

A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century –

Vol 11 Eschatology

Good Dispensationalism

An Excerpt of

Chapter 3 Good Eschatology Requires Good

Good Dispensationalism

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Chapter 3 Good Eschatology Requires Good Dispensationalism

One cannot account for a thorough coverage of Biblical eschatology without a consideration of the great stages of stewardship wherewith mankind has been and will be tested. A systematic review of the whole of Scripture discovers seven distinct stewardship tests for man. Since the concept of the progressive testing of man in these stewardship phases, properly called dispensations, insults and assaults Roman Catholic Church doctrine, and that of its Protestant offspring, the Biblical basis for this teaching needs careful development up front.

A preliminary development of dispensationalism was given in the doctrine of man, Vol 6 Anthropology, because of the stewardship of man that it captures. Another development of dispensationalism is pursued in the doctrine of the church, Volume 09 Ecclesiology, because the church age has a beginning and a closing that is crucial to that doctrine. Dispensational truths are presented again here in order to understand the doctrine of last things. One cannot understand the second coming of Christ without discerning the transition from the dispensation of grace into the last dispensation, “the dispensation of the fullness of times,” called the Kingdom Age. For that reason a solid understanding of the seven dispensations is vital to Biblical doctrine. That understanding can be achieved by going through Chapter 5 of the Anthropology volume and/or Chapter 2 of the Ecclesiology volume and/or this volume pursuing the doctrine of last things. A brief outline of these seven dispensations is included below:

God's Seven Dispensations Outlined

The First Dispensation – Innocence (Gen 1:28 Scofield Note)

The Second Dispensation – Conscience (Gen 3:23 Scof. Note)

The Third Dispensation – Government (Gen 8:21 Scof. Note)

The Fourth Dispensation – Promise (Gen 12:1 Scof. Note)

The Fifth Dispensation – Law (Exod 19:8 Scof. Note)

The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth (John 1:17, Eph 3:1-6)

The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom (Eph 1:10 Scof. Note)

Much more needs to be said about these dispensations. It is necessary to be systematically aware of their presence in the big picture. Mankind is given thorough and complete testing and opportunity in seven distinct phases, covering seven thousand years, and is repeatedly found lacking in each stewardship and dispensation. Dispensationalism is key to comprehending the larger picture of all of Scripture.

An understanding of dispensations is best introduced starting in the book of Genesis. So is an understanding of God, an understanding of man, and an understanding of redemption. But presuming some understanding of those three, let us focus on the very first dispensation, which is often called “Innocence.” Most simply, a dispensation is a period of time where stewardship is tested. *Stewardship* and *dispensation* come from the same root word, *oikonomia* in Greek.

The First Dispensation – Innocence

God placed man in the Garden of Eden with a specific requirement of obedience. He was left in that testing for a period of time to “see” how he would fare¹. He fared poorly, and was consequently removed from the Garden. There were consequences for his failure and that period of testing, for all mankind, was abruptly ended. Now a new set of guidelines must be determined, a new testing of mankind would be pursued.

In that scenario there is a general set of guidelines which define a dispensation (Greek - οικονομία – *oikonomia* translated in English “dispensation,” four times and “stewardship,” three times). It is defined in the lexicon, *the management, oversight, or administration of a household or of other property- usually owned by another*. A dispensation contains 1) a set of rules, guidelines or expectations given by God, 2) a period of time wherein man is tried or tested under the guidelines, and 3) a distinct ending of the testing period wherein (it

1 That period of time opens with all heaven and earth of this universe being “*very good*” as stated in Gen.1:3. After Gen.1:31 Satan falls in rebellion and shows up in Gen.3:1 lying and deceiving. The Bible does not dictate how long this period of testing is, nor should we. The Bible does not tell us when Satan rebelled but one dare not move his rebellion outside of these 1:31 to 3:1 boundaries. Especially do not move it to some fictitious gap imagined by C. I. Scofield (1834 – 1921), and portrayed by Clarence Larkin (1850 – 1924)!

shall be seen as the pattern develops) man fails to live up to the guideline. The word *dispensation* is used four times in the Holy Bible (1Cor 9:17, Eph 1:10, 3:2, and Col 1:25). Additionally it is translated *stewardship* three times (Luke 16:2, 3, 4). The understanding of stewardship might better refine what a dispensation is because as a *steward* one is left in charge of what belongs to another, there is a period of time where they are accountable, and there is a definite ending wherein “the Lord of the vineyard” returns (cf Matt 21:33-46). The first dispensation, *innocence* in the Garden of Eden, illustrates well these three concepts of a dispensation.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the first dispensation:

Scofield Note 4 (1:28, heading) A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture. (See Gen.1:28 note 5).

