The Apostle Paul

Hyperdispensationalism
Paul the Apostle, also called the Apostle Paul, Saul of Tarsus, and Saint Paul (c. AD 5 – c. AD 67), was one of the most influential early Christian missionaries, with his writings forming a considerable portion of the New Testament. His influence on Christian thinking has been of utmost significance due to his role as a prominent apostle of Christianity during the spreading of the Gospel through early Christian communities across the Roman Empire.

According to the Bible, Paul was known as Saul prior to his conversion, and was dedicated to the persecution of the early disciples of Jesus in the area of Jerusalem. While traveling from Jerusalem to Damascus on a mission to "bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem", the resurrected Jesus appeared to him in a great light. Saul was struck blind, but after three days his sight was restored by Ananias of Damascus, and Paul began to preach that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God.

Along with Simon Peter and James the Just he was one of the most prominent early Christian leaders. He was also a Roman citizen—a fact that afforded him a privileged legal status with respect to laws, property, and governance.

Fourteen epistles in the New Testament are attributed to Paul. His authorship of seven of the fourteen is questioned by modern scholars. Augustine of Hippo developed Paul's idea that salvation is based on faith and not "Works of the Law". Martin Luther's interpretation of Paul's writings heavily influenced Luther's doctrine of sola fide.

Paul's conversion dramatically changed the course of his life. Through his missionary activity and writings he eventually transformed religious belief and philosophy around the Mediterranean Basin. His leadership, influence
and legacy led to the formation of communities dominated by Gentile groups that worshiped the God of Israel, adhered to the Judaic "moral code", but relaxed or abandoned the "ritual" and dietary obligations of the Mosaic law all on the basis of Paul's teachings of the life and works of Jesus Christ and his teaching of a new covenant (or "new testament")[10] established through Jesus' death and resurrection. The Bible does not record Paul's death.

Sources

The main source for historical information about Paul's life is the material found in several of his epistles and the Book of Acts. However, these epistles contain comparatively little information about Paul's past. The Book of Acts also recounts Paul's career but leaves several parts of Paul's life out of its narrative, such as his (alleged) execution in Rome.[11] Scholars such as Hans Conzelmann and 20th century theologian John Knox (not to be confused with the 16th century John Knox) dispute the historical reliability of the Acts of the Apostles.[12] [13] Paul's own account of his background is found particularly in Galatians. According to some scholars, the account in Acts of Paul visiting Jerusalem[Acts 11:27-30] contradicts the account in Paul's letters.[11] (See the Acts of the Apostles article). Some scholars consider Paul's accounts to be more reliable than those found in Acts.[14]

Names

Along with being ethnically Jewish, Paul was born a Roman citizen Acts 22:28. "Paul" was part of his three-part Roman name.[15] His given name was Saul (Hebrew: שָׁעֵל, Modern Sha’ul; "asked for, prayed for"), perhaps after the biblical King Saul, a fellow Benjaminite and the first king of Israel who was replaced by King David, the second king of the united Kingdom of Israel.[16] In Ancient Greek: Σαοῦλ (Saul), Σαῦλος (Saulos), and Παῦλος (Paulos), in Latin Paulus or Paullus, in Hebrew: שָׁעֵל הַתָּרְסִי (Sha’ul HaTarsi (Saul of Tarsus))[17]

When Jesus spoke to him prior to his conversion to Christianity on the Road to Damascus, Jesus called him "Saul" in confronting him for persecuting the Christians: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"[Acts 9:4] Shortly thereafter, in addressing a disciple named Ananias, Jesus referred to "a man from Tarsus named Saul."[Acts 9:4]

The earliest biblical reference to his being called "Paul" is recorded in Acts 13:9: "...Saul, who was also called Paul...." All subsequent New Testament verses refer to him as "Paul" or with the appended title "Apostle Paul."

Prior to conversion

Paul, whose Hebrew name was Saul,[18] claimed to be "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee."[Phil. 3:5] Paul's "sister's son" is mentioned in Acts 23:16. Acts identifies Paul as from the Mediterranean city of Tarsus (in present-day south-central Turkey), well-known for its intellectual environment. Acts also quotes Paul indirectly referring to his father by saying he was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee".[Acts 23:6] Paul refers to his mother in Romans 16:13, among those at Rome. Paul confesses that "beyond measure" he persecuted the "church of God" prior to his conversion.[19] Paul was born a citizen of the city Tarsus as well as a citizen of Rome, an honor not often granted to "outsiders." It is likely that Paul's family purchased the Tarsian citizenship with money earned from their trade. His family were tent-makers, a trade that Paul uses to support himself throughout his ministry. Scripture does not say how Paul's family acquired a Roman citizenship but scholars speculate that his father or grandfather may have been honored with it for some sort of military service.[15]
Although born in Tarsus, he was raised in Jerusalem "at the feet of Gamaliel", who is considered to be "one of the greatest teachers in all the annals of Judaism", and whose level headed advice to the council in Acts 5:34-39, to "refrain" from slaying the disciples, is in great contrast to the rashness of his student Saul, who went on a rampage, after the death of Stephen, persecuting the "saints". (Acts 9:13; Acts 26:10)

Conversion and mission

Paul's conversion can be dated to 31 – 36 by his reference to it in one of his letters. According to the Acts of the Apostles, his conversion (or metanoia) took place on the road to Damascus where he claimed to have experienced a vision of the resurrected Jesus after which he was temporarily blinded. (Acts 9:1-31) (Acts 22:1-22) (Acts 26:9-24)

Post-conversion testimony

In the opening verses of Romans 1, Paul provides a litany of his own apostolic claim and his post-conversion convictions about the risen Christ:

- Paul describes himself as:
  - a servant of Christ Jesus
  - called to be an apostle
  - set apart for the gospel of God
- Paul describes Jesus as:
  - having been promised by God "beforehand" through his prophets in the holy Scriptures
  - being the Son of God
  - having biological lineage from David ("according to the flesh")
  - having been declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead
  - being Jesus Christ our Lord
  - the One through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, "including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ."

Paul's writings give some insight into his thinking regarding his relationship with Judaism. He is strongly critical both theologically and empirically of claims of moral or lineal superiority of Jews while conversely strongly sustaining the notion of a special place for the Children of Israel.

Paul asserted that he received the Gospel not from any person, but by a personal revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul claimed independence from the Jerusalem community (possibly in the Cenacle), but was just as quick to claim agreement with it on the nature and content of the gospel. What is remarkable about such a conversion is the changes in the thinking that had to take place. He had to change his concept of who the messiah was, particularly the absurdity of accepting a crucified messiah. Perhaps more challenging was changing his conception of the ethnic superiority of the Jewish people. There are debates as to whether Paul understood himself as commissioned to take the gospel to the Gentiles at the moment of his conversion.
**Early ministry**

After his conversion, Paul went to Damascus, where Acts states he was healed of his blindness and baptized by Ananias of Damascus. Paul says that it was in Damascus that he barely escaped death. Paul also says that he then went first to Arabia, and then came back to Damascus. Paul's trip to Arabia is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, and some suppose he actually travelled to Mt. Sinai for meditations in the desert. He describes in Galatians how three years after his conversion he went to Jerusalem. There he met James and stayed with Simon Peter for 15 days.

Paul asserted that he received the Gospel not from any person, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, Paul claimed almost total independence from the Jerusalem community and yet appeared eager to bring material support from the various budding Gentile churches that he planted to Jerusalem. In his writings, Paul persistently used the persecutions he claimed to have endured, in terms of physical beatings and verbal assaults, to claim proximity and union with Jesus and as a validation of his teaching.

