

Biblical Dispensationalism

Jim McGowan, MTS, Th.D.

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Biblical Dispensationalism

Review Session 9

False Charges Against Dispensationalism

<http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/dispens/dispensa.htm>

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Review Session 9

Outline

- 1) Dispensationalists Teach More Than One Way of Salvation.
- 2) Dispensationalists are Guilty of Antinomianism
- 3) Dispensationalists Teach that the Sermon on the Mount is Not for the Church Today – “TRUE” and “FALSE”!
- 4) Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought and that the Church is “Plan B” in God's program.
- 5) Dispensationalism is a ‘New’ doctrine.
- 6) Dispensationalism Teaches a ‘Secret Rapture’.
- 7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.
- 8) Dispensationalists revere C. I. Scofield but he was an immoral man, not qualified to be a spiritual leader.

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4) **Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought...the Church is "Plan B" in God's program.**

Straw Man Fallacy


A straw man fallacy occurs when someone takes another person's argument or point, **distorts it or exaggerates it in some kind of extreme way**, and then attacks the **extreme distortion**, as if that is really the claim the first person is making.




The graphic shows the words "STRAW MAN FALLACY" in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a white background. To the right of the text is a small, simple drawing of a straw man figure, which is a classic symbol for a distorted or exaggerated version of an argument.

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4) **Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought...the Church is "Plan B" in God's program.**



• **Philip Mauro** – “When we press the vital question, what, in case the offer had been accepted, would have become of the Cross of Calvary and the atonement for the sins of the world?” (*The Gospel of the Kingdom with an Examination of Modern Dispensationalism*, p. 23).



• **O.T. Allis** – “If the Jews had accepted the kingdom would there have been any place, any necessity for the cross?” (*Prophecy and the Church*, p. 75).



The graphic shows the words "STRAW MAN FALLACY" in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a white background. To the right of the text is a small, simple drawing of a straw man figure, which is a classic symbol for a distorted or exaggerated version of an argument.


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4) Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought...the Church is "Plan B" in God's program.

Dispensationalists **know and teach that:**

- the cross of Christ is **central** and is the **focal point** of all history.
- Christ was the sacrifice **Lamb**. (John 1:29; Rev. 13:8).
- the **centrality** of the cross of our Savior and that we should glory or boast in nothing else (Gal. 6:14; 1 Cor. 2:2).



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John 1:29

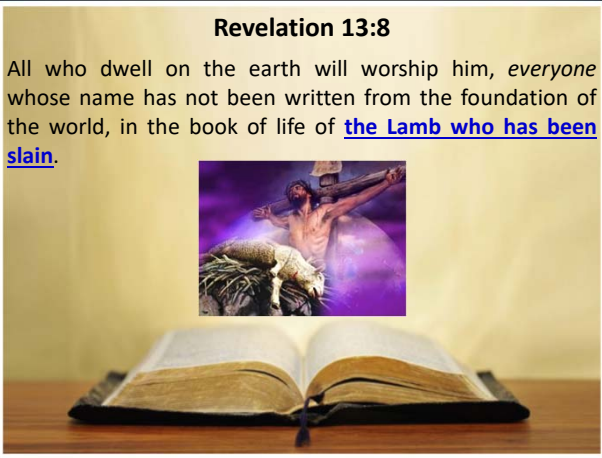
The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, **the Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!"



8

Revelation 13:8


All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of **the Lamb who has been slain**.



9

Galatians 6:14
¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

1 Corinthians 2:22
For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.



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4) Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought...the Church is "Plan B" in God's program.

- R.C. Sproul Jr. – *"We're not dispensationalists here... We believe that the church is essentially Israel. We believe that the answer to, "What about the Jews?" is, "Here we are." We deny that the church is God's "plan B." We deny that we are living in God's redemptive parenthesis, and that sometime in the next three, no two, no eight, no seven years, He'll get back to His real work, dealing with the Jews"*.



Table Talk magazine, published by Ligonier Ministries, Spring of 1999.