Scofield Note 5 (1:28 And God blessed them...) The First Dispensation: Innocency. Man was created in innocency, placed in a perfect environment, subjected to an absolutely simple test, and warned of the consequence of disobedience. The woman fell through pride; the man deliberately. 1 Timothy 2:14 God restored His sinning creatures, but the dispensation of innocency ended in the judgment of the Expulsion Gen.3:24²

The Second Dispensation – Conscience

What were the rules after man was removed from the Garden of Eden? C. I. Scofield labeled the second dispensation “*Conscience.*” Therein man did what was right in his own mind. In the dispensation of conscience the first born man became the first first-degree murderer. Note particularly in that murder report, that man was not to take vengeance or retribution on Cain for his act of murder. Instead man had to answer for himself before a Holy God. Note also that a blood sacrifice was required in this age of conscience. Even if the learned

2 C. I. Scofield, “*The Scofield Reference Bible*”, Oxford University Press, Inc., 1909, public domain, pg 5, s.v. *Genesis 1:28 note 4 & 5.*

scholar cannot find it in Genesis chapter four, the Bible believer knows the principle well from Hebrews 9:22, “*And almost all things are by law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission (of sin).*”

How did this dispensation of conscience end?

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart (Gen 6:5-6).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the second dispensation:

Scofield Note 2 (3:23 Therefore the Lord God...) The Second Dispensation: Conscience. By disobedience man came to a personal and experimental knowledge of good and evil--of good as obedience, of evil as disobedience to the known will of God. Through that knowledge conscience awoke. Expelled from Eden and placed under the second, or ADAMIC COVENANT, man was responsible to do all known good, to abstain from all known evil, and to approach God through sacrifice. The result of this second testing of man is stated in Genesis 6:5 and the dispensation ended in the judgment of the Flood. Apparently "the east of the garden" Genesis 3:24 where were the cherubims and the flame, remained the place of worship through this second dispensation.³

The flood brought the second dispensation to an expedient end. A new dispensation would now begin.

The Third Dispensation – Government

When man's conscience before God was unable to keep him from evil, God installed a dispensation wherein man was accountable to

³ Ibid., pg 10, s.v. *Genesis 3:23 note 2.*

man to curb him from evil. C. I. Scofield labeled the third dispensation “*Government.*” Human government has three primary responsibilities in this endeavor, 1) to promote the good, 2) to punish the bad, and 3) to protect the innocent. These primary functions of a government are carried to our current day. It is intended to keep a restraint on man's depravity, iniquity and evil. It finds its root and basis in God's command,

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man (Gen 9:5-6).

Of course much more could be said about this dispensation, but consider that it did have other provisions, like shortened life spans, the eating of meat, and its tower of Babel consequence (Gen 6:3, 9:3, 11:3). Note also that this dispensation did not formally end, it just got dispersed to all the nations of the world when they dispersed with confounded languages. In that sense the role and principles of human government continue until today.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the third dispensation:

Scofield Note 1(Gen.8:21 ...the Lord said in his heart...) The Third Dispensation: Human Government. Under Conscience, as in Innocency, man utterly failed, and the judgment of the Flood marks the end of the second dispensation and the beginning of the third. The declaration of the Noachic Covenant subjects humanity to a new test. Its distinctive feature is the institution, for the first time, of human government--the government of man by man. The highest function of government is the judicial taking of life. All other governmental powers are implied in that. It follows that the third dispensation is distinctively that of human government. Man is responsible to govern the world for God. That responsibility rested upon the whole race, Jew and Gentile, until the failure of Israel under the Palestinian

