

Dispensationalism

A heresy practiced by many Protestant groups, *Dispensationalism* is a form of *Premillennialism* which narrates Biblical history as a number of successive "economies" or "administrations", called "dispensations". Each one of these dispensations emphasizes the discontinuity of the covenants of God made with His various peoples.

Dispensationalism was born from the Protestant environs of England and Ireland, developed by the Plymouth Brethren movement under the teachings of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). Darby built on a number of themes that were common with radical Calvinists and Evangelicals in the early 19th century. However, he elaborated a more complex system for interpreting the Bible than his predecessors.

Dispensationalism was brought to the Americas by John Inglis, where it continued to flourish through the teachings of James H. Brookes, Dwight L. Moody (founder of the Moody Bible Institute) and Cyrus Scofield (author of the Scofield Study Bible).

Unlike the Orthodox teaching the Church itself, as Christ's spouse, is the New Jerusalem and God's chosen people through its union with Jesus Christ, dispensationalists believe that the Christian Church is an interruption in God's divine contract with the Jewish people. They believe that the Gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles, however, God's continued care for the Jewish people will be revealed after the end of the "Church's Dispensation", when the Jews shall be restored to their land, and they shall accept Christ as the Messiah. Hence, dispensationalists believe that there is one mode of salvation for Gentiles, and another for Jews. This goes against the soteriology taught by the Church, which says that Christ came to save all regardless of ethnic background.

Some Christian dispensationalists have taken to also observing traditional Jewish holidays, keeping Kosher standards and practicing Jewish religious rituals. It should be noted that this practice has been condemned by the holy apostles (especially in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians) as well as by the Church Fathers throughout the centuries.

Dispensationalists also advocate other questionable teachings, especially in their interpretation of eschatology. For example, many believe in the *Rapture*, an event occurring before the *Second Coming of Christ*, when all Christians of true belief are assumed into Heaven; and the *Time of Tribulation*, a period ruled by a draconian, demonic figure, called the *Antichrist*, when those who were not taken up must find correct belief before the *Final Judgment*.

Let us continue to work for the promulgation of Holy Orthodoxy, which preaches the true Christ and rejects all distorted, false and demonic heresies. Let us fervently pray for the conversion of those stubbornly holding to bogus beliefs, that God may enlighten their souls to repentance and conversion to the truth in His holy Orthodox Church.