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4) Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought...the Church is "Plan B" in God's program.

- Hebrew Christian scholar, Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum responded to Sproul's outlandish statement with this piercing riposte: *"Too bad you were not declaring this on the streets of Berlin around 1941."*




Andrew D. Robinson, author of *Israel Betrayed*, quoted in the Summer 2018 edition of the Ariel Ministries Magazine, Cover Story entitled, "A Doctrine of Demons" pgs. 10-13

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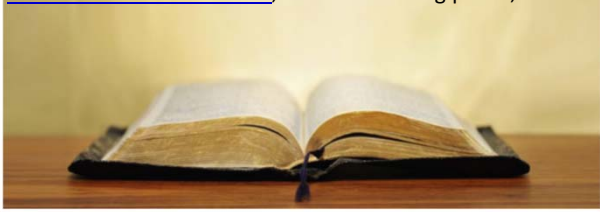
- Dispensationalists **NEVER** speak of the church being "Plan B". **"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18)**, and this includes His **distinct plans** for Israel and the Church.
- The **"one new man"** (Eph. 2:15), the **"body of Christ"**, **"the Church"**, was a **"mystery"** not made known to man for ages and for generations (Ephesians 3:3-10; Colossians 1:26-27).



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Ephesians 2:13-15


¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, **so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man**, thus establishing peace,



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Ephesians 3:3-10

³ that **by revelation** there was made known to me the **mystery**, as I wrote before in brief. ⁴ By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the **mystery** of Christ, ⁵ which **in other generations was not made known** to the sons of men, as it has **now been revealed** to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶ to be specific, that **the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel**, ⁷ of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was . . .




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Ephesians 3:3-10

...given to me according to the working of His power.⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,⁹ and **to bring to light** what is the **administration** of the **mystery** which **for ages has been hidden in God** who created all things;¹⁰ 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.

οἰκονομία oikonomía - a spiritual dispensation, management, or economy



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“Mystery” Defined



“In the N.T, it [mystērion] denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. word), but that which, being **outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation**, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit.”

W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament Words (Nashville: Nelson, 1996), 424.

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4) Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought...the Church is "Plan B" in God's program.

“In almost 35 years since I have become a dispensationalist, I have never heard nor read of a dispensationalist teaching a **plan B scenario**. Yet opponents often present this straw man in their statement of what we supposedly believe. We believe that God's single plan has always included the Church, but He did not reveal the church age part of the plan in the Old Testament...Paul states specifically that the church age 'was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord' (verse 11). This is why **dispensationalists have never taught the so-called plan A and plan B theory** that critics suppose we hold. Dispensationalists have always taught that there is a single plan carried out in stages.”



Thomas Ice, "The Uniqueness of the Church," Pre-Trib Perspectives 8, no. 6 (September 2003): 4.

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Origin of the Universal Church – a “Mystery”

BEFORE CHRIST’S ASCENSION

- Matt 16:18 – future tense



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Origin of the Universal Church – a “Mystery”

AFTER CHRIST’S ASCENSION

- Eph 2:14-15; 3:9; Rom 16:25-26; Col 1:26-27 – mystery
- Eph 1:20-22 – Christ’s headship over church
- Eph 4:7-11 – spiritual gifts after Ascension
- 1 Cor. 12:13 – Spirit’s baptizing ministry
 - Acts 1:5 – to begin after Ascension
 - Acts 11:15-16 – began in the past
 - Acts 2 – only legitimate, biblical, place for beginning of Spirit’s baptizing ministry

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5) Dispensationalism is a 'New' doctrine.

Students of church history all recognize that vital basic truths of God's Word were lost for almost 1500 years and had to be rediscovered and recovered.

- God used the Reformation to recover **justification by faith, the supreme authority of the Bible and the priesthood of every believer, but it took until the 16th century!**
- Regrettably, however, the Reformers failed to make a clean break from other Roman Catholic errors such as:
 - 1) an allegorical approach to O.T. prophecies (Origin) &
 - 2) the Church is the Kingdom (Augustine).