Covenant (Deu 28.-30:1-10) brought the judgment of the Captivities, when "the times of the Gentiles" (See Luke 21:24; Rev.16:14) began, and the government of the world passed exclusively into Gentile hands ; Daniel 2:36-45; Luke 21:24; Acts 15:14-17. That both Israel and the Gentiles have governed for self, not God, is sadly apparent. The judgment of the confusion of tongues ended the racial testing; that of the captivities the Jewish; while the Gentile testing will end in the smiting of the Image (Dan. 2) and the judgment of the nations (Matt.25:31-46).⁴

Anyone can see this third dispensations initial, and then repeated failures on man's part. In any event there was a failure of government to restrain man's evil and God moves on to a new trial. The first three dispensations are applicable to all of mankind. The next two are applicable to a select group, God's chosen.

The Fourth Dispensation – Promise

With the failure of nations in curbing man from iniquity God chooses to construct one particular and peculiar nation and calls Abram as the father of this chosen nation. He gives Abram profound promises and Abram believes God. C. I. Scofield labeled the fourth dispensation "*Promise.*" Much more could be said about this dispensation of promise but suffice it to say some of the promises were unconditional and are yet to be fulfilled, i.e. Israel will occupy all of the promised land in peace and safety. The dispensation closes with the seed of Abraham still holding the promises. They have divided into twelve tribes of Israel, but they are in bondage in Egypt.

Dispensations are divinely ordered stewardships by which God reveals himself, reveals man's depravity, and reveals his longsuffering. It becomes increasingly apparent that every stewardship testing of man ends in man's failure. The fact that there are seven such stewardship tests emphasizes that God is giving man every opportunity to do right. Yet each dispensation ends in the abject failure of man.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the fourth dispensation:

4 Ibid., pg 16, s.v. *Genesis 8:21 note 1.*

Scofield Note 1(Gen 12:1 Now the Lord ...) The Fourth Dispensation: Promise. For Abraham, and his descendants it is evident that the Abrahamic Covenant (See Gen.15:18 note) made a great change. They became distinctively the heirs of *promise*. That covenant is wholly gracious and unconditional. The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing. In Egypt they lost their blessings, but not their covenant. The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex.19:8). Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine power brought them out of bondage (Ex.19:4) but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law. The Dispensation of Promise extends from Genesis 12:1 to Exodus 19:8, and was exclusively Israelitish. The “*dispensation*” must be distinguished from the “*covenant*”. The former is a mode of testing; the latter is everlasting because it is unconditional. The law did not abrogate the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal.3:15-18) but was an intermediate disciplinary dealing "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal.3:19-29; 4:1-7). Only the dispensation, as a testing of Israel, ended at the giving of the law.⁵

Of all the failed dispensations, the failure under this one, *Promise*, may have been more providentially driven than depravity driven, but it still depicts a failure. The failed *Innocence* dispensation brought death, The failed *Conscience* dispensations brought the destroying flood, the failed *Government* dispensation brought Babble, and the failed *Promise* dispensation ends in Israel's bondage. In the fifth dispensation God would lay down the law for his chosen nation Israel.

The Fifth Dispensation – Law

The promised seed of Abraham, which were to inherit God's promised land, were redeemed from bondage in Egypt and read the Law of God by God himself. This began the dispensation called *Law*.

5 Ibid., pg 20, s.v. *Genesis 12:1 note 1*.

The children of Israel agreed to obey all the laws of God. God agreed to bless them and give them all the promised land if they did. A quick read through the book of Judges confirms that they did not, and thus he did not.

It needs to be clarified that the law was only given to the promised seed of Abraham, i.e. the twelve tribes of Israel. It was not given to Gentile nations. It was not given as a model law for Gentile nations to pattern their laws after, and it was not given as a model law for the Christians, or the pious, or the religious. It was given to keep Israel a holy and a peculiar people in all the earth (Exo 19:5, Deut 14:2, 26:18, Psalm 135:4). The severe penalties of death by stoning were given so that this holy, peculiar people could “put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear” (Deut 21:21, cf 17:17, 19:19, 22:21, 24:7).