Paul's narrative in Galatians states that 14 years after his conversion he went again to Jerusalem. It is not completely known what happened during these so-called "unknown years," but both Acts and Galatians provide some partial details. At the end of this time, Barnabas went to find Paul and brought him back to Antioch.

When a famine occurred in Judea, around 45–46, Paul and Barnabas journeyed to Jerusalem to deliver financial support from the Antioch community. According to Acts, Antioch had become an alternative center for Christians following the dispersion of the believers after the death of Stephen. It was in Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called "Christians."

**First missionary journey**

The author of the Acts arranges Paul's travels into three separate journeys. The first journey, led initially by Barnabas, takes Paul from Antioch to Cyprus then southern Asia Minor (Anatolia), and back to Antioch. In Cyprus, Paul rebukes and blinds Elymas the magician who was criticizing their teachings. From this point on, Paul is described as the leader of the group.

They sail to Perga in Pamphylis. John Mark leaves them and returns to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas go on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they go to the Synagogue. The leaders invite them to speak. Paul reviews Israelite history from life in Egypt to King David. He introduces Jesus as a descendant of David brought to Israel by God. He said that his team came to town to bring the message of salvation. He recounts the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. He quotes from the Hebrew scriptures to show that Jesus was the promised Messiah who brought them forgiveness for their sins. Both the Jews and the 'God-fearing' Gentiles invited them talk more the next Sabbath. At that time almost the whole city gathered. This upset some influential Jews who spoke against them. Paul used the occasion to announce a change in his mission which from then on would be to the Gentiles.

Antioch served as a major Christian center for Paul's evangelizing.
Second missionary journey

Paul leaves for his second missionary journey from Jerusalem, in late Autumn 49,[36] where they were having a council with other apostles, and where the circumcision question was lifted up. On their trip around the Mediterranean sea, Paul and his companion Barnabas stopped in Antioch where they had a sharp argument about taking John Mark with them on their trips. It is mentioned in the book of Acts that John Mark had left them in a previous trip and went home; Paul did not think he was ready for this kind of evangelism. Paul and Barnabas decided to separate. Barnabas ended up taking John Mark with him, while Silas joined Paul.

Paul and Silas traveled to a lot of different cities such as Tarsus, Derbe and Lystra. In Lystra, they met Timothy, a disciple who was spoken well of, and decided to take him with them. The Church kept growing, adding believers, and strengthening their faith daily (Acts 16:5). In Philippi, men who were not happy about the conversion of their slave turned the city against the missionaries and Paul and Silas were put in jail. After a miraculous earthquake, the gates of the prison fell apart and Paul and Silas were able to escape; this event led to the conversion of the jailor. They continued traveling, went by Berea and Athens where Paul preached to the Jews and Greeks; and in Corinth where Paul met Aquila and Priscilla who became faithful believers and helped Paul through his other missionary journeys. The couple followed Paul and his companions to Ephesus, and stayed there to start one of the strongest, and most faithful Church at that time. In 52, the missionaries sailed to Caeserea to greet the Church there, and traveled down to Antioch to stay there for about 1 year before leaving again on their third missionary journey.[37]

Third missionary journey

Paul began his third missionary journey by traveling all around the region of Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen, teach and rebuke the believers. When he arrived in Ephesus, he stayed there for a little less than 3 years and performed a lot of miracles, like healing people and casting demons out. Then he went through Macedonia, went up to Greece, and as he was getting ready to leave for Syria, he changed his plans because of Jews who had made a plot against him, and had to go back through Macedonia. He finished his trip in Caeserea.[40] [41]

Journey to Rome

Paul and his companions went on to Rome, which was probably their last missionary journey, in 60. They started in Jerusalem where the brothers there received them joyfully. Paul was beaten and almost killed before he was arrested and kept as a prisoner in Caesarea for about one year and a half even before starting his journey. He was transferred to Rome after his request and was released after the Roman commander realized that he was born a Roman citizen. Paul continued to preach in Rome and possibly traveled to other countries like Spain and Britain before he died as a martyr in 68AD.[42]

Persecution

Many plots were made against Paul in the last years of his life, especially by Jews who would stir the crowd and excite them when Paul was preaching. He was beaten more than once, and put in prison. He was persecuted in every one of his missionary journeys. He was persecuted because of a “lack of understanding, preconceptions, irritations and provocation.”[43] The message of a risen Christ and Savior was aggravating for Jews as well as many pagan believers. During his first missionary journey, Paul was stoned in the city of Lystra for healing a crippled man. Some
Jews dragged him out of the city thinking he was dead but when his disciples came around him, he miraculously got up and went into the city. Paul was also put in prison while he was in Philippi and also in Jerusalem.

**Council of Jerusalem**

Most scholars agree that a vital meeting between Paul and the Jerusalem church took place some time in the years 48 to 50,[11] described in Acts 15:2 and usually seen as the same event mentioned by Paul in Galatians 2:1.[11] The key question raised was whether Gentile converts needed to be circumcised.[44] At this meeting, Paul claims in his letter to the Galatians that Peter, James, and John accepted Paul's mission to the Gentiles. See also Circumcision controversy in early Christianity.

Jerusalem meetings are mentioned in Acts, in Paul's letters, and some appear in both.[45] For example, the Jerusalem visit for famine relief[Acts 11:27-30] apparently corresponds to the "first visit" (to Cephas and James only).[Gal. 1:18-20][45] F. F. Bruce suggested that the "fourteen years" could be from Paul's conversion rather than the first visit to Jerusalem.[46]

**Incident at Antioch**

Despite the agreement achieved at the Council of Jerusalem, as understood by Paul, Paul recounts how he later publicly confronted Peter, also called the "Incident at Antioch" over Peter's reluctance to share a meal with Gentile Christians in Antioch.[47]

Writing later of the incident, Paul recounts: "I opposed [Peter] to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong". Paul reports that he told Peter: "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"[Gal. 2:11-14] Paul also mentions that even Barnabas (his traveling companion and fellow apostle until that time) sided with Peter.[48]

The final outcome of the incident remains uncertain. The Catholic Encyclopedia[49] states: "Paul's account of the incident leaves no doubt that Peter saw the justice of the rebuke." In contrast, L. Michael White's *From Jesus to Christianity* claims: "The blowup with Peter was a total failure of political bravado, and Paul soon left Antioch as persona non grata, never again to return."[50]

The primary source for the *Incident at Antioch* is Paul's letter to the Galatians.

**Visits to Jerusalem in Acts and the epistles**

This table is adapted from White, *From Jesus to Christianity*.[45] Note that the matching of Paul's travels in the Acts and the travels in his Epistles is done for the reader's convenience and is not approved of by all scholars.
### Acts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First visit to Jerusalem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>Acts 11:29-30, Acts 12:25</td>
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<td>Third visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>Acts 15:1-19</td>
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<td>Acts 18:21-22</td>
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### Epistles

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<tr>
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<td>Gal. 1:18-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>Gal. 1:17-18</td>
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<td>Third visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>Gal. 2:1-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>Gal. 2:11-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>Gal. 2:1-10</td>
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### Resumed mission

Around 50–52, Paul spent 18 months in Corinth. The reference in Acts to proconsul Gallio helps ascertain this date (cf. Gallio inscription). Here he worked with Silas and Timothy.

After Corinth, the next major center for Paul's activities was Ephesus. Ephesus was an important center for early Christianity from the year 50, see also Early centers of Christianity. From 52 to 54, Paul lived here, working with the congregation and apparently organizing missionary activity into the hinterlands. Paul's time here was marked by disturbances and possibly imprisonment. Finally, he was forced to leave.

