

TWO MAIN BRANCHES OF DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY COMPARED



The chart below depicts the principal commonalities and differences between the two *main* branches of Dispensationalism Theology: Classic Dispensationalism and Progressive Dispensationalism. Although certainly **not** exhaustive, this chart highlights the general commonalities and differences between these two *main* branches of Dispensational Theology.

(✓) indicates that there is virtual agreement between the two *main* branches of Dispensational Theology on this point.

(⊗) indicates that the two *main* branches of Dispensational Theology disagree on this particular point.

CLASSIC DISPENSATIONALISM

PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

- ✓ I. **Sola Scriptura** ("by the Scriptures alone")
- ✓ A. The Bible **is** the Word and words of God.
- ✓ B. All Scripture is inspired by God and thus **wholly** inerrant, infallible, sufficient and authoritative.
- ⊗ C. **Normal / plain (i.e. literal) historical-grammatical interpretation of Scripture (especially OT Scriptures).**
- ✓ D. New Testament (NT) does **not** have interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT).
- ⊗ E. **Rejects 'Now-Not-Yet' understanding of NT Prophecy & redemptive history**
- ⊗ F. **Literal understanding of apocalyptic prophecy (i.e. Revelation, etc.).**
- ✓ G. "Sequential" understanding of Revelation & Olivet Discourse.

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- ✓ A. The Bible **is** the Word and words of God.
- ✓ B. All Scripture is inspired by God and thus **wholly** inerrant, infallible, sufficient and authoritative.
- ⊗ C. **Revised "literal" hermeneutic that allows for a more consistent historical-literary interpretation of Scripture.**
- ✓ D. New Testament (NT) does **not** have interpretive priority over the Old Testament (OT).
- ⊗ E. **Now-Not-Yet' understanding of NT Prophecy & redemptive history**
- ⊗ F. **Revised "Literal" understanding of apocalyptic prophecy (i.e. Revelation, etc.).**
- ✓ G. "Sequential" understanding of Revelation & Olivet Discourse.

- ✓ II. **Trinitarian Theology**
- ✓ III. **Arminian Soteriology (OR varying degrees of Calvinism)**
- ✓ A. Five Points of Arminianism (although *most* hold to Perseverance of the Saints)
- ✓ B. Regeneration follows faith.
- ✓ C. God limits His sovereignty to give man free will.
- ✓ D. Dual Imputation of Righteousness **indispensable** to biblical Gospel.
- ✓ E. Good works will **always** result from genuine faith.

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- ⊗ IV. **"Classic" Dispensational Theology**
- ⊗ A. Redemptive history divided into 7 distinct *dispensations*: Innocence, Conscience, Civil Government, Promise Law, Grace (i.e. Church Age), Kingdom (i.e. Millennium)
- ✓ B. **Two** New Covenant (NC) *dispensations*: Grace & Millennium
- ⊗ C. **Two** redemptive plans: Israel & the Church (each with a *distinctly different* purpose & destiny)
- ✓ D. OT & NT saints **all** saved by grace through faith in Christ.
- ✓ E. Israel = Israel (**always**)
- ✓ F. Israel ≠ type of Church; Church ≠ eschatological Israel
- ✓ G. Church has **not** replaced, fulfilled, or superseded Israel.
- ⊗ H. Church Age = parenthesis in redemptive history, as the OT promises (Abrahamic, Davidic) are neither inaugurated nor fulfilled. Fulfillment reserved for future, literal millennium.
- ⊗ I. Christ's *current* heavenly reign at the Father's Right Hand is **not** in fulfillment of Davidic Covenant. (Only Millennium).
- ⊗ J. Body of Christ = the Church
- ✓ K. Church **not** revealed in the Old Testament.
- ✓ L. New Covenant made **with** Israel, but inaugurated for Church.
- ✓ M. **Only** select OT saints had the Spirit prior to Pentecost.
- ✓ N. Church = the Body of Christ **first** constituted at Pentecost via Spirit Baptism. Spirit Baptism ends at Rapture of Church Consists of believing Jews & Gentiles during the Church Age.
- ✓ O. Specific commandments from the Ten Commandments **only** apply to NC believer if repeated in the New Testament.
- ✓ P. OT Scriptures are *profitable & authoritative* for NC believer as they reveal Christ but are **no** longer covenantally binding since Old Covenant has been fulfilled by Christ & thereby abrogated.
- ✓ Q. Some hold to pre-fall "Edenic" / post-fall "Adamic" Covenants