Consternation is dolled out to Christians who do not understand the dispensations, this dispensation particularly, and this purpose of the law. First because many religionists and “*Clergy*”⁶ construct some form of works salvation where they pick a few choice laws and disregard others. Second because Christians themselves are confused and troubled about God having a man stoned because he picked up sticks on a Sabbath (Num 15:32-36). And third because the world mocks the Christian because he does not know how to explain the conflict between law and grace. Such consternation is relieved when one understands the realities of the dispensation of law. It is for Israel's peculiarity and for Gentiles learning (Gal 3:24-25⁷).

Although the law, given to God's chosen nation Israel, is not set as a model for other nations to follow there are many moral principles and civil laws which are exemplary models for other Gentile nations. Many of our US laws are based on God's laws for Israel. Our Creator's requirements for moral right and wrong are discernible. Criminal laws for murder and manslaughter, civil laws for stealing, property damage and restitution can certainly find a place in our legal systems. But the death penalty punishments and the eye for an eye consideration must be left in their context for the dispensation of law and their focus on Israel's peculiarity. All of Israel's dietary laws, ceremonial laws, and

6 Recall that true Christianity has no clergy, or laity, or Nicolaitans, cf Rev 2:6, 15.

7 Gal 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

other laws designed to keep Israel a peculiar people must be kept in their proper context, in order to rightly divide the Word of Truth.⁸

And so Israel was given a myriad of laws to keep her a holy people, a peculiar people, and a chosen nation of God. Israel failed, but God's promises remain centered on his chosen people. After her chastisements only one tribe remained. The Hebrews are now called Jews, because the only tribe left in Israel at the coming of her Messiah was Judah. The only begotten Son of God came as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to be the king of the Jews. But after being under law for fifteen hundred years (BC 1492 – 30 AD) the lawyers, scribes and Pharisees of the Jews rejected their king. Indeed they had the Romans crucify him under Roman law fulfilling many Bible prophecies about the Messiah (Greek *Christ*).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the fifth dispensation:

Scofield Note1 (Ex.19:8 ...we will do...) The Fifth Dispensation: Law. This dispensation extends from Sinai to Calvary--from Exodus to the Cross. The history of Israel in the wilderness and in the land is one long record of the violation of the law. The testing of the nation by law ended in the judgment of the Captivities, but the dispensation itself ended at the Cross.⁹

Although the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah and King, their King did not reject them. The promise of God is emphatic, the Christ will sit on the throne of David and rule and reign the twelve tribes of Israel as he said. But after they rejected him as their king, he goes to the Gentiles, and temporarily the Gentiles become his people. That makes for a separate and distinct dispensation, the dispensation of grace, the age of the church.

The Sixth Dispensation – Grace and Truth

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken

8 Ellen White (1827 – 1915) insisted that her followers keep the 5th commandment in order to keep their salvation. She also supposed, from her hundreds of visions, a bunch of peculiarities about the advents of Christ and her misguided followers came to be called Seven Day Adventists!

9 Ibid., pg 94, s.v. *Exodus 19:8 note 1*.

from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt 21:43)... *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17).

In the sixth dispensation the promises that were made to the Jews are temporarily set aside and God's grace was extended to all people. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith"* (Eph 2:8a) is the hallmark of this dispensation. The salvation available in this dispensation differs from any other: individual's are Converted – Justified – Quickened – Indwelt – and Immersed-in-Christ (Matt.18:3, Rom.5:1, Eph.2:1, Rom.8:9, Rom.6:3). They are consequently sealed by the Holy Spirit of God and that new-birth, salvation, conversion, cannot be undone. It has been said, "In the Old Testament God made a temple for the people, in the New Testament God makes a people for his temple"¹⁰. A whole volume of this systematic theology deals with soteriology. Suffice it to say here that it has never been easier for man to be in a right relationship with his Creator, Jehovah God, and yet this dispensation of Grace and Truth (John 1:17) is destined to end *"as it was in the days of Noe,... as it was in the days of Lot..."* (Luke 17:26, 28).

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the sixth dispensation:

Scofield Note 1,2,3 (John 1:17 Grace. Summary)

(1) Grace is "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man. . . not by works of righteousness which we have done (Tit.3:4 - 5).