Next, he traveled to Macedonia before going probably to Corinth for three months (56–57) before his final visit to Jerusalem. Though Paul wrote that he visited Illyricum, he meant what would now be called Illyria Graeca that was part of the Roman province of Macedonia, which is now modern day Albania.
Arrest and death

Paul arrived in Jerusalem in 57 with a collection of money for the community there. Acts reports that he was warmly received. But Acts goes on to recount how he was interrogated by James for 'teaching all the Jews living among the gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs'. (Acts 21, 21) Paul underwent a purification ritual in order to give the Jews no grounds to bring accusations against him for not following their law. Paul however continued to preach against circumcision, Jewish dietary restrictions, and other requirements of the Torah. This made a final rift inevitable with the Jews. Paul caused a stir when he appeared at the Temple, and he escaped being killed by the crowd by being taken into custody. He was held as a prisoner for two years in Caesarea until a new governor reopened his case in 59. When accused of treason, he appealed to Caesar, claiming his right as a citizen of Rome to appear there before a proper court and to defend himself of the charges.

Acts recounts that on the way to Rome Paul was shipwrecked on "Melite" (Malta), where he was met by Publius and the islanders, who showed him "unusual kindness". He arrived in Rome c 60 and spent two years under house arrest. All told, during his ministry the Apostle Paul spent roughly 5½ to 6 years as a prisoner or in prison.

Irenaeus of Lyons in the 2nd century believed that Peter and Paul had been the founders of the Church in Rome and had appointed Linus as succeeding bishop. Paul was not a bishop of Rome nor did he bring Christianity to Rome since there were already Christians in Rome when he arrived there (Acts 28:14-15). Also Paul wrote his letter to the church at Rome before he had visited Rome (Romans 1:1,7,11-13; 15:23-29). However, Paul would have played an important role in the life of the early church at Rome.

Neither the Bible nor other history says how or when Paul died. According to Christian tradition, Paul was beheaded in Rome during the reign of Nero around the mid-60s at Tre Fontane Abbey (English: Three Fountains Abbey). By comparison, tradition has Peter being crucified upside-down. Paul's Roman citizenship accorded him the more merciful death by beheading.

In June 2009, Pope Benedict announced excavation results concerning the tomb of Paul at the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. The sarcophagus itself was not opened but was examined by means of a probe. It revealed pieces of incense and purple and blue linen as well as small bone fragments. The bone was radiocarbon dated to the 1st to 2nd century. According to the Vatican, this seemed to confirm the tradition of the tomb being Paul's.

Writings

Fourteen epistles in the New Testament are attributed to Paul, of which seven are almost universally accepted, and seven are disputed, (Ephesians, Colossians, 2nd Thessalonians, 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy and, Titus, and Hebrews), of which four are considered in some academic circles as other than Pauline for textual and grammatical reasons, and the other three are in dispute in those same circles. Paul apparently dictated all his epistles (except Galatians) through a secretary (or amanuensis), who would usually paraphrase the gist of his message, as was the practice among 1st-century scribes. These epistles were circulated within the Christian community, where they were
read aloud by members of the church along with other works. Paul's epistles were accepted early as scripture and later established as Canon of Scripture. Critical scholars regard Paul's epistles (written 50–62) to be [among] the earliest-written books of the New Testament. They are referenced as early as c. 96 by Clement of Rome.\[64\]

### Authorship

Paul's letters are largely written to churches which he had visited; he was a great traveler, visiting Cyprus, Asia Minor (modern Turkey), mainland Greece, Crete, and Rome. His letters are full of expositions of what Christians should believe and how they should live. He does not tell his correspondents (or the modern reader) much about the life of Jesus; his most explicit references are to the Last Supper\[1 Cor. 11:17-34\] and the crucifixion and resurrection.\[1 Cor. 15\] His specific references to Jesus' teaching are likewise sparse,\[1 Cor. 7:10-11\] [9:14] raising the question, still disputed, as to how consistent his account of the faith is with that of the four canonical Gospels, Acts, and the Epistle of James. The view that Paul's Christ is very different from the historical Jesus has been expounded by Adolf Harnack among many others. Nevertheless, he provides the first written account of what it is to be a Christian and thus of Christian spirituality.

Of the fourteen letters attributed to Paul and included in the Western New Testament canon, there is little or no dispute that Paul actually wrote at least seven, those being Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon. Hebrews (no relation to the Gospel according to the Hebrews), which was ascribed to him in antiquity, was questioned even then, never having an ancient attribution, and in modern times is considered by most experts as not by Paul (see also Antilegomena). The authorship of the remaining six Pauline epistles is disputed to varying degrees.

The authenticity of Colossians has been questioned\[65\] on the grounds that it contains an otherwise unparalleled description (among his writings) of Jesus as 'the image of the invisible God,' a Christology found elsewhere only in John's gospel. On the other hand, the personal notes in the letter connect it to Philemon, unquestionably the work of Paul. Internal evidence shows close connection with Philippians.\[66\] Ephesians is a very similar letter to Colossians, but is almost entirely lacking in personal reminiscences. Its style is unique. It lacks the emphasis on the cross to be found in other Pauline writings, reference to the Second Coming is missing, and Christian marriage is exalted in a way which contrasts with the reference in 1 Cor. 7:8-9. Finally, according to R.E. Brown, it exalts the Church in a way suggestive of a second generation of Christians, 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets' now past.\[67\] The defenders of its Pauline authorship argue that it was intended to be read by a number of different churches and that it marks the final stage of the development of Paul of Tarsus's thinking. It has to be noted, too, that the moral portion of the Epistle, consisting of the last two chapters has the closest affinity with similar portions of other Epistles, while the whole admirably fits in with the known details of St. Paul's life, and throws considerable light upon them.\[66\]
The Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus have likewise been put in question as Pauline works. Three main reasons are advanced: first, their difference in vocabulary, style, and theology from Paul's acknowledged writings; Defenders of the authenticity note, that they were then probably written in the name and with the authority of the Apostle by one of his companions, to whom he distinctly explained what had to be written, or to whom he gave a written summary of the points to be developed, and that when the letters were finished, St. Paul read them through, approved them, and signed them. Second, the difficulty in fitting them into Paul's biography as we have it. They, like Colossians and Ephesians, were written from prison but suppose Paul's release and travel thereafter. However, Christianity was not yet declared a religio illicita at the time they were written, and according to Roman law there was nothing deserving of death against him. Finally, the concerns expressed are very much the practical ones as to how a church should function. They are more about maintenance than about mission.

2 Thessalonians, like Colossians, is questioned on stylistic grounds, with some noting, among other peculiarities, a dependence on 1 Thessalonians yet a distinctiveness in language from the Pauline corpus. This, again, is explainable by the possibility of St. Paul requesting one of his companions to write the letter for him under his instructions.

**Atonement**

Paul wrote down much of the theology of atonement. Paul taught that Christians are redeemed from the Law (see Supersessionism) and from sin by Jesus' death and resurrection. His death was an expiation; as well as a propitiation, and by Christ's blood, peace is made between God and man. By baptism, a Christian shares in Jesus' death and in his victory over death, gaining, as a free gift, a new, justified status of sonship.

**Relationship with Judaism**

Some scholars see Paul (or Saul) as completely in line with 1st-century Judaism (a "Pharisee" and student of Gamaliel), others see him as opposed to 1st-century Judaism (see Marcionism), while still others see him as somewhere in between these two extremes, opposed to "Ritual Laws" (see for example Circumcision controversy in early Christianity) but in full agreement on "Divine Law". These views of Paul are paralleled by the views of Biblical law in Christianity.

