

Proposed Perspectives for Dispensational Theology

Category	Classical	Mid-Acts	Traditional	Soft-Progressive	Hard-Progressive
Years	1830’s-1950’s	1950’s-Present	1960’s-Present	1980’s-Present	1980’s-Present
Adherents	John Darby, Clarence Larkin, Cyrus Scofield, Lewis Chafer, James Brookes, Harry Ironside	Harry Bultema, Cornelius Stam, Charles Baker, J.C. O’Hair, Dale S. Dewitt	Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord, Alva McClain, Cory Marsh, Mark Snoeberger, Dwight Pentecost, John MacArthur [<i>Leaky</i>], James Fazio, Arnold Fruchtenbaum	Robert Saucy, Michael Vlach, Paul Henebury [<i>Biblical Covenantalist</i>], John Feinberg, Peter Goeman	Darrell Bock, Craig Blaising, Bruce Ware, C. Marvin Pate
Continuity/Discontinuity	Prioritizes Discontinuity	Prioritizes Discontinuity	Discontinuity and Continuity	Discontinuity and Continuity	Discontinuity and Continuity
Dispensations	3-8	4-7	7-12	Variable / de-emphasized	4
General Hermeneutics	Literal priority with occasional spiritual or typological application	Literal, grammatical-historical; Pauline priority	Consistent literal, grammatical-historical; typology only where the NT makes explicit	Consistent literal, grammatical-historical; more flexibility on typology	Literal, grammatical-historical + complementary hermeneutic. Emphasis on 3 levels of reading: Historical-Exegetical, Biblical-Theological, Canonical-Systematic
Typology	Minimal or Illustrative rather than prophetic	Minimal to None	Retrospective only (NT-authorized)	Retrospective recognition of typology without present covenant fulfillment	Prospective and prophetic
Governing Factor(s)	Prioritizes Dispensations	Prioritizes Dispensations	Prioritizes Dispensations, Incorporates Kingdom & Covenant	Prioritizes Kingdom, Covenant, Redemption, New Creation while Dispensations are de-emphasized	Attempts to Prioritizes Kingdom, Covenant, Redemption, New Creation, and Dispensations
Israel/Church	<i>Dualism</i> - Sharp, eternal, and absolute distinction between Israel and the Church. Israel is God’s earthly people. The Church is God’s heavenly people. The Church includes believing Jews and Gentiles	<i>Dualism</i> - Sharp, eternal, and absolute distinction between Israel and the Church. Israel is God’s earthly people. The Church is God’s heavenly people. The Church includes believing Jews and Gentiles	Israel is distinct from the Church, but the Church includes believing Jews in this present age. Dualism has largely been dropped	Israel is distinct from the Church, but the Church includes believing Jews in this present age	Israel is distinct from the Church, but the Church includes believing Jews in this present age
Israel’s Restoration	Political, territorial, future; grounded in unconditional covenants	Political, territorial, future; grounded in unconditional covenants	Political, territorial, future; grounded in unconditional covenants	Political, territorial, future; grounded in unconditional covenants with Christological emphasis	Political, territorial, future; grounded in unconditional covenants with Christological emphasis
Kingdom	Kingdom of God is <i>distinct</i> from the Kingdom of Heaven	Kingdom of God is the <i>same</i> as the Kingdom of Heaven (terminological) though some older theologians did see the Kingdom of	Kingdom of God is the <i>same</i> as the Kingdom of Heaven (terminological) Messiah’s Davidic/Mediatorial Kingdom is	Kingdom of God is the <i>same</i> as the Kingdom of Heaven (terminological) Messiah’s Davidic/Mediatorial Kingdom	Kingdom of God is the <i>same</i> as the Kingdom of Heaven (terminological) Messiah’s Davidic/Mediatorial

	Messiah’s Davidic/Mediatorial Kingdom is entirely future	God as <i>distinct</i> from the Kingdom of Heaven Messiah’s Davidic/Mediatorial Kingdom is entirely future	entirely future, while there might be some form of the <i>Mystery/Spiritual</i> kingdom present during the Church age	is entirely future, while there might be some form of the <i>Mystery/Spiritual</i> kingdom present during the Church age	Kingdom has been inaugurated (already) but there is also a future Kingdom on Earth (not yet) at the Messiah’s Second Coming
Church/Kingdom Relationship	The Church <i>may</i> have some connection to the present reality of the Kingdom of Heaven	Church is entirely distinct from the Kingdom program	Church related to kingdom blessings, not reign	Church participates spiritually in kingdom blessings, not political rule	Church participates in Christ’s inaugurated reign
Church Present Age	Parenthesis/Intercalation	Parenthesis/Intercalation	Parenthesis/Intercalation	Continuation of Redemptive-Historical Program, not a Parenthesis/Intercalation	Continuation of Redemptive-Historical Program, not a Parenthesis/Intercalation
Covenants	(8) Edenic— <i>Similar to the Covenant of Works</i> , Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, New	(6) Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, New	(6) Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, New	(6) Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Priestly, Davidic, New	(5) Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New
New Covenant	<i>Three views</i> : [1] Exclusively for Israel [2] Two new covenants, one for Israel and one for the church [3] Literally for Israel & Spiritually for the Church	<i>One view</i> : [1] Exclusively for Israel, the church does not partake in the new covenant	<i>Four views</i> : [1] Exclusively for Israel [2] Two new covenants, one for Israel and one for the church [3] Church Partially Fulfills the New Covenant Now; Israel Completely Fulfills in the Future [4] The Church Presently Participates in the New Covenant, Israel Fulfills the New Covenant in the Future	<i>Three views</i> : [1] Church Partially Fulfills the New Covenant Now; Israel Completely Fulfills in the Future [2] The Church Presently Participates in the New Covenant, Israel Fulfills the New Covenant in the Future [3] New Covenant is given to Israel, the Church becomes an added referent to the New Covenant in Christ’s blood	<i>One view</i> : [1] Church Partially Fulfills the New Covenant Now; Israel Completely Fulfills in the Future
Inaugurated Eschatology	No	No	No	Yes – Inaugurated Eschatology, No – Inaugurated Davidic Kingdom	Yes – Inaugurated Eschatology, Yes – Inaugurated Davidic Kingdom