

God's Plan For The Ages



Dispensationalism

23

“The new divine purpose had intentionally been unrevealed before its inauguration. It came, therefore, not only with great suddenness, but wholly without Old Testament revelation.”

Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993). 4:40.

26

Dispensationalism III

24

In fact, the new, hitherto unrevealed purpose of God in the outcalling of a heavenly people from Jews and Gentiles is so divergent with respect to the divine purpose toward Israel, which purpose preceded it and will yet follow it, that the term *parenthetical*, commonly employed to describe the new age purpose, is inaccurate. A parenthetical portion sustains some direct or indirect relation to that which goes before or that which follows; but the present age purpose is not thus related and therefore is more properly termed an *intercalation*.

27

The Church, a new, previously undisclosed age and distinct from God's previous dealings with Israel. The Church is not a continuation of Israel.

25

The appropriateness of this word will be seen in the fact that, as an interpolation is formed by inserting a word or phrase into a context, so an intercalation is formed by introducing a day or a period of time into the calendar. The present age of the Church is an intercalation into the revealed calendar or program of God as that program was foreseen by the prophets of old. Such, indeed, is the precise character of the present age.

Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993). 4:41

28

¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus ²Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

¹² Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. ¹³ And after they had ³become silent, James answered, saying, "Men *and* brethren, listen to me: ¹⁴ Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

¹⁶ *'After this (μετα ταυτα) I will return
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;*

¹⁷ *So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD,
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,
Says the 'LORD WHO DOES ALL THESE THINGS.'*

¹⁸ "Known to God from eternity are all His works. ¹⁹ Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God.

29

According to this view there are four chronological movements in this passage:

- (1) the present Church Age ("taking from the Gentiles a people for Himself," Acts 15:14),
- (2) the return of Christ to Israel (v. 16a),
- (3) the establishing of the Davidic kingdom (v. 16b),
- (4) and the turning of Gentiles to God (*in the millennium*) (v. 17).

John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:395.

32

"After this (μετα ταυτα) I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up"

meta - preposition

tauta – demonstrative pronoun (this) – what is the "this"?

The out-calling of the Gentiles "...the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name"

"meta tauta" denotes sequence, temporal succession, chronological sequence.

"and thus serves as a connecting link or transition between what has been mentioned and what is to follow in order of time." --J.B. Smith

30

The Mystery of the Church

"To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration [dispensation] (οικονομία), of the mystery which for ages (αίων) has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places." (**Ephesians 3:8-10, NASB95**).

33

Dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the N.T. It gives the divine purpose for this age, and for the beginning of the next.

(1). The taking out from among the Gentiles of a people for His name, the distinctive work of the present, or church-age. The church is the ecclesia--the "called-out assembly." Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost. The Gospel has never anywhere converted all, but everywhere has called out some.

(2). "After this viz. the out-calling I will return." James quotes from Amos 9:11,12. The verses which follow in Amos describe the final regathering of Israel, which the other prophets invariably connect with the fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant (e.g.); Isaiah 11:1,10-12; Jeremiah 23:5-8.

(3). "And will build again the tabernacle of David," i.e. re-establish the Davidic rule over Israel 2 Samuel 7:8-17; Luke 1:31-33.

(4). "That the residue of men Israelites may seek after the Lord" cf. Zechariah 12:7,8; 13:1,2.

(5). "And all the Gentiles," etc. cf. Micah 4:2; Zechariah 8:21,22. This is also the order of Romans 11:24-27.

31

continued...

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation [stewardship] (οικονομία), of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages (αίων) and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" (**Colossians 1:24-27, KJV**).

34

Augustine (354 - 430 A.D.)

"Distinguish the ages and the Scriptures harmonize"

35

⁷ But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, ⁸ how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. ¹⁰ For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.

¹¹ For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious. ¹² Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech-- ¹³ unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. **2 Corinthians 3:7-17 (NKJV)**

38

Important Distinctions

➤ LAW AND GRACE

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1: 17).

"It is a serious mistake to press law-observance in the face of repeated revelations that the believer of this age is not under law as his rule of life (Rom. 6:14; 10:4, 5; Gal. 5:18; 2 Cor. 3:11, 17)."

L.S. Chafer

36

The Apostle Paul's Testimony

"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law *μη ὢν ἀντὸς ὑπὸ νόμον*), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law (*μη ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ* - not being an outlaw [lawless] of God but an in-law of Christ), so as to win those not having the law (*the Gentiles*)." (**1 Corinthians 9:19-21, NIV**).

39

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. **Romans 6:14 (NKJV)**

⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. ⁵ For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "*The man who does those things shall live by them.*" **Romans 10:4-5 (NKJV)**

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **Galatians 5:18 (NKJV)**

37

➤ THE JEW, THE GENTILE, AND THE CHURCH

"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (1 Cor. 10: 32).

The Jew	The Gentile	The Church
who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. Romans 9:4-5 (NKJV)	¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- ¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Ephesians 2:11-12 (NKJV)	²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23 (NKJV)

40

The Church and Israel

“A mixture of the teachings concerning Israel, as a nation, with the revelations concerning the Church, the body of Christ, is groundless in Scripture. It is hopelessly confusing and grotesque, for under this plan only Israel's blessings are borrowed; her curses and penalties are, naturally, not wanted. No progress can be made in the kingdom studies unless plain words are taken in their obviously plain meaning...

41

...In the Bible "Israel" is not the "Church"; "Zion" is not the body of saints of this dispensation; the "throne of David" is not Heaven, nor will it ever be; the "land of your fathers" is not "Paradise" and the "house of Jacob" is not a host of Gentiles ignorantly attempting to force an entrance into Judaism.”

L.S. Chafer

42