- ⊗ IV. **"Progressive" Dispensational Theology**
- ⊗ A. Redemptive history divided into 4 **primary** *dispensations*: Patriarchal, Mosaic, Ecclesial (i.e. Church Age), and Zionist (i.e. earthly, future millennium + eternal state)
- ✓ B. **Two** successive New Covenant *dispensations*: Ecclesial & Zionist
- ⊗ C. **One** *people of God* with **dual** application to Church & future redeemed Israel (i.e. distinction *less* pronounced, **still** intact)
- ✓ D. OT & NT saints **all** saved by grace through faith in Christ.
- ✓ E. Israel = Israel (**always**)
- ✓ F. Israel ≠ type of Church; Church ≠ eschatological Israel
- ✓ G. Church has **not** replaced, fulfilled, or superseded Israel.
- ⊗ H. Church Age ≠ (**merely**) parenthesis in redemptive history. Fulfillment of OT promises inaugurated at Christ's First Coming (for Church), yet await total fulfillment in Millennium.
- ⊗ I. Christ's *current* heavenly reign at the Father's Right Hand inaugurates fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (i.e. throne, kingdom) **but** awaits total fulfillment in earthly Millennium.
- ⊗ J. Body of Christ = Church + future redeemed *national* Israel + millennial saints
- ✓ K. Church **not** revealed in the Old Testament.
- ✓ L. New Covenant made **with** Israel, but inaugurated for Church.
- ✓ M. **Only** select OT saints had the Spirit prior to Pentecost.
- ✓ N. Church = the Body of Christ **first** constituted at Pentecost via Spirit Baptism. Spirit Baptism ends at Rapture of Church Consists of believing Jews & Gentiles during the Church Age.
- ✓ O. Specific commandments from the Ten Commandments **only** apply to NC believer if repeated in the New Testament.
- ✓ P. OT Scriptures are *profitable & authoritative* for NC believer as they reveal Christ but are **no** longer covenantally binding since Old Covenant has been fulfilled by Christ & thereby abrogated.
- ✓ Q. Some hold to pre-fall "Edenic" / post-fall "Adamic" Covenants

CLASSIC DISPENSATIONALISM	PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM
(√) indicates that there is virtual agreement between the two main branches of Dispensational Theology on this point.	(⊗) indicates that the two main branches of Dispensational Theology disagree on this particular point.
V. Church Issues	V. Church Issues
√ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper	√ A. Two Ordinances: Baptism & Lord's Supper
√ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism	√ B. Sign of New Covenant: Baptism
√ C. Baptism for Believers Only (<i>credobaptism</i>)	√ C. Baptism for Believers Only (<i>credobaptism</i>)
√ D. Baptism by Immersion	√ D. Baptism by Immersion
√ E. Baptism = Symbol of salvation; important as act of obedience	√ E. Baptism = Symbol of salvation; important as act of obedience
√ F. Lord's Supper = Mere Remembrance	√ F. Lord's Supper = Mere Remembrance
√ G. Mixture of cessation / non-cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts	√ G. Mixture of cessation / non-cessation of <i>miraculous</i> spiritual gifts
VI. Church Government	VI. Church Government
√ A. (Typically) Plurality of Elders or Single Elder / Rule by Deacons	√ A. (Typically) Plurality of Elders or Single Elder / Rule by Deacons
√ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations	√ B. Local Autonomy of Congregations
VII. Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience	VII. Christian Liberty & Total Liberty of Conscience
VIII. Government Relations	VIII. Government Relations
√ A. Separation of Church and State	√ A. Separation of Church and State
√ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities	√ B. Voluntarily involvement of Church members in political activities
IX. Eschatology	IX. Eschatology
√ A. Visible, Bodily, Two -Stage Return of Christ: (1) Rapture of Church; (2) Second Coming (i.e. glorious appearing); timing of Rapture varies: <i>pre-tribulation</i> , <i>mid-tribulation</i> , <i>pre-wrath</i> , or <i>post-tribulation</i> , etc.	√ A. Visible, Bodily, Two -Stage Return of Christ: (1) Rapture of Church; (2) Second Coming (i.e. glorious appearing); timing of Rapture varies: <i>pre-tribulation</i> , <i>mid-tribulation</i> , <i>pre-wrath</i> , or <i>post-tribulation</i> , etc.
√ B. Daniel's 70th Week = <i>literal</i> , seven-year period between Rapture & Second Coming; also, referred to as Tribulation Period	√ B. Daniel's 70th Week = <i>literal</i> , seven-year period between Rapture & Second Coming; also, referred to as Tribulation Period
√ C. Antichrist = future <i>individual</i> who is Christ's chief human enemy	√ C. Antichrist = future <i>individual</i> who is Christ's chief human enemy
√ D. Rebuilt Jewish Temple (as the Temple of God) in Tribulation Period and Millennium with reconstituted sacrificial system (for some, memorial sacrifices; others, semi-efficacious ones)	√ D. Rebuilt Jewish Temple (as the Temple of God) in Tribulation Period and Millennium with reconstituted sacrificial system (for some, memorial sacrifices; others, semi-efficacious ones)
√ E. Future salvation of "all Israel" & total reconstitution/ restoration of Israel <i>as a national entity</i> at/just before Christ's Return.	√ E. Future salvation of "all Israel" & total reconstitution/ restoration of Israel <i>as a national entity</i> at/just before Christ's Return.
√ F. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment after 1,000 year period.	√ F. Bodily Resurrection of Just & Unjust for Day of Judgment after 1,000 year period.
√ G. Millennium = future, <i>literal</i> , thousand-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem on David's Throne in fulfillment of OT promises of the Abrahamic & Davidic covenants	√ G. Millennium = future, <i>literal</i> , thousand-year reign of Christ from Jerusalem on David's Throne in fulfillment of OT promises of the Abrahamic & Davidic covenants
√ H. <i>Eternal</i> New Heavens & Earth for Elect; <i>eternal</i> Hell for Non-Elect.	√ H. <i>Eternal</i> New Heavens & Earth for Elect; <i>eternal</i> Hell for Non-Elect.

*Providence Theological Institute used the "Theological Positions" (<http://www.dsf.org/positions.pdf>) document of Dayspring Fellowship in Austin, TX as the foundational base (i.e., format, some wording, certain areas) for this chart.