will do an entire series of teaching to cover all the errors in this one: about the so-called “rapture”; the so-called “great tribulation” and the Antichrist. I will save all that to get to this:

**2. Of all the errors of Dispensationalism, its most deadly doctrine is its pessimistic view of the future for the Church on earth.**

3. What you think about the *future* determines how you live in the *present*!

4. There can be no argument about this: a Dispensationalist is a pessimist:

- He believes that many will fall away from the faith in the last days
- He believes that the world will get worse and worse
- He believes that an all-powerful “Antichrist” will rule the world before the coming of Christ
- He pins his hope on a (secret) “rapture” (or “catching up”) of the Church as the only way God’s people can escape the bad things coming

5. In short, Dispensationalists believe that the Church will LOSE the War of the Worldviews; that the forces of Satan will overcome everyone and everything to such a degree that only the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ can turn it all around.

So what *affect* does believing all this have on the Church?

- Have you ever video-taped a ball game you cared about?

**WE RECORD A BALL GAME BECAUSE  
WE THINK OUR TEAM CAN WIN**

So we go all day telling your friends, “Don’t tell me the score!”  
But someone blabs-we find out our team lost.

**And we LOSE INTEREST in watching the game!**

6. This is EXACTLY what Dispensationalism does to the Church-it pretends to know the future-our team loses. SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF PARTICIPATION?

- Why get upset with the news of the world? Isn't it supposed to get worse?
- Why worry if the Government is taken over by socialism?
- Actually, why VOTE?

7. The enemy has no greater weapon to hinder the advancement of the Kingdom of God than the 5<sup>th</sup> Column of Dispensational pessimism about the future of the Church on earth.

8. Christ's church is losing the War of the Worldviews because 90% of American Christians have no faith we can win.

a. The famous philosopher Bertrand Russell was an agnostic who said this of the Church....

**Most Christians would rather die than think. In fact, they do.**

**Bertrand Russell**

8. God's people need to think through the through the false doctrines of Dispensationalism and get back to their Bibles; lest we die.

### III. Conclusion:

**What *evolution* is to the biblical worldview of creationism and *socialism* is to the biblical worldview of civil government, so is dispensationalism to the biblical worldview of God's plan for the end-times.**

#### A. Personal Thoughts

1. I have so many friends who are dispensationalists; and Pastor friends who preach it; and even some of you still believe it.

2. All I can give is my testimony; in 1981 I saw the Kingdom; I believe we can win.

**TITLE SLIDE**

Closing Prayer