Paul's theology of the gospel accelerated the separation of the messianic sect of Christians from Judaism, a development contrary to Paul's own intent. He wrote that the faith of Christ was alone decisive in salvation for Jews and Gentiles alike, making the schism between the followers of Christ and mainstream Jews inevitable and permanent. He argued that
Gentile converts did not need to become Jews, get circumcised, follow Jewish dietary restrictions, or otherwise observe Mosaic laws. Nevertheless, in Romans he insisted on the positive value of the Law, as a moral guide.

E. P. Sanders' publications have since been taken up by Professor James Dunn who coined the phrase "The New Perspective on Paul" and N.T. Wright, the Anglican Bishop of Durham. Wright, noting a difference between Galatians and Romans, the later being much more positive about the continuing covenant between God and his ancient people than the former, contends that works are not insignificant but rather proof of attaining the redemption of Jesus Christ by grace (free gift received by faith) and that Paul distinguishes between works which are signs of ethnic identity and those which are a sign of obedience to Christ.

World to come

According to Ehrman, Paul believed that Jesus would return within his lifetime. He states that Paul expected that Christians who had died in the mean time would be resurrected to share in God's kingdom, and he believed that the saved would be transformed, assuming supernatural bodies.

Paul's teaching about the end of the world is expressed most clearly in his letters to the Christians at Thessalonica. Heavily persecuted, it appears that they had written asking him first about those who had died already, and, secondly, when they should expect the end. He assures them that the dead will rise first and be followed by those left alive. This suggests an imminence of the end but he is unspecific about times and seasons, and encourages his hearers to expect a delay.

The form of the end will be a battle between Jesus and the man of lawlessness whose conclusion is the triumph of Christ.

Role of women

A verse in the first letter to Timothy, 1 Timothy 2:12 ("I suffer not a woman"), traditionally attributed to Paul, is often used as the main biblical authority for prohibiting women from becoming ordained clergy and or holding certain other positions of ministry and leadership in Christianity, though Paul's authorship of this letter is debated. The Letter to Timothy is also often used by many churches to deny women a vote in church affairs, reject women from serving as teachers of adult Bible classes, prevent them from serving as missionaries, and generally disenfranchise women from the duties and privileges of church leadership. The apparent message of this verse may seem anachronistic to 21st century Western societies with their emphasis on gender egalitarianism and non-discrimination.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.
12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.
13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

1 Timothy 2:11-14, KJV

The KJV translation of this passage seems to be saying that women in the churches are to have no leadership roles vis a vis men. Whether it also forbids women from teaching children and women is dubious as even those Catholic churches that prohibit female priests, permit female abbesses to teach and exercise authority over other females. Any interpretation of this portion of Scripture must wrestle with the theological, contextual, syntactical, and
lexical difficulties embedded within these few words.\[76\] Fuller Seminary theologian J. R. Daniel Kirk finds evidence in Paul’s letters of a much more inclusive view of women. He writes that Romans 16 is a tremendously important witness to the important role of women in the early church. Paul praises Phoebe for her work as a deaconess and Junia who was (according to some scholars) an Apostle. Kirk points to recent studies that have led “many scholars” to conclude that the passage in 1 Corinthians 14 ordering women to “be silent” during worship was a later addition, apparently by a different author, and not part of Paul’s original letter to Corinth. Other scholars such as Giancarlo Biguzzi, claim that Paul’s restriction on women speaking in 1Corinthians 14 is genuine to Paul but applies to a particular case of prohibiting asking questions or chatting and is not a general prohibition on any woman speaking since in 1Corinthians 11 Paul affirms the right of women to prophesy.\[77\] Kirk’s third example of a more inclusive view is Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (italics added). In pronouncing an end within the church to the divisions which are common in the world around it, he concludes by highlighting the fact that "...there were New Testament women who taught and had authority in the early churches, that this teaching and authority was sanctioned by Paul, and that Paul himself offers a theological paradigm within which overcoming the subjugation of women is an anticipated outcome."\[78\]

**Influence on Christianity**

Paul’s influence on Christian thinking arguably has been more significant than any other New Testament author.\[3\] Paul declared that faith in Christ made the Torah unnecessary for salvation, exalted the Christian church as the body of Christ, and depicted the world outside the Church as under judgment.\[11\]

**Lord’s Supper**

Paul’s writings include the earliest reference to the supper of the Lord, a rite traditionally identified as the Christian Eucharist.

**Eastern tradition**

In the East, church fathers reduced the element of election in Romans 9 to divine foreknowledge.\[11\] The themes of predestination found in Western Christianity do not appear in Eastern theology.

**Western tradition**

Augustine’s foundational work on the gospel as a gift (grace), on morality as life in the Spirit, on predestination, and on original sin all derives from Paul, especially Romans.\[11\]

In the Reformation, Martin Luther expressed Paul’s doctrine of faith most strongly as justification by faith alone.\[11\] John Calvin developed Augustine’s predestination into double predestination.\[11\]

**Modern theology**

In his commentary The Epistle to the Romans (Ger. Der Römerbrief; particularly in the thoroughly re-written second edition of 1922) Karl Barth argued that the God who is revealed in the cross of Jesus challenges and overthrows any attempt to ally God with human cultures, achievements, or possessions. Some theologians believe this work to be the most important theological treatise since Friedrich Schleiermacher’s On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers.
As in the Eastern tradition in general, Western humanists interpret the reference to election in Romans 9 as reflecting divine foreknowledge.\footnote{11}

**Church tradition**

Various Christian writers have suggested more details about Paul's life. 1 Clement, a letter written by the Roman bishop Clement of Rome, around the year 90 reports this about Paul:\footnote{79}

"By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance."

Commenting on this passage, Raymond Brown writes that while it "does not explicitly say" that Paul was martyred in Rome, "such a martyrdom is the most reasonable interpretation."\footnote{80} Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote in the 4th century, states that Paul was beheaded in the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero. This event has been dated either to the year 64, when Rome was devastated by a fire, or a few years later, to 67. The San Paolo alle Tre Fontane church was built on the location where the execution was believed to have taken place. A Roman Catholic liturgical solemnity of Peter and Paul, celebrated on June 29, may reflect the day of his martyrdom, other sources have articulated the tradition that Peter and Paul died on the same day (and possibly the same year).\footnote{81} The apocryphal Acts of Paul, the apocryphal Acts of Peter suggest that Paul survived Rome and traveled further west. Some hold the view that he could have revisited Greece and Asia Minor after his trip to Spain, and might then have been arrested in Troas, and taken to Rome and executed.\footnote{2 Tim. 4:13} A tradition holds that Paul was interred with Saint Peter \emph{ad Catacumbas} by the via Appia until moved to what is now the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. Bede, in his Ecclesiastical History, writes that Pope Vitalian in 665 gave Paul's relics (including a cross made from his prison chains) from the crypts of Lucina to King Oswy of Northumbria, northern Britain. However, Bede's use of the word "relic" was not limited to corporal remains.

Paul, who was quite possibly martyred in Rome, has long been associated with that city and its church. Paul is the patron saint of London.
Elaine Pagels, professor of religion at Princeton University and an authority on Gnosticism, argues that Paul was a Gnostic and that the anti-Gnostic Pastoral Epistles were "pseudo-Pauline" forgeries written to rebut this.

British Jewish scholar Hyam Maccoby contended that the Paul as described in the Book of Acts and the view of Paul gleaned from his own writings are very different people. Some difficulties have been noted in the account of his life. Paul as described in the Book of Acts is much more interested in factual history, less in theology; ideas such as justification by faith are absent as are references to the Spirit, according to Maccoby. He also pointed out that there are no references to John the Baptist in the Pauline Epistles, although Paul mentions him several times in the Book of Acts.