It is, therefore, constantly set in contrast to law, under which God demands righteousness from man, as, under grace, he gives righteousness to man (Rom.3:21 - 22; 8:4; Phil.3:9). Law is connected with Moses and works; grace with Christ and faith (John 1:17; Rom.10:4-10). Law blesses the good; grace saves the bad (Ex.19:5; Eph.2:1-9). Law demands that blessings be earned; grace is a free gift (Deut.28:1-6; Eph.2:8; Rom.4:4- 5).

(2) As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom.3:24-26, 4:24 - 25). The point of

¹⁰ This was a well rehearsed thought of noted evangelist Dr. Laren Dawson, who had and heard more recordings of fundamental preachers of the gospel than any other evangelist.

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 (John 1:12 - 13; 3:36; Matt. 21:37; 22:24; John 15:22, 25; Heb.1:2; 1John 5:10-12). The immediate result of this testing was the rejection of Christ by the Jews, and His crucifixion by Jew and Gentile (Acts 4:27). The predicted end of the testing of man under grace is the apostasy of the professing church (See "Apostasy" 2Tim.3:1-8 note) and the resultant apocalyptic judgments.

(3) Grace has a twofold manifestation: in salvation (Rom.3:24, refs) and in the walk and service of the saved (Rom.6:15, refs).¹¹

The dispensation of grace will come to an end, and it will end in a failure of mankind. It is man's failure in accepting God's simple plan of salvation (Heb 2:3). The ending of the sixth dispensation and the beginning of the seventh and final dispensation is really the beginning of a Biblical eschatology. The doctrine of last things includes the closing of the Church age, called the dispensation of Grace and Truth, and the ushering in of the last dispensation.

The Seventh Dispensation – The Kingdom

*“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: **and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end**”* (Luke 1:31-33 emphasis added). *“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever**”* (Rev.11:15 emphasis added). *“And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**”* (Rev 19:16 emphasis added).

¹¹ Ibid., pg 1115, s.v. *John 1:17 note 1,2,3.*

It has been resoundingly promised that the Jewish Messiah (Greek *Christ*) would be the King of the Jews, i.e. the King of Israel, who sits on the throne of David. That fact is hated by Satan and refuted with tenacity by the Roman Catholic Church and her children. The despise of that coming kingdom has freely flowed into the doctrine of the Roman reformers. The persistence of the denial has caused the rejection of all dispensational teaching in the wide gate and broad path of Christendom. That broad path is called “*supersessionism*” and it is unfortunate that so many Baptists are ignorant of its devices.

A study of Biblical eschatology will center on the fact that this kingdom will be ushered in at the second advent of Christ. It will last for the thousand years that Christ promised in Revelation chapter twenty, so it is called the “*Millennial Kingdom*.” It will be preceded by a judgment of the nations which will end “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24¹²) and be called the seven year tribulation and the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan 9:24). This Great Tribulation has 144 thousand virgin males (Rev. 14:1-5), from the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev.7:2-8), preaching the gospel. It will not be the church preaching the gospel during this seven year transition period, it will be these 144 thousand virgin male followers of the Lamb (Rev 14:4). The Church is removed in a pretribulation rapture, else they would be in competition with the 144 thousand Jews. Again the whole key to understanding “*the things which shall be hereafter*” requires that one believe in the Millennial Reign of Christ as the seventh dispensation of the Holy Bible.

C. I. Scofield provides this concise explanation of the seventh dispensation:

Scofield Note 3 (Eph 1:10 ...dispensation of the fullness of times...) The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. This, the seventh and last of the ordered ages which condition human life on the earth, is identical with the kingdom covenanted to David (2Sam. 7:8-17; Zech. 12:8).

Summary; (Luke 1:31-33; 1Cor. 15:24 Summary) and gathers into itself under Christ all past "times":

(1) The time of oppression and misrule ends by Christ

12 Luke 21:24 *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

taking His kingdom (Isa. 11:3 - 4).

(2) The time of testimony and divine forbearance ends in judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30 - 31; Rev. 20:7-15).

(3) The time of toil ends in rest and reward (2Thes. 1:6 - 7).

(4) The time of suffering ends in glory (Rom. 8:17 - 18).

(5) The time of Israel's blindness and chastisement ends in restoration and conversion (Rom. 11:25-27; Ezek. 39:25-29).

