

Sensational Dispensationalism

John Nelson Darby's Seven Era Premillennialism

Round about 1832, John Nelson Darby, an ex-Anglican priest and prominent founder member of the relatively small Plymouth Brethren movement, propagated a novel form of premillennialism generally known as "Dispensationalism". However the faith is "once for all delivered to the saints" [Jude 1:3], so new doctrines cannot be true. Despite that, this new doctrine, in its various forms, has permeated the evangelical world so much that most evangelical bodies do not regard as Christian those who oppose it.

Dispensationalists generally claim that there will be 7 eras of 1,000 years from the creation of the world, at about BC4004, to the end. Which would mean that we have now entered the 7th. and last dispensation of God's dealings with mankind.

Very briefly the theory is that the OT predicted the Lord Jesus coming into the world to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jews. The Jews having rejected the Christ this is postponed, meanwhile the church is established, as a sort of stop-gap measure, until Christ comes invisibly to "rapture" its faithful to heaven. Then God will resume his aim to establish an earthly Jewish kingdom. Views of what happens then are complex and varied.

The Danger of the Doctrine

The implication of this stop-gap theory is that the church and the cross was hardly, if at all, foreseen in the Old Testament. If the Jews had not rejected the Christ then he would have instituted a Jewish earthly kingdom and there would have been no cross, no salvation for the world and no church.

I. C. Scofield claimed that salvation was by works for the Jews under the Old Covenant and by grace under the New:

"As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ....The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation".

Scofield Reference Bible, 1909,1917

(notes on John 1:17 sec.2) p.1115

The Scofield Reference Bible promotes Dispensationalism.

Biblical Refutation

- Prophetic Predictions Fulfilled -

These Old Testament promises about God's plan for the Jewish Nation are fulfilled in the church.

Predicted - Gentiles becoming God's people

"... I will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God." Hosea 2:23

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, *Ye are* the sons of the living God." Hosea 1:10

Fulfilled - The church is God's holy nation

"... not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles ... As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; ... which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." Romans 9:22-26

"But ye *are* ..., an holy nation ...: Which in time past were not a people, but *are* now the people of God:..." 1 Peter 2:9-10

Predicted - Gentiles to be Priests

"... I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. ... and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. ... And I will also take of them for priests *and* for Levites, saith the LORD." Isaiah 66:18,19,21

Fulfilled - Members of the church are priests

"But ye *are* ... , a royal priesthood, ... ; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" 1 Peter 2:9

Predicted - David's Tabernacle will be rebuilt

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, ... and of all the heathen upon whom my name is called, saith the LORD that does this" Amos 9:11

Fulfilled -

The church is David's rebuilt tabernacle

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; ... and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

Acts 15:14-18

Predicted -

A new covenant will replace the old.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Jer 31:31

Fulfilled -

The church is under that new covenant.

"... he took the cup, ... saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." 1Corinthians 11:25

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant;..." 2 Corinthians 3:6

"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Hebrews 8:8

"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away." Hebrews 8:13

"... Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, ..."
Hebrews 12:24

The Jews forfeited their right to the Old Covenant

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, ... saith the LORD:" Jeremiah 31:32

The Old was severed by God and the New introduced at the cross

"... that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: ... - ... they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver. ... In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Zechariah 11:10-12, 13:1

In the day the Jews bought the Messiah for 30 pieces of silver and crucified him God broke the covenant he had made with all the tribes of Israel, the Jewish nation forfeited its right to the land of Palestine, on the other hand a fountain was opened for sinners.

Gentiles are grafted in and become part of the true Israel of God

"... some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wast grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree;" Romans 11:17

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the

circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead". Colossians 2:11-12

Such are the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise.

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:24-29

So those who believe in the Lord Jesus and are baptised* in water for the remission of sins are born into the promised kingdom.

Compare: John 3:3-5, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:37-39, Romans 6:1-5 and Colossians 2:11-13

* baptised is from a Greek word meaning immersed.

@ [* There is no Divine authority for the Jewish restoration of the nation of Israel !]

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Fulfilled

Darbyism Refuted