Others have objected that the language of the speeches is too Lukan in style to reflect anyone else's words. Moreover, George Shillington writes that the author of Acts most likely created the speeches accordingly and they bare his literary and theological marks. Conversely, Howard Marshall writes that the speeches were not entirely the inventions of the author and while they may not be accurate word-for-word, the author nevertheless records the general idea of them.

F. C. Baur (1792–1860), professor of theology at Tübingen in Germany, the first scholar to critique Acts and the Pauline Epistles, and founder of the Tübingen School of theology, argued that Paul, as the "Apostle to the Gentiles", was in violent opposition to the original 12 Apostles. Baur considers the Acts of the Apostles were late and unreliable. This debate has continued ever since, with Adolf Deissmann (1866–1937) and Richard Reitzenstein (1861–1931) emphasising Paul's Greek inheritance and Albert Schweitzer stressing his dependence on Judaism.

Maccoby theorized that Paul synthesized Judaism, Gnosticism, and mysticism to create Christianity as a cosmic savior religion. According to Maccoby, Paul's Pharisaism was his own invention, though actually he was probably associated with the Sadducees. Maccoby attributed the origins of Christian anti-Semitism to Paul and claims that Paul's view of women, though inconsistent, reflects his Gnosticism in its misogynist aspects.

Professor Robert Eisenman of California State University, Long Beach argues that Paul was a member of the family of Herod the Great. Professor Eisenman makes a connection between Paul and an individual identified by Josephus as "Saulus," a "kinsman of Agrippa." Another oft-cited element of the case for Paul as a member of Herod's family is found in Romans 16:11 where Paul writes, "Greet Herodion, my kinsman."

Among the critics of Paul the Apostle was Thomas Jefferson who wrote that Paul was the "first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus." Howard Brenton's 2005 play "Paul" takes a skeptical view of his conversion.
F.F. Powell argues that Paul, in his epistles, made use of many of the ideas of the Greek philosopher Plato, sometimes even using the same metaphors and language. For example, in *Phaedrus*, Plato has Socrates saying that the heavenly ideals are perceived as though "through a glass dimly." These words are echoed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12.

References

Notes


[2] Harris, p. 411


Acts 9:21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

[6] "The Canon Debate," McDonald & Sanders editors, 2002, chapter 32, page 577, by James D. G. Dunn: "James, the brother of Jesus, and Paul, the two other most prominent leading figures [beside Peter] in first-century Christianity"


[8] [Acts 22:24-29]


[10] Hebrews 9:15


[14] Harris, p. 316–320


[16] According to the Hebrew Bible and, according to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, an ancestor of Jesus Christ.


[24] through his mother Mary


[27] (PDF) N.T. Wright, "Paul, Arabia and Elijah" (http://www.nwtwrightpage.com/Wright_Paul_Arabia_Elijah.pdf)

[28] [Why did Paul go to Arabia?]


The only indication as to who is leading is in the order of names. At first, the two are referred to as Barnabas and Paul, in that order. Later in the same chapter the team is referred to as Paul and his companions.


Harris


http://www.biblestudy.org/maps/paul-to-rome-map.html


Acts 15:26ff; Galatians 2:1ff


Catholic Encyclopedia: Judaizers (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08537a.htm) see section titled: "The Incident At Antioch"

Catholic Encyclopedia: Judaizers (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08537a.htm): "On their arrival Peter, who up to this had eaten with the Gentiles, "withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision," and by his example drew with him not only the other Jews, but even Barnabas, Paul's fellow-labourer."

http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08537a.htm


Paul does not exactly say that this was his second visit. In Galatians, he lists three important meetings with Peter, and this was the second on his list. The third meeting took place in Antioch. He does not explicitly claim that he did not visit Jerusalem in between this and his first visit.

Note that Paul only writes that he is on his way to Jerusalem, or just planning the visit. There might or might not have been additional visits before or after this visit, if he ever got to Jerusalem.

Romans 15:25,2 Corinthians 8-9, 1 Corinthians 16:1-3


Ireneaus Against Heresies 3.3 (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/an001.i.iv.iv.html):2: the "...Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of Linus the bishop of the episcopate.


Lashway, Calvin. "HOW and WHERE died the Apostle Paul die?" Web: HOW and WHERE did the Apostle Paul die? (http://www.biblestudy.org/question/sauldie.html)


Joseph Barber Lightfoot in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians writes: "At this point [Gal.6:10] the apostle takes the pen from his amanuensis, and the concluding paragraph is written with his own hand. From the time when letters began to be forged in his name [2 Thes. 2:2], it seems to have been his practice to close with a few words in his own handwriting, as a precaution against such forgeries. In the present case he writes a whole paragraph, summing up the main lessons of the epistle in terse, eager, disjointed sentences. He writes it, too, in large, bold characters (Gr. pelikoi grammassin), that his handwriting may reflect the energy and determination of his soul."


[33] The only indication as to who is leading is in the order of names. At first, the two are referred to as Barnabas and Paul, in that order. Later in the same chapter the team is referred to as Paul and his companions.


[35] Harris


[70] Paul and Palestinian Judaism in 1977; Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People in 1983


[73] Rowlands, Christopher. Christian Origins (SPCK 1985) p.113


[76] Moore, Terri D. "Chapter Six: Conclusions on 1 Timothy 2:15." bible.org Aug. 30, 2009:


[78] Kirk, J.R. Daniel. "Was Paul a Misogynist?" Web:


[81] Lactanius, John Chrysostom, Sulpicius Severus all agree with Eusebius' claim that Peter and Paul died under Nero. Lactanium, Of the Manner in Which the Persecutors Died II; John Chrysostom, Concerning Lowliness of Mind 4; Sulpicius Severus, Chronica II.28–29


[85] Maccoby.Ch. 1


[88] The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Being his Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private. Published by the Order of the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library, from the Original Manuscripts, Deposited in the Department of State, With Explanatory Notes, Tables of Contents, and a Copious Index to Each Volume, as well as a General Index to the Whole, by the Editor H. A. Washington. Vol. VII. Published by Taylor Maury, Washington, D.C., 1854.


[90] Plato Phaedrus (http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html) translated by Benjamin Jowett

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• Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* i.26.2
• Rief, John, *Paul's First letter to Corinth* (Penguin 1971)
• Sanders, E.P., *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977)
• Segal, Alan F., "Paul, the Convert and Apostle" in *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Harvard University Press 1986).

**External links**

• St Paul (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kj8z) on In Our Time at the BBC. (listen now (http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/console/b00kj8z/In_Our_Time_St_Paul))
• Catholic Encyclopedia: Paul of Tarsus (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11567b.htm)
• Catholic Perspective on Paul (http://pauliscatholic.com)
• Documentary film on Apostle Paul (http://www.zenit.org/relsenglish-20538)
• Encyclopædia Britannica: Paul (http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Paul), 1911
• Maps of Paul's three missionary journeys and final captive journey (http://www.biblestudy.org/maps/pauls-first-journey-map.html)
• Novena to Saint Paul Apostle (http://www.catholic.net/index.php?option=dedestaca&id=703)
• Saint Paul of Tarsus: the true story (http://www.earlychristians.org/docs_interest/saint_paul_year.html)
• The Apostle and the Poet: Paul and Aratus (http://spindleworks.com/library/rfaber/aratus.htm) Dr. Riemer Faber
Hyperdispensationalism

Hyper-dispensationalism (or ultra-dispensationalism[1] or more rarely "Bullingerism"[2]) is a niche Protestant doctrine that views the teachings of the Apostle Paul both as unique from earlier apostles and as foundational for the church, a perspective sometimes characterized by proponents as the "Pauline Distinctive"[3]. E. W. Bullinger (1837–1913), an Anglican clergyman and scholar, is the best known early expositor of hyper-dispensationalism, although the ideas trace back further to John Nelson Darby (1800–1882).