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5) Dispensationalism is a 'New' doctrine.

- Given the facts of church history, it should not surprise us that New Testament **mystery truths**, relating to: 1) the nature of the Church and 2) God's dual program and purpose for this present age, were not rediscovered and recovered until the 19th and 20th centuries.
- So, if Dispensationalism can be attacked simply because it is new, then Covenant Theology, an outgrowth of the Reformation, not formally systematized until the 17th century by Johannes Cocceius, has the same weakness.




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**Charles Ryrie**
Dispensationalism, pgs. 215, 218

"Systematized Covenant theology is recent. ***It was not the expressed doctrine of the early church. It was never taught by church leaders in the Middle Ages. It was not even mentioned by the primary leaders of the Reformation.*** Indeed, Covenant theology as a system is only a little older than dispensationalism....Covenant theology ***does not appear*** in the writings of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, or Melancthon,... They had every opportunity to incorporate the covenant idea, but they did not. There were ***no references to Covenant theology*** in any of the great confessions of faith until the Westminster Confession in 1647, and even then Covenant theology was not as fully developed as it was later by Reformed theologians....Covenant theology is a . . .

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**Charles Ryrie**
Dispensationalism, pgs. 215, 218 (Cont'd)

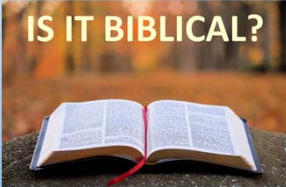
...***post-Reformation*** development in doctrine....Covenant theology is a refinement, and the refining did not antedate Darby by many years. Covenant theology cannot claim much more antiquity than dispensationalism....***If lack of antiquity is detrimental and refinement is disallowed for dispensationalism, then by the same two criteria Covenant theology is discredited.***



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5) Dispensationalism is a 'New' doctrine.

- ***The real issue is not whether a system of theology is new or ancient, but whether it is Biblical.***



- ***BTW, "The charge of newness was leveled long ago at the doctrine of the Reformers."*** (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, p. 71).

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6) Dispensationalism Teaches a 'Secret Rapture'.

What is the so-called "*secret rapture*"?

- It is the idea that Christ will come to take believers out of the world *before* His return with them at the Second Coming – usually just called the Rapture of the church:

"*Secret rapture*" is stereotypically used as a *pejorative* (expressing contempt and disapproval) by those who deny that the Rapture of the Church is *separate from* the Second Coming of Christ.


<https://www.gotquestions.org/secret-rapture.html>



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1 Cor. 15:51-52


⁵¹ Behold, I tell you *a mystery*; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.



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6) Dispensationalism Teaches a 'Secret Rapture'.

- Bible believers should be making known the glorious truth that *"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"* living believers will be changed and those who have died 'in Christ' will be raised (1 Thess. 4:13-18).



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1 Thess. 4:13-18

¹³ But *we do not want you to be uninformed*, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and. . .



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1 Thess. 4:13-18


... with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore *comfort one another with these words.*



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6) Dispensationalism Teaches a 'Secret Rapture'.



- Bible believers should be looking *expectantly* for this blessed and comforting and purifying hope (Titus 2:13)! *It's no secret, but it's a wonderful life-changing truth that our living Lord expects us to believe and share!*



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Titus 2:13

"...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus..."



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6) Dispensationalism Teaches a 'Secret Rapture'.



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END OF REVIEW



FINALLY

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False Charges Against Dispensationalism
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7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.

THE ISSUE:

Dispensational teaching insists that Jesus made a bona fide* offer of the kingdom to Israel. If Israel as a nation had truly repented, then the kingdom promised by all the prophets would have been established (Matt. 4:17).

**Bona fide means "made in good faith without fraud or deceit, sincere, genuine."*

43

7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.

THE FALSE CHARGE:

Covenant Theology erroneously claims that there is dishonesty in this teaching since God knew all along that the nation Israel would reject Jesus as the Messiah. It was obvious that God intended to fulfill the suffering servant Messiah prophecies, and He did. How then could it have been a bona fide offer?

