

Why Is Dispensationalism Important?

History & Legacy

2025

Charlottetown Bible Chapel

Why Is It Important?

- ▶ **Why is Dispensationalism Important?**
- ▶ **Why Should We Study It?**
- ▶ **What did it do for others?**

Introduction

State Churches? Germany, Norway, Italy

Church Armies? Such as there were during the European Reformation.

Religious Cities? Such as Jerusalem, Rome

Polygamy?

Should it be practiced today? Why not?

Dispensationalism speaks to these issues?

**Chicago 1867 - Emma Moody... "Why Don't You Visit the
British men of the book...."**



Dwight L. Moody (1834-1899)

Evangelist & Founder of Moody Bible Institute

“Emma Moody suggested... they might go to England for a visit; there were such giants of God’s Word there; it would be a great blessing to D. L.; the Plymouth Brethren in Chicago had gotten their priceless secrets from Spirit-filled English Christians. There were other men in England like C. H. Mackintosh and J. N. Darby whose books so blessed him. Here we find the real reason for the first English visit, March to July of 1867...the motivation was to cure his spiritual asthma by contact with British men of the Book.” —Richard Ellsworth Day, *Bush Aglow: Life of D. L. Moody*, (Philadelphia, PA: Judson, 1945), p. 121

Evangelist D. L. Moody

1834-1899

“I had my attention called to C. H. M.’s notes, and was so pleased and at the same time profited by the way they opened up Scripture truth, that I secured at once all the writings of the same author, and if they could not be replaced, I would rather part with my entire library, excepting the Bible, than these writings. They have been to me a very key to the Scriptures.”

—Ernest Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978), p. 166

What is Dispensationalism?

► *Dispensationalism is a system of theology that places great emphasis on the sovereignty, holiness, and glory of God. It shows Christ to be the center of God's program for the ages and the object of worship for eternity. Dispensationalism is the interpretive key that unlocks the pages of Scripture, opens the door for our understanding of prophecy, and rightly directs our thinking about God's blueprint for human history. It shows the failure of man while exalting God's mercy, grace, and faithfulness. Dispensational principles are firmly rooted in Scripture and have been used throughout every age of church history but became especially prominent in the 1800s through the writings of John Darby, C. H. Mackintosh, and William Trotter. Dispensationalism has proven itself to be a stimulus for evangelism, world missions, the study of prophecy, and the centrality of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

What Difference Does it Make?

Dispensationalism makes a difference - The Person and Work of Christ - in the dispensations, church, kingdom

Dispensationalism makes a difference - The nature and character of the church.

Dispensationalism makes a difference - The inerrancy and inspiration of The Scriptures

Dispensationalism makes a difference - Doctrine of Salvation- state and standing, two natures, law & grace



E. Schuyler English

**“It is my personal judgement that the
Dispensational method of Bible interpretation
has done more in this century to enable to
ordinary man to understand the Scriptures than
any other system of Bible Study.”**

— E. S. English, “*Why We Revised the Scofield Bible*,” Moody
Monthly (Dec. 1966), p. 42

Harold Mackay

“Early in my Christian life I came under the teaching of able men of God who instructed me in dispensational truth. I accepted it because I had confidence in these servants of Christ. Later I earnestly searched the Scriptures myself. After forty years in the service of the Lord, and countless hours in the diligent study of the Word, today, I am more convinced than ever that Dispensationalism is the key, under God, for the unlocking of the rich truths of the Holy Scriptures.”

— Harold Mackay, *Countdown to Eternity*, Emmaus Correspondence School, p. 2

Dispensationalism Under Siege

Reformed Leaders

R. C. Sproul:

"Dispensationalism should be discarded as being a serious deviation from biblical Christianity."

"Dispensationalism is a system that is inherently antinomian..."

John Gerstner:

"Dispensationalism is, at best, dubious evangelicalism. All of its distinctive doctrines undermine, either explicitly or implicitly, the salvation that is to be found only in Jesus Christ."

— *"Dispensationalism: Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth"*, by John Gerstner, foreward R. C. Sproul

Dispensationalism Under Siege

Dispensational Leaders

Former President Chuck Swindoll - In an interview with *Christianity Today*, when Chuck Swindoll was asked about traditional dispensationalism at Dallas Theological Seminary, he replied, (Christianity Today, Oct. 25, 1993)

“I think that dispensations is a scare word. I’m not sure we’re going to make dispensationalism a part of our marquee as we talk about our school.” When asked whether the term dispensationalism would disappear, Swindoll replied, “It may and perhaps it should.”