Hyper-dispensationalism is rejected by mainstream dispensationalism, which holds that the Church began at Pentecost[4] long prior to Paul's conversion to Christianity as described early in the New Testament book entitled "Acts of the Apostles". Popular dispensationalist Harry A. Ironside (1876–1951) declared Bullingerism an "absolutely Satanic perversion of the truth"[5]. Anti-dispensationalists simultaneously admire hyper-dispensationalism as a "consistent Dispensationalism" and condemn it as much like a "cult or sect"[6]. Evangelicals eject adherents as "divisive"[7]. The clearest scholarly references to hyper-dispensationalism are made by Charles C. Ryrie[8] and Charles F. Baker.[9]

Advocates of hyper-dispensationalism accept the term "dispensationalism", but reject the prefix "hyper" or "ultra" as pejorative. Within the United States, advocates often refer to themselves as members of the "Grace Movement"[10], and affiliate with the Grace Gospel Fellowship[11] denomination and its Grace Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

General views

Hyper-dispensationalism holds that the early Christian Church lost "four basic truths" starting near the end of the Apostle Paul's ministry[12]. The four truths are (in order of loss)[13]:

- The Distinctive Message and Ministry of the Apostle Paul
- The Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church, the Body of Christ
- The Difference between Israel and the Church, the Body of Christ
- Justification by Faith Alone, in Christ Alone.

The truths, advocates say, were gradually recovered in reverse order starting during the Protestant Reformation[14]; for example, Martin Luther is credited with recovery of "justification by faith" and John Nelson Darby with "Church Truth".

Hyper-dispensationalists reject water baptism[15][16][17], which divides them from mainstream dispensationalists who are often Baptists, like W. A. Criswell[18], or in earlier times Presbyterians[19][20] like James H. Brookes. Hyper-dispensationalists themselves are divided on the Lord's Supper.
**Divisions**

Hyper-dispensationalists disagree among themselves as to whether the apostle Paul's early ministry was transitional or normative for the church. They differentiate among themselves by terminology reflecting when the normative portion of Paul's ministry began in the book of Acts. The most obvious result of this internal differentiation is whether the Lord's Supper is accepted in their church.

Bullinger held that Paul's authoritative teaching began at the conclusion of the book of Acts, a viewpoint now characterized as "Acts 28" dispensationalism (chapter 28 being the concluding chapter of the book), a position he solidified in cooperation with Charles H. Welch. Other writers holding this position include Sir Robert Anderson, Oscar M. Baker, and Otis Q. Sellers. Acts 28 Dispensationalists distinguish themselves with their belief that today's Church is exclusively revealed in Paul's later writings, in the so-called "Prison Epistles." Acts 28 Dispensationalists tend to reject all ordinances including the Lord's Supper.

The so-called "mid-Acts" position was developed later by Cornelius R. Stam, Charles F. Baker, among others, and reflects their position that Paul's normative ministry began in either the ninth or thirteenth chapter. The mid-Acts position accepts the Lord's Supper.

John Nelson Darby, sometimes called the father of dispensationalism, held views similar to the mid-Acts position. Darby writes:

"Stephen formed the link between Jewish rejection and the position and state of the church which followed...Stephen was the closing of the Jewish 'possibility of the dispensation.' But a new scene now opens—the regular Gentile form and order of the dispensation in the hands of the apostle Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision, the apostle of the Gentiles. Did he then derive it from the apostles? or was he indeed a successor to our Lord by earthly appointment and derivation? No; in no wise."

"if Christianity were the new covenant, which it is not, the Holy Ghost is the seal of faith now as circumcision was then. Matthew 28 was never carried out. The mission to the Gentiles was given up to Paul explicitly (Gal. 2) who was not sent to baptize..."

"the outward symbol and instrument of unity is the partaking of the Lord's supper - for we being many are one 'bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.' And what does Paul declare to be the true intent and testimony of that rite? That whenssoever 'ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.' Here then are found the character and life of the church"

Mainstream dispensationalists are referred to holding the "Acts 2" position in the spectrum, because that chapter describes the events at Pentecost.

**Notes**

[2] J. C. O'Hair. "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ, Chapter 51: 'Did the Church Begin with Pentecost of Acts Two?'" (http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/ohair/HTML/UROC/chapter51.html). "If one believes that the Body of Christ began historically with the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he is given the right hand of fellowship by the "regular" Fundamentalists. If one believes that the Body of Christ began after the close of the "Acts" period, the "regulars" brand him as an "ultradispensationalist" and from their camp goes up the cry "Bullingerism."
[3] Robert Hanna. "The Pauline Legacy—Our Heritage" (http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/articles/1031607735.html). Berean Bible Society. "Unless one recognizes the distinctive message committed to Paul, one is left in darkness and confusion as to his spiritual standing, purpose, and destiny as a child of God."
[4] Harry A. Ironside. "Wrongly Dividing The Word of Truth. Chapter 3: The Transitional Period. Is the Church of The Acts the Body of Christ?" (http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/article/181). "Here we are distinctly informed as to the way in which the Body has been brought into existence, and this is exactly what took place at Pentecost."
[5] Harry A. Ironside. "Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: Ultra-Dispensationalism Examined in the Light of the Holy Scriptures. Chapter 1: What is Ultra-Dispensationalism?" (http://www.gotothebible.com/HTML/wrongly1.html). "Having had most intimate acquaintance with Bullingerism as taught by many for the last forty years, I have no hesitancy in saying that its fruits are evil. It has produced a tremendous crop of heresies throughout the length and breadth of this and other lands, it has divided Christians and wrecked churches and assemblies without..."
number; it has lifted up its votaries in intellectual and spiritual pride to an appalling extent, so that they look with supreme contempt upon Christians who do not accept their peculiar views; and in most instances where it has been long tolerated, it has absolutely throttled Gospel effort at home and sown discord on missionary fields abroad. So true are these things of this system that I have no hesitancy in saying it is an absolutely Satanic perversion of the truth."

[6] Jamin Hubner (2010-07-16). "A Theological Introduction to Hyper-Dispensationalism" (http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php?itemid=4006), Alpha & Omega Ministries, directed by James White (theologian). . "Hyper-Dispensationalism is consistent Dispensationalism. Darby effectively replaced Gods' covenants (i.e covenant with Adam) with his dispensations (i.e. "dispensation of innocence"). But only hyper-dispensationalists fully carry out the implications. In conclusion, it appears that Hyper-Dispensationalism has attributes of both a cult and a sect..."


[12] E. W. Bullinger. "The Loss and Recovery of Truth" (http://thethings2come.org/?p=165). . "We are told, on every hand, today, that we must go back to the first three centuries to find the purity of faith and worship of the primitive church! But it is clear from this comparison of Acts 19:10 and II Timothy 1:15, that we cannot go back to the first century. No, not even to the apostle's own lifetime!"

