



Maranatha Baptist Church

Covenant Theology Vs. Dispensationalism

9/17, 10/15, 2023

I. Definitions

- A. Dispensationalism - a system of Bible interpretation that draws from Scripture the principles of interpretation; as well, it is belief in a system of historical progression, as revealed in the Bible, consisting of a series of stages in God's self-revelation and plan of salvation.
- B. Covenant Theology - a system of theology which attempts to develop the Bible's philosophy of history on the basis of 3 covenants.
1. Covenant of Redemption
 2. Covenant of Works
 3. Covenant of Grace

II. Dilemmas

- A. Covenant of Works
1. Adam was placed on temporary probation in order to determine whether he would submit his will to God's will.
 2. God promised eternal life to Adam and his descendants in return for Adam's perfect obedience. - No Scripture!
- B. Covenant of Grace
1. Who? Regenerate and Unregenerate
 2. How? Enter by virtue of their physical birth to parents who are in the covenant - No Scripture!

C. Conclusions:

1. They are in as far as their **responsibility** is concerned.
2. They are in as far as their **claim to the promises which God gave when He established His covenant with believers and their seed.**
3. They are in as they are subject **to the helps of covenant.**
4. They are in as far as the common **covenant blessings.**

III. Disagreement to the time of establishment

- A. Genesis 3:15 **established immediately after Adam sinned.**
- B. Genesis 12 **established with Abraham (this is not the church!)**
- C. See the church in the Old Testament

- D. Some are convinced that believers before Abraham were in the Covenant of Grace.
- E. Some see requirements: faithful, devoted love, agreement to be God's people, saving faith in Christ, continual trust in Christ forever, and a life of obedience and consecration to God.
- F. Genesis 17:7 covenant of grace beginning with God's promise made to Abram.

IV. Difficulties

A. Significant Features of Covenant Theology

1. The Bible teaches one gospel by which men can be saved.
2. The mediator of the covenant is the same yesterday, today, and forever - Hebrews 13:8. Therefore, the covenant that God mediates must also be the same throughout history.
3. The way of salvation revealed in the covenant must be the same. (Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 2:11,12)

B. Significant Failures of Covenant Theology

1. Its ultimate goal of history is too limited at times and too narrow at others.
2. It denies or weakens some of the distinctions which are in the Bible.
3. It denies the distinction between Israel and the Church.
4. It is mistaken when it teaches that each of the biblical covenants is a continuation and newer phase of the Covenant of Grace.
5. Its unifying principle is too limited and narrow.
6. In order to make its system work, Covenant Theology must employ a double system of interpretation. (CT uses the allegorical or spiritualize method)

Dispensationalism: What does it provide?

1. A _____, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture.
2. A clear _____ between Israel and the Church.
3. A _____ that the major unifying purpose of God is the exaltation of Christ and the demonstration of God's glory.
4. Salvation is by grace through faith in every _____.
5. There is a clear pattern that God has _____ Himself; and man is _____ to God.
6. In each dispensation God has revealed Himself and man _____
7. _____ and _____ are mutually exclusive rules of life.
8. The Kingdom announced by John the Baptist and Jesus was not _____.
9. Yields 2 aspects of Christ's return:
 - a) The gathering of the _____ at the rapture
 - b) The establishment of His _____ upon His return to earth