

## Baptist Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism

1. What is dispensationalism?
  
2. What does dispensationalism teach?
  - a. There are many varieties of dispensationalism, but certain distinctive commitments and emphases separate it from other systems.
    - i. Israel and the church are separate entities and will be so for all eternity.
  
    - ii. The Bible should be interpreted literally.
  
  - b. Traditionally, dispensationalists have understood history to be divided into seven periods or dispensations. In each dispensation God announces a principle for which man is responsible, man ultimately fails to live up to his responsibility, God judges man, and then begins a new dispensation.
  
3. Baptist covenant theology sheds light on the biblical relationship of Israel to the church.
  - a. The NT church is a continuation of the OT people of God with universal scope and expanded blessings. The distinction can be compared to the progression from a child to an adult (Gal. 4:3-5).
  
  - b. The promise of everlasting possession in Gen. 17:8 is conditional.
  
  - c. The purpose of the circumcision covenant was temporary.
  
  - d. All the promises are fulfilled in Christ, the true and faithful offspring.
  
  - e. Specific passages teach the unity of Israel and the church:
    - i. Eph. 2:11-22
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
    - ii. Rom. 11:16

4. Baptist covenant theology sheds light on biblical principles of interpretation.
  - a. We agree that the Bible uses words in ordinary ways to communicate. The meaning isn't encoded or hidden below a different, superficial meaning.

1689 1:9 "The infallible rule for interpreting Scripture is the Scripture itself. Therefore, when there is a question about the true and full meaning of any part of Scripture (and each passage has only one meaning, not many), it must be understood in light of other passages that speak more clearly."

- b. The Bible is a supernatural book. The meaning of a text is that which God as the divine author intended and may be more than the human author meant or understood. 1 Pet. 1:10
- c. The proper method of interpretation is taught by divine revelation just as other doctrines are.
- d. God communicates realities through types and shadows.
  - i. Gal. 4:21-31
  - ii. Gal. 3:8
  - iii. Heb. 11:9
- e. God accommodates his expressions to the weak understanding and limited perspective of his people. The OT people were in a time of childhood, and God often spoke to them with childlike terms.

5. Why does this matter?
  - a. The redeemed, both Jew and Gentile, are the true people of God. Php 3:3 For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—
  - b. Christ has displayed his ultimate love and commitment to the church and his greatest glory in the church. Eph 3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
  - c. We can read the OT and see its teaching culminating on what God is doing among his new covenant people now and in eternity.