

# Podcast Theology: Dispensationalism

## 2 Tim. 2:15

**Introduction:** Theology (“God-talk”) has never been more present in our popular or political discourse than it is today. The Bible is the sole authority for theology. Good God-talk gives the right opinion of God and leads people to the truth. Mistakes in God-talk leads to misconceptions about God and leads people to error. As the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), believers must anchor their theology to the truth of God’s Word.

*“We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life, which define man’s responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture.”* **Worth Baptist Church Statement of Faith**

### 1. Defining Dispensationalism

“Dispensationalism is a method of biblical interpretation that adopts a literal-historical-grammatical approach to studying the Bible, recognizing the differences of God’s administration of various periods of Biblical history, and emphasizing a clear distinction between Israel and the church.”

- **Dispensationalism is a method of biblical \_\_\_\_\_...**
- **...that adopts a literal-historical-grammatical approach to studying the Bible...**
  - “Literal” means the \_\_\_\_\_ or ordinary meaning of the text.
  - “Historical” means that we seek the author’s original intent to the original audience.
  - “Grammatical” means that we look to the plain meaning of the \_\_\_\_\_ and their relationship to each other for their meaning.
- **...recognizing the differences of God’s administration of various periods of Biblical history...**
  - Dispensation means “\_\_\_\_\_” or “rules of the house.”
  - As we study Scriptures, we see different “rules” or “administrative practices” in different periods of history.
  - While there has always been \_\_\_\_\_ way of salvation, God administers the church and Israel differently.
- **...emphasizing a clear distinction between Israel and the church.**

### 2. Defending Dispensationalism

- **A Biblical Critique** (Gal. 3:16, 26-29) (Gal. 6:16) (Rom. 9-11)
- **A Historical Critique**

*“There will be a certain period of a thousand years after the resurrection from the dead, when the kingdom of Christ must be set up in a material order on this earth... all the animals, feeding only on the produce of the earth, shall live in peaceful harmony together, and in perfect subjection to man.” Papias (c. 60–130 AD)*

*“But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.” Justin Martyr (c. 100–165 AD)*

*“God will gather together in one the dispersed of Israel, and will also bring back to their own land the remnant of Judah.” Irenaeus (c. 130–202 AD)*

*“If there be anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passage [Ezekiel 37]—a meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized away—must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land, and that a king is to rule over them.” Charles Spurgeon*

### 3. Applying Dispensationalism

- God’s people can understand God’s Word (Deut. 30:11-14) (2 Tim. 3:15-17).
- God is faithful to keep the specifics of His promises, even to faithless people.

|                        | <b>Israel</b>   | <b>The Church</b>   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Origin</b>          | Called out through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3); formed as a nation at Sinai   | Empowered at Pentecost (Acts 2); a “mystery” hidden in the Old Testament (Eph. 3:1-6)   |
| <b>Membership</b>      | By natural / physical birth   | By supernatural / spiritual birth – faith in Christ alone   |
| <b>Primary Focus</b>   | Earthly kingdom, promised land, Davidic throne, national identity   | Heavenly citizenship, worldwide gospel witness, local assemblies of believers   |
| <b>Key Promises</b>    | Unconditional: everlasting land (Gen. 15:18), eternal throne (2 Sam. 7:12-16), national New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36–37) | Spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1–2); participates in some covenant blessings but does not inherit Israel’s national/land promises            |
| <b>Covenants</b>       | Direct recipient of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants   | Receives spiritual blessings through Christ (the true Seed); does not replace or cancel Israel’s national covenants                               |
| <b>Current Status</b>  | Partially hardened (Rom. 11:25); still beloved and God’s chosen people  | Active during this parenthesis age of grace; the main focus of God’s program today  |
| <b>Future Destiny</b>  | Regathered, nationally saved, restored to the land, and will reign with Christ in the Millennium (Zech. 14; Rom. 11:26; Rev. 20)  | Caught up in the Rapture before the Tribulation; returns with Christ to co-reign in the Millennium; eternal home in the new heavens and new earth |
| <b>Destiny Summary</b> | Earthly inheritance – literal kingdom centered in Jerusalem   | Heavenly inheritance now; earthly co-reign with Christ in the future kingdom  |