(6) The times of the Gentiles end in the smiting of the image and the setting up of the kingdom of the heavens (Dan 2:34 - 35; Rev. 19:15-21).

(7) The time of creation's thralldom ends in deliverance at the manifestation of the sons of God (Gen. 3:17; Isa. 11:6-8; Rom. 8:19-21).¹³

But even the Kingdom age, where Christ physically rules and reigns over the whole world, ends with an insurrection. That insurgence is short lived and mankind steps off into eternity and streets of gold. This short survey of the seven dispensations builds the framework for the study the stewardships of man in anthropology, the study of the church age in ecclesiology, and the study of last things in eschatology. Christendom's many misunderstandings of the Bible and its end times comes from those who have rejected dispensationalism and embraced supersessionism, i.e. Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology. Be careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth in these areas, and dispensationalism is key to the divisions.

As was stated previous, grasping these dispensations, these great spiritual divides in God's dealings with man, these stewardship tests of mankind, is key to rightly dividing the word of truth. It is paramount for comprehending anthropology, ecclesiology and eschatology in ones systematic theology. It is, consequentially, covered in Volume 8 Anthropology, Volume 9 Ecclesiology, and Volume 11 Eschatology. May God richly bless the student of Scripture that comprehends these great divides.

¹³ Ibid., pg 1250, s.v. *Eph 1:10 note 3.*

Dispensational's Alternative, Supersessionism

Supersessionism is a big word that simply captures the belief that the Catholic Church completely replaces Israel. Its main tenets are found in Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology. One cannot comprehend a Biblical doctrine of the church or of the last things while holding to these ideological moorings that the Catholic Church is the centerpiece for all Bible revelation and all Bible prophecy. The flaws of supersessionism are rehearsed and exposed in this essay.

The denial of the Bible's dispensational teachings started with the Roman Church. After the annihilation of the Jews, and Jerusalem in 70 AD. Catholic Church Fathers Saint Clement of Alexandria (150 – 215 AD), and his student Saint Origen of Alexandria (184 – 253 AD) supposed that Judaism was gone forever, and supposed that the Church (they supposed it to be *catholic*) should thus absorb all the promises given to the Jews. Given that the Bible clearly promised the regathering of Israel, and their inheriting the Promised Land, this would have been an impossible task, but Saint Origen, known as the Father of the Allegorical Method, found a way to dismiss any literal rendering of Scripture whenever it pleased “the Catholic Church.” Consequently the allegorical method of hermeneutics has been the mainstay of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformers to this day.

Supersessionism, Replacement Theology, and Covenant Theology are so brazenly unBiblical that it is often an embarrassment to claim it's tenets publicly. A less toxic summary of supersessionism is expressed by the neo-evangelicals who spend their days tip-toeing around it and pretending that it is not so bad. Michael J. Vlach, writing in a journal for John MacArthur's Masters Seminary, tries to back away from the toxicity by saying:

Replacement theology or supersessionism is not a ‘one size fits all’ perspective. There are variations within this view. Punitive supersessionism emphasizes Israel’s disobedience as the reason for its displacement as the people of God. Economic supersessionism emphasizes that national Israel’s role as the people of God expired with the coming of the New Testament church. Structural

supersessionism is an approach to the canon that minimizes the role of the Hebrew scriptures. Within supersessionism strong and mild forms are discernible. Strong supersessionism does not believe in a future salvation or restoration of Israel. Mild supersessionism believes in a salvation of the nation Israel but no restoration to a place of prominence.¹⁴

The whole concept of Covenant Theology, with its basis in supersessionism, is likewise an embarrassment to those who would defend it against Bible truth. Consequently there is little written by its proponents, who defend it with tradition, i.e. it is orthodox, (and catholic) and “we” have always believed this way. They will paint dispensationalists and teachings about the rapture as a Johnny-Come-Lately doctrine that could not possibly be true.