Dispensationalism Under Siege

Sensationalists, Extremists, Profiteers

Sensationalists - *The present movement has been focused upon “who” the anti-Christ might be, when the Lord’s coming might be, lost ark of the covenant , the red heifer, re-building the temple, and so on. One World Government, One world wide currency, etc. Perry Stone, J. R. Church, Gary Kah, Grant Jeffery, Southwest Radio Church, etc.*

Academics - *To a lesser degree a dry, academic, theological debate divorced from a devotional, Christ-centered, worshipful teaching.*

Extreme Typology - *Dispensational Abuse of Typology - Using Typology to teach dispensational truth - Example of Arno Gaeblein - His Commentary on Matthew*

One of the Most Important Movements in the History of the Church

Impact on the Church

**Rivals the Protestant Reformation in its impact
on the Church and World.**

Theological movement - Eschatology, Soteriology,
Interpretation of Scripture, Hermeneutics.

Missionary movement

Evangelistic movement

Literature movement

Churches invigorated, revived and multiplied

George Eldon Ladd

Non-Dispensational Professor

“It is doubtful if there has been any other circle of men who have done more by their influence in preaching, teaching, and writing to promote a love for Bible study, hunger for the deeper Christian life, a passion for evangelism, and a zeal for missions in the history of American Christianity.”

—“*Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God*”, p. 49

Dr. James Boice

Non-Dispensational Pastor

“I am delighted to say that the Scofield Bible was a great influence upon my own studies of the Scriptures. Moreover, I have the deepest respect for these Bible teachers. They were steeped in the Bible far more than most Bible teachers today.”

—*“Sermon on the Mount, Zondervan”, 1989, p. 49*

Some Key Figures in Dispensationalism

- ▶ Isaac Watts - Hymn Writer /Theologian
- ▶ John Darby - (1800-1882) scholar, hymnwriter, translator
- ▶ W. E. Vine - (1876-1959) Author and scholar
- ▶ Dr. Charles Ryrie, Erich Sauer, Alva McClain - Scholar/Theologian
- ▶ Dr. John Walvoord - President Dallas Theological Seminary
- ▶ Evangelists - D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham
- ▶ Missionaries - J. Hudson Taylor, Nate Saint, Jim Elliot
- ▶ Bible teachers - H. A. Ironside, W. A. Criswell, M. R. DeHaan

Dispensationalism Is Relevant

HAS IMPACTED POLITICS, HISTORY, FORMATION OF ISRAEL

Historically Impacted the Formation of Israel

W. E. Blackstone - Author - "Jesus Is Coming"

Theodore Herzl - President Zionist Congress

Balfour Declaration - 1917

General Allenby

General Orde Wingate

Expository Preaching

Author C. Norman Kraus

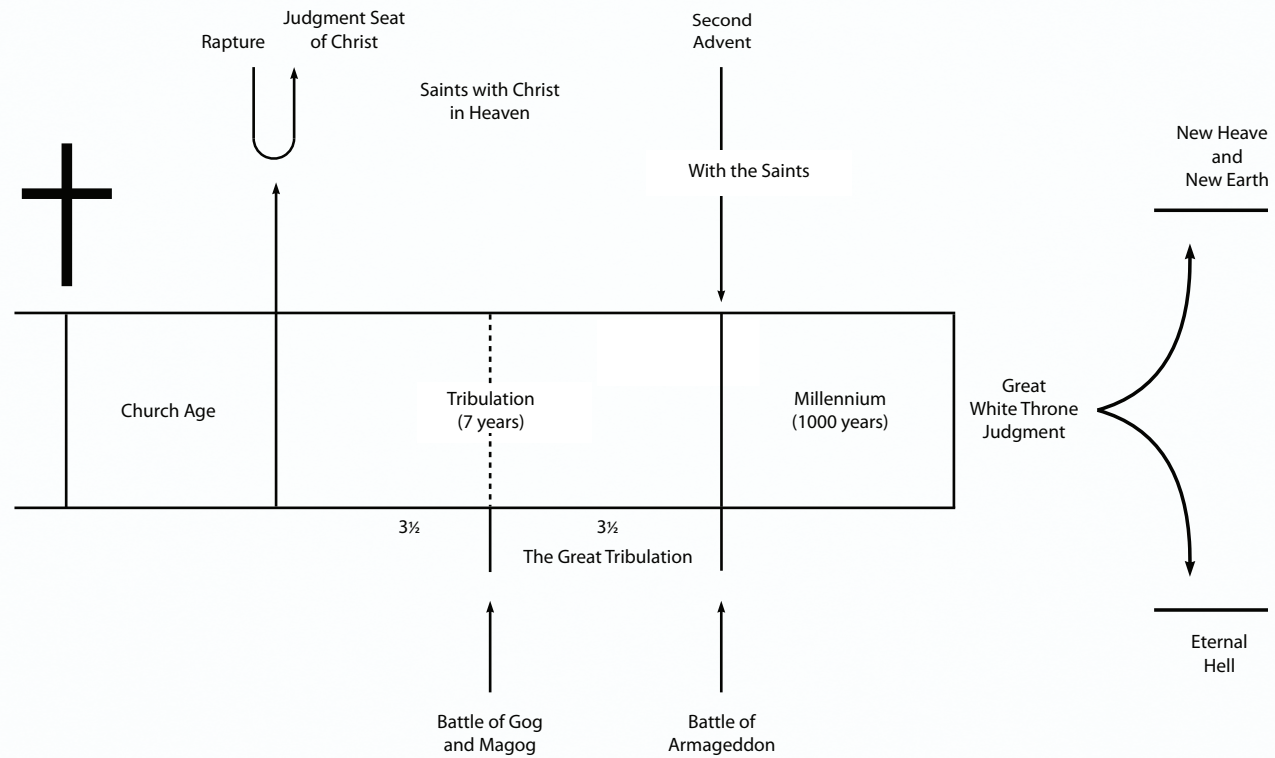
“The striking feature of their ministry was their simple exposition of Bible passages. They did not preach a series of sermons on different topics or hold series of evangelistic meetings, as Moody did. Rather, they held Bible study meetings. The ministry of Malachi Taylor, who died in 1897 and was succeeded for two years by A. C. Gaebelin, is a good example of how they worked. For a period of about twelve years he held a daily Bible study meeting in Temple Court in New York City. Darby himself gave a series of studies at Farwell Hall at D. L. Moody’s invitation. It was this method, taken no doubt from the Brethren’s example, that was expanded and used so effectively by James H. Brookes and his associates in Bible conferences all over the country.”

