

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DISPENSATIONALISM TO SOTERIOLOGY

“How many even sincere men can preach an uncomplicated gospel sermon? No man can be trusted to do this until he is **dispensationally** instructed. The imperative character of this requirement cannot be discussed here. The great expositors of this and past generations are such because they are thoroughly established in these **essential distinctions**, and it is no accident that these men have done most to preserve the exact features of the **gospel of divine grace**.”

Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Gospel Preaching,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95 (July 1938): 343.

**Main Point: Dispensationalism’s consistently literal method of interpretation leads to a recognition of valid biblical distinctions which support a clear and consistent gospel of salvation by grace alone.**

- 1 Corinthians 10:32

*This main point is supported in at least the following four ways:*

1. The consistently literal method of interpretation employed in dispensationalism leads to a recognition of the biblical distinction between the *Judgment Seat of Christ* for the church vs. the *Great White Throne* judgment for the eternally condemned. This dispensational distinction in ecclesiology and eschatology affects soteriology by supporting the biblical distinction between the free gift of *eternal life* by God’s grace alone vs. *rewards* for believers which are earned.
  - Ephesians 2:8-9 vs. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15
2. The dispensational distinction between Israel and the church also affects the interpretation of several prophetic passages that historically have been misinterpreted as proof-texts for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints for eternal salvation.
  - Matthew 24:13, “he who endures to the end shall be saved”
  - Matthew 25:31-46, the Sheep and Goats Judgment of the nations (cf. Joel 3:1-2; Gen. 12:1-3)
  - Romans 11:20-24, largely Gentile church enduring in faith to remain in the place of privileged service

3. The dispensational distinction between the Holy Spirit's ministry of selectively and temporarily indwelling saints in Old Testament Israel vs. His ministry of permanently indwelling and sealing all church saints in the New Testament magnifies and clarifies the biblical truth of eternal security for all saints, whether persistently carnal or spiritual, in contrast to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints held by Reformed, Covenant theology.

- 1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:11
- John 14:16
- Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1, 3; 6:19-20
- Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

4. Regarding God's covenants with man, dispensationalism sees a distinction in the Old Testament between covenants that are unconditional, grant or promise-type covenants vs. a conditional-type covenant, such as the Mosaic covenant made at Mt. Sinai. Covenant theology's notion of covenants mixes law & grace, obligation & promise. This is consistent with the Reformed doctrine of the perseverance of the saints that still requires faithfulness and good works on man's part for eternal life, rather than the biblical truth of eternal security which rests entirely upon Christ's finished work and the persevering faithfulness of the Savior, not the saint.

