

# ARE WE IN END TIMES?

## "Dispensational Thinking"

Scripture Reading: ROMANS 11:17-24

- ) **SLIDE 7-9**. Scripture reading.
- ) **SLIDE 10**. This is our 6th week in our series titled "Are We in End Times?" Today's message: "Dispensational Thinking."
- ) Last week we learned that there are six references to a period of time referred to as the one thousand years (millennium) in REVELATION 20. We then put those 1000 years on a timeline for each of the five different eschatological views.
- ) We concluded that there are differences in how people interpret this millennium. Some camps take the 1000 years as literal and some as symbolic. Some think the 1000 years is something in the future and some think it has already happened. And some believe we are in this millennial period right now. Me. It's also the church age.
- ) And since Jesus has not yet returned, we don't know who is right. Perhaps each camp contains some measure of truth. But as Paul Washer says: "Within 10 minutes of the return of Christ, everyone will know who had it right."
- ) **SLIDE 11**. Today let's look at the most popular view taught today - PPD. I want to cover 1) why this view (87%) is so popular; 2) define why this camp are called dispensationalists; 3) how they view the six events that will occur in REV 20 (the millennium); and 4) even though it's popular, why I no longer subscribe to this view.
- ) It's a fact that most popular teachers and preachers today support this view. I don't think you can be a Southern Baptist unless you submit to this view.

- ) So, why is PPD so popular today? Here are four reasons:
- ) **SLIDE 12.** #1 – It's **CREDIBLE** because prophecy interpretation is literal. In this camp, all end times prophecies carry a literal interpretation. And because they do, they claim it gives the Bible much more credibility and is more scholarly because it is the product of more intelligent interpretation. Hal Lindsay said the people in heaven with the lowest IQ will be amillennials.
- ) **SLIDE 13.** #2 – It's **REASSURING** because it includes a pretribulation rapture. What's more reassuring than knowing that when Jesus decides to return, that every living Christian will be raptured out of here without ever having to suffer any consequences of the tribulation? We suffer nothing and all those hard-headed unbelievers suffer the tribulation.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** #3 - It's **EXCITING** because it is newsworthy. Dispensationalists favor Israel as a nation (1948 Israel becomes a nation). So anytime the nation of Israel is in the news, it has the strong possibility that their actions are the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. People like Jack Van Impe love to connect the dots of Israel in the news with what REV says in prophecy. And that's exciting because we get to see these prophecies unfold right before our eyes.
- ) **SLIDE 15.** #4 – It's **VALIDATED** by movies and books and trusted preachers. What's better than the stamp of approval by a popular book series or a Hollywood movie? Movies and books like the "*Left Behind*" series and the book and movie "*The Late Great Planet Earth*" by Hal Lindsay help validate the credibility of PPD. And let's not forget all those trusted preachers today who teach and stand behind PPD.
- ) **SLIDE 16.** There's actually a 5<sup>th</sup> reason. Here's a not-so-famous quote by a not-so-famous preacher. "*All that you have ever been taught, is all that you will ever know.*" That's rather logical and straightforward.

- ) Those are four reasons why PPD is so popular today. Let's move on to our second question. What is and why is this view called dispensationalism?
- ) **SLIDE 17.** Dispensationalism is a belief that teaches that God has related to human beings in different ways under different Biblical covenants in a series of "*dispensations*" or periods in history.
- ) **SLIDE 18.** What are those periods? 1) Innocence (GEN 1-2) - Adam and Eve pre-sin. 2) Conscience (GEN 3-8) - First sin to the flood. 3) Civil Government (GEN 9-11) - After the flood. 4) Promise (GEN 12 - EXO 19) - Abraham to Moses. 5) Law (EXO 20 - ACT 2:4) - Moses to the Church. 6) Grace (ACT 2:4 - REV 20:3) - Cross to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. 7) Millennial Kingdom (REV 20:4-6) - The rule of Christ on earth in the millennial kingdom.
- ) In other words, God will relate to human beings in different ways in each dispensation. Give example.
- ) **SLIDE 19** A dispensationalist believes that ISRAEL and the CHURCH are two separate and distinct entities. The church is actually Plan B because Israel rejected their Messiah. Again, they do show true concern for the nation Israel. But they also believe that when the church is raptured away, Israel is left behind to face the wrath and judgment of God for their unbelief and God will deal with Israel in a different way than the church.
- ) Let's summarize this. A dispensationalist 1) believes in seven distinct dispensations of how God relates to human beings and 2) Israel and the church are two distinct entities and God will deal with each separately.
- ) **SLIDE 20.** Next let's talk about the six events that will occur in the 1000-year millennium and how a PPD interprets these six events. Remember, a PPD interprets everything literally. All six of these events happen during this time period.

- **SLIDE 21.** Satan is bound for 1,000 years (v2)
- Satan is thrown and sealed in the abyss and cannot deceive the nations for 1,000 years (v3)
- The saints reign with Christ for 1,000 years (v4)
- The saints are part of the first resurrection and are priests of God for 1,000 years (v6)
- The rest of the dead come to life after the 1,000 years are completed (v5)
- Satan is released after the 1,000 years are completed (v7).

) Using a literal interpretation makes it very simple and easy to interpret these six verses. It's a millennial kingdom under the rule of Christ. It's much more difficult for an amillennial (like myself) to interpret these six verses, but I promise I will do that next Sunday.

) So far this morning I have given you four reasons why PPD is so popular. I have briefly explained dispensationalism to you in that there is a genuine concern for God's people - the nation Israel, but Israel/church are separate. And I have explained the millennium, the 1000 years, to you in its simplicity.

) So, allow me to answer the fourth question. Why do I no longer believe in PPD?

- Conversation with Corey.
- It's new. It only surfaced in 1830. If it's new, then it's not true. If it's true, then it's not new. If it is so Scripturally sound, then why didn't this belief system surface centuries ago?
- Literal interpretation. Satan, a spirit being, a fallen angel, can be bound physically with a chain.
- Rapture a half return of Jesus.
- Know when Jesus completely returns.
- Preparation for the return of Christ. If I know that I'm raptured out of here, unscathed, when Jesus half returns, why should I have any concern whatsoever about His return? Unbelievers have seven years to repent.

- Our Scripture reading for today. There's only one olive tree. One vine (JOHN 15). We are all branches in that same olive tree, Jew or Gentile. Some are there because they are God's chosen people (Israel) and some have been grafted in (Gentiles). We are all branches of that same vine, Jew or Gentile, because (HABUKKAK 2:4) tells us that the righteous shall live by faith.
- ) And those are a few reasons why I am no longer a PDD. I like my amillennial camp, even though I am in a minority and (according to Hal Lindsay) a person with a low IQ.
- ) Next week I will explain the six points about the millennium as outlined in REV 20 from the amillennial view. I also want to cover the Scriptures that speak about the final judgment. We may end this series next week. If not, certainly the week after. Then after that, we return to our expository study of the Book of GALATIANS.

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