Who better to refute Covenant Theology than a Friends of Israel executive director and author, and in his writing, James Showers also delineates the facts of Covenant Theology which oftentimes even its proponents fail to mention. It is worthwhile in this effort on ecclesiology and eschatology to include all three parts and the conclusions of Dr. Shower's “The Facts And Flaws of Covenant Theology.”¹⁵ That article is copied in its entirety in *A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century*, Vol 9 Ecclesiology, Chapter 2, page 36-

14 Michael J. Vlach, “VARIOUS FORMS OF REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY”, TMSJ 20/1 (Spring 2009) 57-69, <https://legacy.tms.edu/JournalIssue.aspx?year=2009> (accessed 10/29/2016) . [Michael J. Vlach is a Ph.D. and Assistant Professor of Theology at Dr. John MacArthur's Masters Seminary. The neo-evangelical positions of Masters Seminary do not represent the views of this author.]

15 James Showers, “Facts and Flaws of Covenant Theology”, from The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843, www.foi.org/free-resources/article/facts-and-flaws-covenant-theology-part1/...part-2/...part-3/...conclusion/ (accessed 9/9/2016). [James A. Showers is executive director for The Friends of Israel. Permission to copy and distribute this material is granted provided that you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction or alter the wording in any way. Please contact The Friends of Israel if you are making more than 100 physical copies. Proper accreditation must be visible on each copy. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred (where applicable). Any exceptions to the above must be formally approved by The Friends of Israel. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: From The Friends of Israel. Website: www.foi.org . E-mail: webmaster@foi.org. Toll free: 1-800-257-7843.]

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About the Author

Pastor Ed Rice is a retired USAF Systems Engineer surrendered to be a Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saved in 1960 at the age of eight he grew up tutored in the Scriptures through Tuscorora Baptist Church in Addison NY, where he married his high-school sweetheart Beverly Cook Rice. Drafted into the military off of the dairy farm in 1972, Ed and Bev Rice raised 3 boys while serving as a Missile Technician in the USAF. After completing a USAF AECF bootstrap program he graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned in the USAF where he served until 1995 as a systems engineer and weapons integration specialist at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and Rome Laboratories, Rome NY. He finished his Masters degree in Electrical Engineering through The Air Force Institute of Technology in 1990.

After being commissioned as a USAF officer in 1982 he pursued his systems engineering work in several classified research and development programs. While moving around the USA in his twenty three year military career he was a youth pastor and associate pastor in Independent Baptist Churches near his station. In 1995 he became Captain Rice, USAF retired, and surrendered to be a Baptist Pastor.

In 1998 he took the senior pastorate at Good Samaritan Baptist Church, in Dresden, New York where he pursued his theological studies at Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary. At LBU Pastor Rice received his second masters degree in 2013, and his PhD in Theology in 2017. His son Michael is US Army retired living near Fort Hood Texas, Shane is an Independent Baptist Missionary pastoring Chiesa Biblica Battista, Mazara Del Vallo, Italy, and Matthew is serving our Lord Jesus Christ near Hamilton NY. Capt Rice has spent seven years teaching math and science with the ABeka Christian High School Curriculum, and seven years teaching college mathematics, a love of his life, at community colleges near his church.

Dr. Rice's staunch belief in the preserved accuracy of the inspired Scriptures and his extensive background in systems engineering make him uniquely qualified to assemble "A Systematic Theology for the 21st Century."

Personal Testimony of Pastor Edward Rice.

I was saved in 1960 at the age of eight. My father and mother were saved and founding members of Fellowship Baptist Church in Gang Mills New York. In 1958 my dad, Levi O. Rice, an agnostic, was invited by Cecil Palm to be a founding member of that church; both of my parents were born-again-saved two weeks later. My mother, Doris was converted from Roman Catholicism, and became a Christian. She stopped her Roman penance and practiced Bible repentance, stopped praying to Mary and called upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save her. She was thus converted from Roman Catholicism to the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone needs converted from something. Mom and Dad were now born again, and two years later I was saved in revival services with Evangelist Dale and Opel Linbaugh. Opel cut the flannel graph burden of sin off little Christian's back in her Pilgrim's Progress presentation, and I was born-again-saved before it hit the basement floor. In 1995 I retired from the USAF as a systems engineer and became an ordained Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3). Being converted is quite like a new birth, Jesus said so. If you have not been converted you should trust Christ today, and you must tell him that that is your intent. (see Romans 10:9-13).