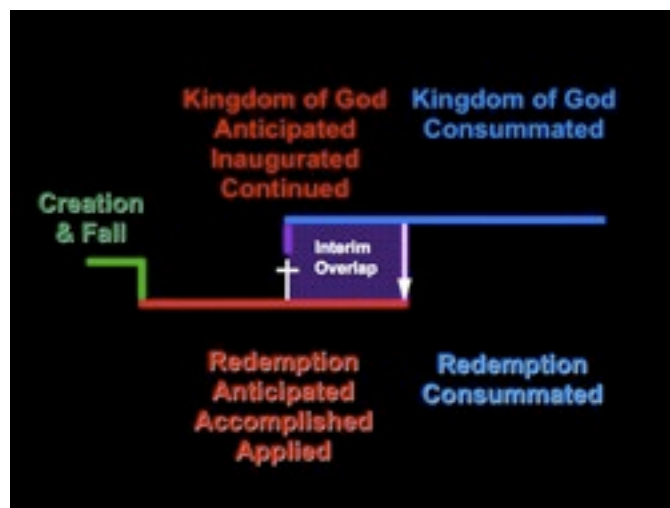


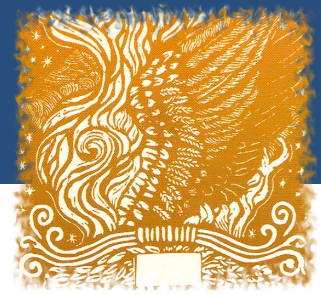
# Prelude to the End: Comparing Dispensational & Covenant Theology

## A Dispensational Perspective

Innocence	Conscience	Human Government	Promise	The Law	Grace or Church	The Kingdom
From the restored earth (Genesis 1:28)...	From the fall (Genesis 3:7)...	From the Flood (Genesis 8:15)...	From the call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1)...	From the giving of the Law (Exodus 19:4-24)...	From the Cross (Acts 2:1; Ephesians 3:2-7)...	From the return of Christ for His Church (Rev. 19:11-20:4)...
To the fall of Adam (Genesis 3:6).	To the flood (Genesis 8:14).	To the call of Abraham (Genesis 11:32).	To the giving of the Law (Exodus 18:27).	To the Cross (John 19:30).	To the return of Christ for His Church (1 Thess. 4:17)	To the new heaven and earth (Rev. 21 & 22)

## A Covenantal Perspective





## Different Emphases

**Ebb & flow between the Dispensations/ Covenants (Frame, ch. 9)** — more discontinuity (Dispensationalism)? or more continuity (Covenantalism)?

- Basic question (for me): is the contrast between “law & grace” worked out most satisfactorily by contrasting dispensations (in one age there’s more “law” and in another more “grace”) or by reconciling “law & grace” within a particular covenantal age?

**One people of God? or Two?** Israel vs. the Church (physical vs. spiritual — Plan A & Plan B — Frame, ch. 18).

- Basic question (for me): are NT believers part of the Israel of God (Gal 6:15; Rom 11:17-24; Eph 2:12,19-22; 3:6)?

**View of the End** — Basic questions (for me): Must God remove the Church to resume work with Israel? Is the church the “final temple” or do we await a new physical temple with renewed animal sacrifices and the works? You kind of know where you are when you stand on the Mt. of Olives and look at the empty space that used to be occupied by the Temple:

- If you say, “Lord, haste the day when the Temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices will be renewed as ‘memorials’\* to Jesus’ death,” then you might be a dispensationalist.
- If you say, “Lord, thank you for removing the shadow form of the temple so we can see the true and final temple that has your Son as its cornerstone, the apostles and NT prophets as its foundation layers, and all believers as its

‘living stones,’” then you might be a covenantalist.

## Principles of Interpretation: “Literal” vs. “Literary”

Physical/National promises must be kept in a physical/national sense vs. “From lesser to greater, from shadow to reality” — e.g., law of love; and see the way the NT treats promises to ethnic Israel (Ac 2:30-35; 13:32-33; 15:15-17; Rom 9:

Different interpretive instincts surface when you come upon things that are not repeated (or clearly so) in the NT: e.g., tithing, Sabbath, use of musical instruments, place of children in the covenant community (baptize or not? allow at the Table or not?)

## Different Concerns

**Disp’m a response to: a)** liberalism’s naive optimism about culture and human nature; **and b)** liberalism’s separation of the Bible’s “kernel” of “spiritual” truth from the “husk” of the Bible’s pre-scientific worldview.

**Cov’m shares both concerns, but says: a)** is not resolved by an overly pessimistic, world-escaping, suffering-denying worldview; **and b)** is better resolved by responsible exegesis that differentiates among biblical genres

**Disp’m: Grace consoles the sinner** ... Law only drives the sinner to Christ (Jn 1:17; Ro 5:20; Gal 3:19)

**Cov’m: Grace also transforms the sinner** ... Law sheds light on the believer’s path (Jn 13:33-34; Ro 8:1-4; Gal 5:14; 1Co 7:19).

\*For the idea of a rebuilt temple being the place where, during Christ’s millennial reign, sacrifices will be renewed as “memorials” of Jesus’ death, see John Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*, p. 319.