Foreign Missions

Missionary Zeal

- CAM (Central American Mission) started in the living room of C. I. Scofield 1891 Dallas TX
- 70 % of missionaries between 1850-1920 were Dispensationalists
- In 1828 assemblies started in British Isles and in 50 years there were 1,400 assemblies in 31 different lands
- Harold Wildish -
T. E. Wilson -
Dan Crawford -
Fredrick Arnot -
Anthony Norris Groves (Bagdad)

The Premillennial Scheme of World Events



Dr. Charles Ryrie

Importance of Literal Interpretation

“Allegorical interpretation fosters modernism. As has often been pointed out, it is almost impossible to find a premillennial liberal or modernist. Among (Plymouth) Brethren, who are supposed to be the founders of modern literalism, liberalism is practically unknown. On the other hand, the great body of modernistic Protestantism is avowed Amillennial. Thus the allegorical method of Amillennialism is a step toward modernism.”

—Ryrie, *Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, Loizeaux, Neptune, NJ, 1981, p. 46

Careful Literal Interpretation

1 Thess 4:15-16

1 Thessalonians 4:16 “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the *dead in Christ* shall rise first...”

Matthew Henry - Whole Bible Commentary - Vol. 6, p. 895 “The state and condition shall be glorious and happy at the second coming of Christ...the Lord will give notice of his approach, and the glorious appearance of this great Redeemer and Judge will be proclaimed and ushered in by the trump of God, for the trumpet shall sound, and this will awaken those that sleep in the dust of the earth, and summon the whole world to appear.”

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the OT & NT

- ▶ **Psalm 51:11 - “Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me...”**
- ▶ **John 14:16-17 - “He shall give you another comforter that will abide in you forever...”**

Doctrinal Consequences

Dr. James Boice
from Comm. on 1 John

“It must be acknowledged that the ***church on earth will always contain tares as well as wheat and that Christians must exercise utmost care in how they deal with them.*** The great temptation, particularly for those who are most serious about the church and its doctrine, is to root up the tares. But those who incline to this must remember that in Christ’s parable (Matt. 13:24-30) it was precisely this course that was forbidden to the householder’s servants...The time for separation was to be at the time of the final harvest when the wheat should be gathered into barns and the tares burned. The implication of Christ’s parable is that some Christians are so much like non-Christians that it is impossible to tell the difference. ***In Christ’s judgment the protection and nurture of all his followers within the church, regardless of outward appearance or degree of sanctification, are of such value that He would rather tolerate an impure church than forfeit them.*** (Italics mine)

(James Montgomery Boice, *Epistles of John*, (Grand Rapids, MI : Zondervan, 1994), p. 87)

Kingdom Parables: Discerning Differences

- ▶ **The Kingdom is not the Church**, otherwise:
- ▶ 1. Tares and Wheat are both in the church, and church discipline should not be practiced until the rapture?
- ▶ 2. v. 38 “Field is the world”, if the field is the church, then this passage teaches the validity of state churches.