**Bona fide means "made in good faith without fraud or deceit, sincere, genuine."*

44

7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.

THE DEFENSE:


The fact that God knows events ahead of time does not change the fact that it was a genuine offer.

- According to John 6:64, the Lord knows ahead of time those who will not believe on Him. Does this mean that His offer of the gospel to these people is not a genuine offer since He already knows that they will reject Him? Obviously not. Our Lord's sincere invitation to "come unto Me" is valid, even though the greater part of lost men refuse to come (John 5:40).

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John 6:64
"But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus **knew from the beginning** who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

John 5:39-40
³⁹ "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and **you are unwilling** to come to Me so that you may have life."



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7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.

- In Deuteronomy 28 God promises and offers great future blessings if the Children of Israel will obey Him and great future curses if they will disobey Him, even though according to Deuteronomy 31:16-29, **God knew ahead of time** that they would disobey.

In fact, this is why the greater part of Deuteronomy 28 (vv. 15-68), is about the curses. If the Children of Israel had obeyed, God would have continually blessed them. **It was a genuine offer!**

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Deuteronomy 31:16
The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and **this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land**, into the midst of which they are going, **and will forsake Me and break My covenant** which I have made with them. (see vv. 16-29)



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7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.


- **The offer of the Kingdom was conditional.** The realization of the Kingdom was, and will be, conditioned on Israel's repentance (Matthew 3:2). **Since Israel did not meet the condition, the Kingdom was not established.**
- **Was God then dishonest? Not at all!** He told the Israelites in advance, what they had to do (cf. Deut. 28). If God had established the Kingdom apart from Israel's repentance, then He would have been dishonest.

THERE IS
ONE THING
GOD CANNOT
DO: *lie.*


49

7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.

- There is no dishonesty on the part of God, because **God told us ahead of time that Israel would reject their Messiah** (Psalm 118:22; Isa. 53:1-3; Matthew 23:37).
God was not taken by surprise by the way the Jews responded to Christ at His first coming. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).




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A. W. Pink
A. W. Pink (2005). *The Prophetic Parables of Matthew Thirteen*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

"In [Daniel 2] verse 44 we are told, 'And in the days of these kings (the "kingdom" before referred to) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.'...Further details concerning it are given in Daniel 7:13, 14 . . . After Daniel, the voice of prophecy was soon silenced, and for four hundred years the people of Israel remained in a state of eager expectation, waiting for God to fulfill His promises. Next appeared John the Baptist, who took up the *kingdom* message just where the O. T. prophets had dropped it In Matthew 3:1, 2 we read,...

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A. W. Pink
A. W. Pink (2005). *The Prophetic Parables of Matthew*
Thirteen. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

...‘...Repent ye: for *the kingdom of heaven* is at hand’ — it was ‘at hand,’ because the King Himself was about to appear in the midst of the Jews. When John said, ‘*The kingdom of heaven* is at hand,’ what do you suppose his Jewish hearers understood by that expression? They had the whole of the O.T. in their hands, but *that* is *all* which they then had. Obviously, all their thoughts would naturally turn to that kingdom which the Son of Man was to receive in heaven at the hands of the Ancient of days.”

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James Ventilato
<http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/deityjv/allchaps.pdf>

“At our Lord’s first coming, the establishment of the kingdom of the heavens was indeed “at hand,” contingent upon the national repentance of Israel...this is in perfect accord with,...Daniel 9 and the 70 weeks (and other OT prophecies). For Daniel 9 foresees the Messiah presenting Himself as Israel’s King (the Messiah-Prince), genuinely offering the Kingdom during the 69th week, and being rejected, cut off in the death of the Cross, having nothing of His Kingdom glory.

Thus the actual establishment of the Kingdom, the bringing in of the righteousness of the ages, and the anointing of the Millennial Temple, must, as a consequence, take place upon the fulfillment of the 70th week and the Time of Jacob’s Trouble.”