[13] E. W. Bullinger (1905). "The Loss and Recovery of Truth" (http://thethings2come.org/?p=165). . "It was Pauline truth and teaching from which all had "turned away."...that led necessarily To the loss of the teaching concerning the Mystery; that truth concerning the one Body of Christ... the truth of the Lord's promised return from heaven; and of resurrection[and] the truth as to what God had made us to be in Christ; and "justification by faith""


[16] J.C. O'Hair. quote= Tongues, visions and miraculous signs are inseparably connected with water baptism in the Bible and any Scriptural exegesis which will eliminate the one will eliminate the other. "The Recovery of Lost Bible Truth" (http://www.beranebiblesociety.org/ohair/GRACE WORKS IN ADOBE/RECOVERY OF LOST BIBLE TRUTH, THE.pdf), quote=Tongues, visions and miraculous signs are inseparably connected with water baptism in the Bible and any Scriptural exegesis which will eliminate the one will eliminate the other.

[17] John C. O'Hair. "THE RECOVERY OF LOST TRUTH: LET'S DE-JUDAIZE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST: THIS WILL BRING A MIGHTY REVIVAL." (http://www.beranebiblesociety.org/ohair/GRACE WORKS IN ADOBE/LET'S DE-JUDAIZE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.pdf). . "one of the principal reasons why baptism has caused so much dissunity and so many unpleasant controversies is because many Christian have confused the baptism by Christ in the Spirit (Luke 3:17 and Acts 1:5) with the death baptism of Luke 12:50 and the death baptism of Romans 6:3 and 4. Another reason is that they have not carefully compared the six or more baptisms of the Four Gospels and the Book of Acts with the 'one baptism' of Ephesians 4:5."


. "the Presbyterian Church [+] was more influenced by Dispensationalism than any other denomination."
Hyperdispensationalism

22

References

- Stam, Cornelius R., Things That Differ, 1951, Berean Bible Society, Germantown, WI
- Baker, Charles F., A Dispensational Theology, 1971, Grace Bible College Publications, Grand Rapids, MI

External links

- Writings and recordings of Acts 28 dispensationalist Charles H. Welch (http://www.charleswelch.net/)
- Acts 28 dispensationalist Oscar M. Baker's writings (http://www.tftmin.org/)
- GraceImpact.org (http://www.graceimpact.org/) by Richard Jordan
- 85 Pages in the Bible (http://www.85pagesinthebible.com/) Comprehensive survey of the divisions of Scripture from the Post-Acts dispensational perspective
- Berean Bible Society (http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/history.html) History of the Grace Movement
- Grace Gospel Fellowship (http://www.ggfusa.org/)
- Magnified Word (http://www.magnifiedword.com/index2.htm) site maintained by a former "mid-Acts" hyperdispensationalist adherent

epistles."


[24] Paul M. Sadler. "The Truth About the Truth" (http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org/articles/1023136679.html). “Concerning the Lord's Supper, Pastor Stam has always taught that the Apostle Paul received a special revelation from our Lord regarding communion. The command of Christ is unmistakably clear that it should be observed until He returns for the Church,”

[25] Larry V. Crutchfield (http://www.columbiaseminary.org/aboutus/faculty.html#larryvcrutchfield). The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor. “Darby sees Stephen's testimony as the hinge upon which the transition between the Jewish and Christian order of things swings, for Stephen had seen Jesus in the heavenlies (undoubtedly a reference to Acts 7:55). ‘Thus’, says Darby, ‘he formed the linked between Jewish rejection and the position and state of the church which followed.’ At the death of Stephen, the 'Gentile dispensation' began as a distinct thing because that event served as a witness that the Jews were resisting the Holy Spirit just as their fathers had.”


E. W. Bullinger

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Ethelbert William Bullinger AKC (December 15, 1837 – June 6, 1913) was an Anglican clergyman, Biblical scholar, and ultradispensationalist theologian.

Life and work

He was born in Canterbury, Kent, England, the youngest of five children of William and Mary (Bent) Bullinger.[1] His family traced their ancestry back to Heinrich Bullinger, the Swiss Reformer.[2] His formal theological training was at King's College London from 1860–1861, earning an Associate's degree.[3] After graduation, on October 15, 1861, he married Emma Dobson, thirteen years his senior.[4] He later received a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1881 from Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury who cited Bullinger's "eminent service in the Church in the department of Biblical criticism."[5]

Bullinger's career in the Church of England spanned 1861 until 1888. He began as associate curate in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey in 1861,[4] and was ordained as a priest in the Church of England in 1862.[6] He served as parish curate in Tittleshall from 1863–1866; Notting Hill from 1866–1869; Leytonstone, 1869–1870; then Walthamstow until he became vicar of the newly established parish of St. Stephen's in 1874. He resigned his vicarage in 1888.[7]

In the spring of 1867, Bullinger became clerical secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, a position he would hold till his death in 1913.[8] Bullinger was editor of a monthly journal Things to Come subtitled A Journal of Biblical Literature, with Special Reference to Prophetic Truth. The Official Organ of Prophetic Conferences for over 20 years (1894–1915) and contributed many articles.

In the great Anglican debate of the Victorian era, he was a Low Churchman rather than High Church sacerdotalist.

His three major works were

- *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (1898) ISBN 0-8010-0559-0
- Primary editor of *The Companion Bible* (published in 6 parts, 1909-1922) ISBN 0-8254-2177-2. It was completed after his death by his associates.
These works and many others remain in print (2007).

Bullinger's friends included well-known Zionist Dr. Theodore Herzl. This was a personal friendship, but accorded with Bullinger's belief in a Biblical distinction between the Church and the Jewish People.

**Trinitarian Bible Society**

In 1867, at age 29, Bullinger accepted the office of clerical secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS), an office which he exercised, with rare lapses due to illness in his later years, until his death. Accomplishments of TBS during his secretariat include:

- Completion and publication of a Hebrew version of the New Testament under a TBS contract with Christian David Ginsburg after the demise of Isaac Salkinson.
- Formation of the Brittany Evangelical Mission Society under Pasteur LeCoat and translation of the Bible into the Breton language.
- First-ever Protestant Portuguese Reference Bible.
- Distribution of Spanish language Bibles in Spain after the Spanish Revolution of 1868.

Bullinger was also a practiced musician. As part of his support for the Breton Mission, he collected and harmonized several previously untranscribed Breton hymns on his visits to Trémel, Brittany.

Bullinger's TBS workload in his later years was reduced by the assistance of Henry Charles Bowker and Charles Welch. Their assistance enabled him to focus on *The Companion Bible* in his final years. Bullinger and Ginsburg parted ways, and another edition of Tanakh was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

**Theology**

Bullinger's views were often unique, and sometimes controversial. He is so closely tied to what is now called "hyperdispensationalism" that it is sometimes referred to as Bullingerism. Noted dispensationalist Harry A. Ironside (1876–1951) declared Bullingerism an "absolutely Satanic perversion of the truth" Bullingerism differs from mainstream dispensationalism with regard to the beginning of the church. Mainstream dispensationalism holds that the Church began at Pentecost as described early in the New Testament book entitled "Acts of the Apostles". In stark contrast, Bullinger held that the church, the so-called *Body of Christ*, began after the close of Acts, only revealed in the Prison Epistles of the Apostle Paul.

Bullinger described dispensations as divine "administrations" or "arrangements" wherein God deals at distinct time periods and with distinct groups of people "on distinct principles, and the doctrine relating to each must be kept distinct". He emphasizes that "Nothing but confusion can arise from reading into one dispensation that which relates to another." and lists seven dispensations:
Outside of ultradispensationalism, many other examples of Bullinger's unique views can be found. For example, Bullinger argues that Jesus was crucified with four, not just two, criminals. Bullinger argued for mortality of the soul, the cessation of the soul between death and resurrection. While Bullinger did not express any views concerning the final state of the lost, many of his followers did hold to annihilationism. Purportedly, Bullinger was also a member of the Universal Zetetic Society.

