



# Teaching Moments

Pastor Michael Sweet

## Interpretive Lens for the Entire Bible

~ Investigating how we see all the Bible being connected ~

### Spectrum of Interpretive Lenses

#### DISPENSATIONALISM

Multiple Plans  
Two Groups  
Futurist  
Full Restoration

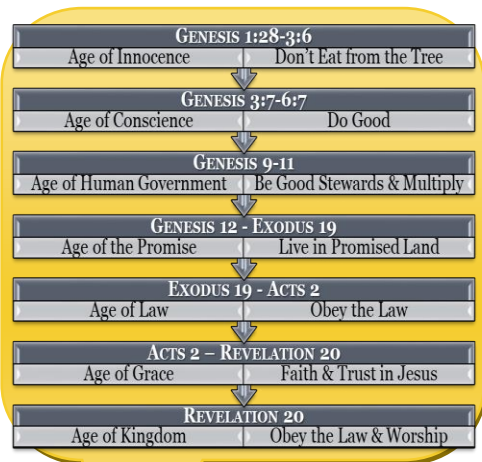
..... God's plan for relationship? .....  
..... People of God? .....  
..... Revelation interpretive lens? .....  
..... Future of national Israel? .....

#### COVENANT THEOLOGY

One Plan  
One People  
Any  
Nothing Specific

## Dispensationalism

~ A brief look at how Dispensationalism interprets the Bible ~



There are various time periods (dispensations) in which God's relationship with humanity is unique. Some models include 7 dispensations, others include more or less.

Classic dispensationalism sees a major distinction between the Old and New Testaments and hence two distinct "people of God". For example, Israel will ultimately dwell on the "New Earth" while the church will ultimately dwell in "Heaven". Israel and the Church have totally distinct relationships with God.

C. I. Scofield creates dispensationalist "Study Bible"

**CLASSICAL DISPENSATIONALISM**  
(founded by James Darby, 1800-1882)

#### ULTRA-DISPENSATIONALISM

(founded by Bullinger, 1837-1913)  
• The "Hebrew" Church began in Acts 2  
• Most reject water baptism, Lord's Supper & spiritual gifts  
• Heavy emphasis on Pauline epistles

#### REVISED DISPENSATIONALISM

(founded by Ryrie, 1925-2016)  
• Israel and Church go to "New Earth"

#### PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

(founded on the works of Blaising, Bock, & Saucy in late 1990's)  
• Dispensations can overlap  
• The "Hebrew age" and the "gentile age" occurred simultaneously in the Gospels

#### ACTS 28 VIEW

• There is a new "gentile" church that began at Acts 28:28

#### MID-ACTS VIEW

• There is a new "gentile" church that began at either Acts 9 or Acts 13



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## Covenant Theology

~ A brief look at how Covenant Theology interprets the Bible ~



**Before Creation – “Covenant of Redemption”**

*Promise within the Trinity that Jesus would be the Messiah.*



**Garden of Eden – “Covenant of Works”**

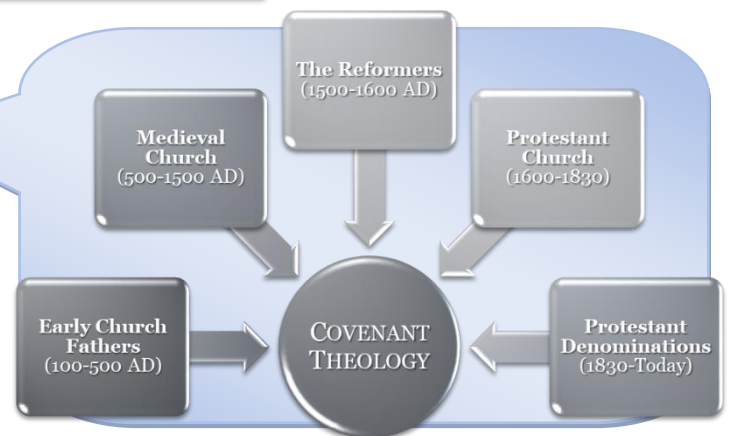
*Promise of life for obedience and death for disobedience.*



**Fallen Humanity – “Covenant of Grace”**

*Promise that the Messiah would defeat death and that faith in the Messiah would lead to restoration.*

Covenant Theology has been a common interpretive lens throughout church history. However, different time periods in history have fostered unique expressions of Covenant Theology. For example, some expressions may emphasize that humans have freewill while others deny freewill. Both expressions agree that the content of our faith and the means of our relationship with God has always been the promised Messiah. Therefore, there is ultimately only one people of God which will include people from every nation, tribe and language.



## Disputed Issues

~ There are numerous issues that get disputed but here are two common examples ~

### **DISPENSATIONALISM:**

#### **ARE THERE MULTIPLE WAYS OF SALVATION?**

“The basis of salvation in every age is the death of Christ; the requirement for salvation in every age is faith; the object of faith in every age is God; **the content of faith changes in the various dispensations.** It is this last point, of course, that distinguishes dispensationalism from covenant theology, but it is not a point to which the charge of teaching two ways of salvation can be attached. It simply recognizes the obvious fact of progressive revelation.”  
- Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*

### **COVENANT THEOLOGY:**

#### **HOW COULD SOMEONE BE SAVED BEFORE JESUS’ ARRIVAL?**

“As the same promise was made to those who lived before the advent which is now made to us in the gospel, as the same Redeemer was revealed to them who is presented as the object of faith to us, it of necessity follows that the condition, or terms of salvation, was the same then as now. It was not mere faith or trust in God, or simply piety, which was required, but faith in the promised Redeemer, or **faith in the promise of redemption through the Messiah.** This is plain not only from the considerations just mentioned, but also further, from the fact that the Apostle teaches that faith, not works, was before as well as after Christ the condition of salvation.” - Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*