

The Defect of Dispensationalism – Chapter 1

Here are some views of Premillennial Dispensationalists. The book we are studying disagrees with all of these views, however P. Andrew Sandlin focuses primarily on point 1.

1. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that God deals with “National (ethnic) Israel” as His people in a way different and separate from The Church as His people.
2. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that the Church is important during the Church Age. Prior to, and after *Her role*, national Israel is the determiner of God’s “time clock” for prophetic events. (Furthermore, the name “dispensation” comes from the approach taken toward bible interpretation as a whole. Dispensationalists divide Scripture into a series of ages where God rules differently in each age.)
3. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that The Great Tribulation is the event that transitions from the Church to National Israel. It will last for seven years.
4. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes in a Rapture of the Church that will occur before during or at the end of the Great Tribulation, depending upon the position of the teacher you follow (a.k.a. pre-trib, mid-trib, and post-trib).
5. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes this means that Jesus will return partially – His coming in the clouds – in order to Rapture (rescue) the Church from tribulation.
6. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes the Antichrist will arise as an historical man and will rule very wickedly during the Great Tribulation. His greatest attack will come upon National (ethnic) Israel.
7. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes in a rebuilt Temple.
8. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes in a re-established priesthood and sacrificial system.
9. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that Jesus 2nd Coming will put an end to the Great Tribulation and defeat the Antichrist.
10. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that Jesus will then set up his throne in Jerusalem to rule from there. His people will rule with him, while non-believers will continue upon the earth and submit themselves (however reluctantly) to his kingship.
11. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes the Pre- in Premillennialism means that Jesus 2nd coming occurs prior (pre-) His 1000 Year Millennial reign.
12. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes this rulership of Jesus will last 1000 Years (the Millennium reign). And things will become like paradise – the lion will lay with the wolf; a small child will put his hand into a vipers’ nest without casualty, people will live a very long time, etc.
13. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that Satan will be bound in a pit during this 1000 year reign of Jesus.
14. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that, at the end of the 1000 years, there will be a great revolt against Jesus led by Satan himself – who God released from the pit – to one last time deceive the nations.
15. Premillennial Dispensationalism believes that Jesus Christ will destroy the revolt of Satan and the nations that follow him. Jesus will then judge the world and usher in the eternal state. Everlasting Paradise and everlasting Lake of Fire.

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pp. 1-2

a. Sandlin points out how Premillennial Dispensationalism has gone out of style with most seminaries who previously taught it. However it is still *popular* among the masses.

pp. 2-4

b. Sandlin points out the irony of Dispensationalists. They deny the OT Law but claim to literally interpret OT prophecy. Sandlin writes, “There is a powerful reason for this: Dispensationalism is primarily an eschatological system, not an ethical system. It is a philosophy of history, not a program of behavior.”

c. The New Testament does just the opposite. Jesus and the Apostles uphold the OT Law but do not, in large measure, interpret OT prophecy literally.

d. The New Testament writers interpret and clarify the meaning of the OT for the Church. However, it is not according to a cardboard literalistic scheme. Dispensationalists insist on “literalness” which is an external and alien scheme to the NT writers.

pp. 4-5

e. Sandlin’s main argument against the Premillennial Dispensationalist (PD) has to do with the foundation of their system. One essential cornerstone: According to the NT, who are God’s people? This is Sandlin’s focus because one of PD’s leading defenders, Charles Ryrie, stated: “The essence of dispensationalism, then, is the distinction between Israel and the Church.” Sandlin spends the rest of the Chapter obliterating that distinction.

pp. 5-7

f. Argument 1: The one olive tree, of Romans 11:13-24, indicates there can only be one people. The olive tree combines both ethnic Jew and Gentile into the Church of Jesus Christ. The Jewish “natural branches” and Gentile “wild branches grafted into the tree” grow together as one olive tree. God offers only one single way of redemption for all peoples, languages, and nations.

pp. 7-12

g. Argument 2: The covenant God made with Abraham applies to both Jew and Gentile. The key ingredient is faith. Dispensationalists focus on the physical seed of Abraham, whereas Jesus and the Apostles argue that Abraham’s seed is determined fundamentally by religion, not race.

h. Galatians 3 is a chapter Sandlin posits as important to our understand the make-up of the people of God. In verses 27-29, Paul writes, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”

i. Jesus did not identify the seed of Abraham with mere physical lineage either. John 8:39-40 records, “They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.”

j. Sandlin asserts that believing Gentiles are entitled to all the promises given to Abraham as the believing Jews are entitled.

pp. 12-15

k. Argument 3: The new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah and Ezekiel are fulfilled in our present day. Both appeared to be intended for ethnic physical Israel. The NT applies the new covenant to spiritual Israel.

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l. Jesus established the new covenant by sacrament at the Last Supper. See Luke 22:20, “And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”

m. The Lord’s Supper was routinely celebrated by Gentile Churches (1 Corinthians 11:20-34).

n. The Apostle Paul calls himself a minister of the new covenant (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). He contrasts his ministry with Moses’ ministry. It says there, “Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

o. The book of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31, a blatant new covenant prophecy, and then applies it in comparison to the new covenant of Jesus Christ. Following on the heels of the Jeremiah prophecy, the writer of Hebrews adds, “In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” This he writes referring to the still standing Temple along with its sacrifices and the nation of Israel itself. (See Hebrews 8:13)

p. Sandlin contends, the new covenant church has replaced old covenant Israel.

pp. 15-17

q. Argument 4: David’s rebuilt tabernacle is considered by the NT church to have already been rebuilt.

r. The passage from Amos 9 is quoted during the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council meeting. The meeting was over concern that the Gentiles should be circumcised and become Jews before they can be admitted into Jesus Christ’s Church. This idea was refuted by Paul and Peter and others, including James who quotes from the Amos passage.

s. Amos 9:11-12 says, “‘In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,’ declares the LORD who does this.”

t. James contends that the Gentiles are being brought in because Jesus has restored David’s once fallen booth (or ruling household). They do not require circumcision because they are invited in as they are.

u. Sandlin writes, “God was dismantling the physical house of David precisely while he was rebuilding the true house of David.” See page 17.

pp. 17-20

v. Argument 5: The NT calls believing Gentiles, true Jews.

w. On passage quoted from is Romans 9:22-26. It says, “What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’” “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

x. Gentiles are the vessels of mercy name here. They are now called “sons of the living God.”

y. The new covenant Church (composed of faithful Jews and Gentiles) has replaced unbelieving, rebellious old covenant ethnic Israel.

z. People from all races can now be considered spiritual Jews.