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7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.

- **The problem with Reformed Covenant Theology is that they do not believe that there will be a future kingdom as described in great detail by God’s prophets.** They are thus accusing God of being dishonest because God predicted the future kingdom in hundreds of detailed prophecies. If there is no future kingdom, as described by God’s spokesmen, then not only is God dishonest, but He is a liar.

So, it is actually non-dispensationalists who are accusing God of being dishonest by promising things that will never come.

THERE IS ONE THING GOD CANNOT DO: lie.

54

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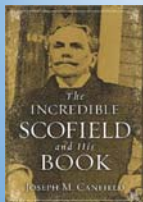
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A prime example of these attacks is the book, "The Incredible Scofield and His Book" by Joseph M. Canfield, Vallecito, CA: *Ross House Books, 1988 (2nd edition, 2005).

Mr. Canfield, attacked dispensationalism and pretribulationism. He apparently believed that the hope of dispensationalists was "built on nothing less than Scofield's notes and Moody Press." Therefore he endeavored to destroy the name and character of Scofield.



*Originally self-published by the author, Asheville, NC; 36 Chapters, 289 Pages; 1984

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8) Dispensationalists revere C. I. Scofield but he was an immoral man, not qualified to be a spiritual leader.

- *Scofield did not originate dispensationalism.* There were many great dispensationalists before Scofield, contemporary with Scofield (such as the other editors of the original Scofield Bible) and following Scofield (such as the editors of the New Scofield Reference Bible).
- *The Bible*, not Scofield's teaching, is the basis of dispensationalism.
- Like all men, Scofield had a past, but **after his conversion, he was held in the highest esteem by the great fundamentalist leaders of his day** and he was greatly loved by the people in his home church at Dallas.

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8) Dispensationalists revere C. I. Scofield but he was an immoral man, not qualified to be a spiritual leader.

- George Ladd, an historic premillennialist and *not a dispensationalist* wrote of dispensationalists, including Scofield in his book, *Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God*, page 49 :
"It is doubtful if there has been any other circle of men who have done more by their influence in preaching, teaching and writing to promote a love for Bible study, a hunger for the deeper Christian life, a passion for evangelism and zeal for missions in the history of American Christianity."

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8) Dispensationalists revere C. I. Scofield but he was an immoral man, not qualified to be a spiritual leader.

- Dr. Robert Sumner* has written an excellent review of Canfield's book entitled, *"The Incredible Canfield and his Scofield Hatchet Job"*. Link below:
<http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/dispencanfield.pdf>



*Dr. Robert Leslie Sumner Obituary (w/ brief biography)
<http://www.biblicalevangelist.org/index.php?id=1688>

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8) Dispensationalists revere C. I. Scofield but he was an immoral man, not qualified to be a spiritual leader.

"We conclude our review with **a quotation Canfield himself offers** from the pen of Dr. Arnold Dallimore: *"If a person writing history makes a false statement--whether because of carelessness, lack of knowledge or in a desire to make his account agree with some preconceived idea--his error will be compounded by being repeated again and again throughout generations to come. How unconscionable a man must be to indulge in such conduct, and with what great carefulness ought he to search out the facts, diligently examining all the evidence on every side of any issue, and presenting his findings with exactitude!"*"

Quoted in Sumner, Robert L., *The Incredible Canfield and his Scofield Hatchet Job*, p. 58

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CONCLUSION

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- 4) Dispensationalists Teach that the Death of Christ was an Afterthought and that the Church is "Plan B" in God's program.
- 5) Dispensationalism is a 'New' doctrine.
- 6) Dispensationalism Teaches a 'Secret Rapture'.
- 7) Dispensationalism falsely claims that God made a bona fide offer of the kingdom to Israel.
- 8) Dispensationalists revere C. I. Scofield but he was an immoral man, not qualified to be a spiritual leader.

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- Dr. Andy Woods, Sugar Land Bible Church, www.slbc.org
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