

COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

Progressive Dispensationalism	Traditional Dispensationalism
The church age as a dispensation is best seen as a harmonious continuation in succession of the entire sequence of dispensations in God’s plan rather than as a parenthesis in God’s plan for Israel.	The present dispensation is a parenthesis with respect to God’s dealing with Israel (explains the delay in His dealing with that nation) but is a harmonious continuation of God’s plan with respect to the plan of the ages.
Rejection of any essential core beliefs to dispensationalism (no sine qua non) – only a list of hermeneutical and theological concerns	Acceptance of a core set of beliefs that is generally true of all dispensationalists of all times, i.e., there is a common thread to the tradition that is rather substantial
Rejection of literal interpretation as a major issue in the debate between covenant theology and dispensationalism	Acceptance of literal interpretation as a major issue in the debate between covenant theology and dispensationalism
Historical distinction between Israel and the Church and rejection of transcendental (heavenly/earthly) distinction between them	Acceptance of both a historical distinction and the heavenly/earthly dichotomy between Israel and the Church
One people of God (soteriological – similar to covenant theology); God’s plan is a single track	One people of God soteriologically, but two peoples of God (or programs of God) historically and teleologically (God’s purposes); God’s plan is multi-faceted which better gives glory to Him
Many OT and NT passages are integrated and harmonized using a complementary hermeneutic.	While such integration is possible, it does not override the distinction between Israel and the Church and it does not apply to the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant
The Messianic Kingdom started at the Ascension (Acts 1-2)	The Messianic Kingdom will start at the Second Coming
Kingdom rule in the present age should be emphasized in order to pursue the rebuilding of social structures according to the ways of Christ.	Christ’s headship of the Church and His general sovereignty (reigning) in the world at large is recognized but it is denied that this is fulfillment of Davidic rule promised in the OT. Furthermore, no Davidic “kingdom authority” is needed to right injustices and demonstrate love for people in social action.
Seeks theological harmony with covenant theology.	Seeks no harmony with covenant theology other than spiritual kinship in Christ.