

DISPENSATIONALISM (58)

QUESTION #18 – Is the job of the church in this dispensation to reconstruct and dominate this world?

Those who adhere to Dominion theology say that the purpose of Christianity is to rule over this world. They believe that their great commission to do this comes from Genesis 1:26-28.

From this passage the conclusion is drawn that the purpose of Christians is to exercise dominion over the earth and God is waiting for His people to take charge and take over. They are to challenge the rulers of the world and take the “steering wheel from them” (Wayne House, Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology: A Blessing or Curse?*, p. 140)

Here is where dispensational theology and eschatology becomes critical. We believe that there will be a time when God and His people will rule over the world. We believe they will rule over the social, political, moral, economic and spiritual realms successfully. That time will be in the 1,000 year millennium, when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth (Rev. 20:1-7). During that time Satan will be bound and righteousness will reign.

Those who hold to Dominion Theology believe this mandate to rule and reign over the earth is for right now and that it is our responsibility to overthrow that which prevents this and take continual charge in this present age.

But upon careful reading of Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8:6-8, we observe that **the mandate given by God to man was a mandate to rule over the earth and animals and not a mandate to rule over men.**

We are not given a mandate to conquer and dominate the world, as a Reconstructionist would have us believe. Dominion Theology misses this point. Our calling is not for world conquest. Our calling is not Christian politics so we can dominate men, families, education, institutions, courts and governments.

If this were the calling for this Grace Age, then Paul missed it. He said we were to submit ourselves to governing authorities who have been given their authority from God and that by doing that we demonstrate grace to the world (Titus 2:1-11).

Dr. Wayne House and Thomas Ice really get at the heart of this when they ask, “Where does the Bible teach that we, not Christ, are the instruments to establish Christ’s earthly Kingdom? Where does the Bible say that we are to be involved in the social, political and economic aspects of society during the church age in the way Reconstructionists affirm? Failure to answer such questions reveals the weakness of Christian Reconstructionist dogma when examined under the light of Scriptures alone” (*Ibid.*, p. 150).

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When asked for a passage to prove that the Church has the responsibility to take over the world, the Reconstructionist typically cites Genesis 1:26-30 and then follows that up with Great Commission passages such as Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:20-23; Acts 1:3-8.

But when we carefully examine those N.T. passages, they are not teaching that the job of the believer is to go into the entire world and take over the world and put it back under the O.T. law; it is a mandate to go and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the grace of God.

The commission was to go and preach to people that Jesus Christ could do something about their sin problem and bring about the forgiveness of sins. As accurately said, “Worldwide evangelism is the calling of the church in this age, not cultural Christianization” (*Ibid.*, p. 160).

QUESTION #19 – What is Progressive Dispensationalism?

Recently a new variation of dispensationalism has developed that seems to try to bridge the gap between covenant Theology and Dispensationalism and it is called “Progressive Dispensationalism.”

This new form of dispensationalism surfaced in the 1990’s. It has many common beliefs with normal dispensationalism. It believes in a distinction between Israel and the Church. It believes in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. It believes in a seven year literal Tribulation and a 1,000 year millennium in which Jesus Christ will reign.

The main difference between normal dispensationalism and progressive dispensationalism is that it attempts to connect the Church to the covenants given to Israel, specifically the New Covenant.

Now the New Covenant that is promised to Israel is stated in one main passage - **Jeremiah 31:31-34**. It is mentioned in Isaiah 61:8. It is very clear from the Jeremiah passage that this covenant does have to do with Israel.

The problem with Progressive Dispensationalism is that it attempts to merge the Church into the covenant promises to Israel based on statements in Hebrews 8:8-12.

Dr. Walvoord said the solution to all of this hinges on three issues:

- 1) Are promises of the New Covenant to Israel being fulfilled in the present age?
- 2) How does the N.T. use the term “new Covenant”?
- 3) What is the explicit teaching in the New Testament about the New Covenant?

(*The New Covenant with Israel*, p. 3)