### Footnotes

1. E. W. Bullinger: A Biography, Carey, Juanita, 2000, p.27
9. "THE STORY OF PASTEUR LECOAT. The Breton Mission At Tremel" (http://www.gospelmagazine.org.uk/february1957.pdf). "As Dr. E. W. Bullinger so aptly points out in his book, The Story of the Breton Mission, M. Lecoat had returned to a land of a corrupt religion... an organised crusade was begun to graft the Romish religion on to that of the Druids. Many of the tall-standing stones were transformed into crosses, but, where the stone was too hard for the mason's chisel, crosses and crucifixes were fastened to them. Dr. Bullinger tells how that in one year no less than five thousand were so transformed by the then Bishop of St. Pol de Leon."
11. Harry A. Ironside. "Wrongly Diving the Word of Truth: Ultra-Dispensationalism Examined in the Light of the Holy Scriptures. Chapter 1: What is Ultra-Dispensationalism?" (http://www.gosthebibble.com/HTML/wrongly1.html). "Having had most intimate acquaintance with Bullingerism as taught by many for the last forty years, I have no hesitancy in saying that its fruits are evil. It has produced a tremendous crop of heresies throughout the length and breadth of this and other lands, it has divided Christians and wrecked churches and assemblies without number; it has lifted up its votaries in intellectual and spiritual pride to an appalling extent, so that they look with supreme contempt upon Christians who do not accept their peculiar views; and in most instances where it has been long tolerated, it has absolutely throttled Gospel effort at home and sown discord on missionary fields abroad. So true are these things of this system that I have no hesitancy in saying it is an absolutely Satanic perversion of the truth."
12. E. W. Bullinger. "The Companion Bible, Appendix 181: The Dispensational Position of the Book of the "Acts"" (http://www.levendwater.org/companion/append181.html). "."all the truth"...was reserved, and not permitted to be revealed, until the public proclaiming of "the kingdom" had ended, after the close of the "Acts". (See Notes on the Epp., specially Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.) Then it was, at the commencement of this present interim period during which "blindness in part is happened to Israel" (Romans 11:25), that "the church which is His body" (Ephesians 1:22, 23) began to be formed "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:6, and Note on 15:14)"
13. E. W. Bullinger. "The Companion Bible, Appendix 192. THE PAULINE EPISTLES." (http://www.levendwater.org/companion/append192.html). "It is ignorance of this Divinely given standard that resulats in the deplorable attempts to "square" the teachings of our Lord in the Gospels, which concern the length and breadth of heaven (Ap. 114) and the Jewish Polity, with the teaching of Paul the apostle and bondservant of Jesus Christ in the Church Epistles. And so, when it is found that they cannot be "squared", we have the unseemly utterances and procedure of those who throw over the "Pauline doctrine", as they term it, in favor of "the teaching of Jesus", with contemptuous references to "the Hellenistic tendencies of Paul's mind", &c.; and such statements as "the Master's words must be preferred to a disciple's; "we must get back to Jesus", and so on."
14. "Companion Bible, Appendix 195: THE DIFFERENT AGES AND DISPENSATIONS OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MEN." (http://www.biblestudysite.com/195.htm). "Nothing but confusion can arise from reading into one dispensation that which relates to another. To connect with God said and did in one dispensation with another, in which His administration was on an altogether different principle, is to ensure error. And finally, to take doctrine of late revelation and read it into the time when it was "hidden" leads to disaster. The nations, Israel the Chosen Nation, and the church (Ap 186) are each dealt with in distinct "times" and on distinct principles, and the doctrine relating to each
must be kept distinct.”

[15] E. W. Bullinger. “The Companion Bible, Appendix 164: The “Others” Crucified With The Lord (Matt. 27:38 and Luke 23:32),” (http://www.levendwater.org/companion/append164.html). “Mislead by tradition and the ignorance of Scripture on the part of medieval painters, it is the general belief that only two were crucified with the Lord. But Scripture does not say so...it is clear [from cited Scriptural evidence] that there were four "others" crucified with the Lord...To show that we are not without evidence, even from tradition, we may state that there is a "Calvary" to be seen at Ploubezre near Lannion, in the Cotes-du-Nord, Brittany, known as Les Cinq Croix ("The Five Crosses"). There is a high cross in the center, with four lower ones, two on either side.”


References

External links
• E.W. Bullinger Books Website (http://www.ewbullingerbooks.com/)
• E.W. Bullinger Books online (http://levendwater.org/frameset.htm?books4.htm&books4_inhoudsopgave.htm) (html & pdf)
• The Companion Bible In PDF Format... Free Downloads (http://www.companion-bible.com/)
• Appendixes to The Companion Bible (http://levendwater.org/companion/frameset.htm?index_companion.html&inhoudsopgave_companion.htm) (All 198 appendices to the Bible)
• Google has a limited preview of The Companion Bible (http://books.google.com/books?vid=ISBN0825422035)
• The Companion Bible (Condensed) on line (http://www.companionbiblecondensed.com/)
• The Companion Bible Notes/Appendices in software module format (http://www.bibleanalyzer.com/companion.html) (not PDF images. Fully searchable)
• E.W. Bullinger: Did Jephthah really sacrifice his daughter? (http://www.jba.gr/Articles/jbadec06b.htm)
• Number in Scripture (http://philologos.org/__eb-nis/)
• E.W. Bullinger: Great Cloud of Witnesses (http://www.peterwade.com/articles/bullinger/cloud00.shtml)
• E.W. Bullinger: The Two Natures in the Child of God (http://www.bibleunderstanding.com/twonatures.htm)

For more information on Bullinger's dispensationalism go here : E.W. Bullinger's "How to Enjoy the Bible - Rightly Dividing the Word as to its Times and Dispensations" (http://philologos.org/__eb-htetb/133.htm#2d) and here : E.W. Bullinger's "How to Enjoy the Bible" (http://philologos.org/__eb-htetb/).
John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby (18 November 1800 – 29 April 1882) was an Anglo-Irish evangelist, and an influential figure among the original Plymouth Brethren. He is considered to be the father of modern Dispensationalism. He produced a translation of the Bible based on the Hebrew and Greek texts called The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation from the Original Languages by J. N. Darby.

Biography

Early years

John Nelson Darby was born in Westminster, London, and christened at St. Margaret's on 3 March 1801. He came from an Anglo-Irish landowning family seated at Leap Castle, King's County, Ireland. He was the nephew of Admiral Henry D'Esterre Darby and his middle name was given in recognition of his godfather and family friend, Lord Nelson.

Darby was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Dublin where he graduated Classical Gold Medallist in 1819. Darby embraced Christianity during his studies, although there is no evidence that he formally studied theology. He joined an inn of court, but felt that being a lawyer was inconsistent with his religious belief. He therefore chose ordination as an Anglican clergyman in Ireland, "lest he should sell his talents to defeat justice." In 1825, Darby was ordained deacon of the established Church of Ireland and the following year as priest.
Middle years

Darby became a curate in the Church of Ireland parish of Delgany, County Wicklow, and distinguished himself by convincing Roman Catholic peasants in the Calary area to abandon the Catholic Church. The well-known gospel tract “How the Lost Sheep was Saved”\(^1\) gives his personal account of a visit he paid to a dying shepherd boy in this area, painting a vivid picture of what his work among the poor people involved. He later claimed to have won hundreds of converts to the Church of Ireland. However, the conversions ended when William Magee, the Archbishop of Dublin, ruled that converts were obliged to swear allegiance to George IV as rightful king of Ireland.

Darby resigned his curacy in protest. Soon after, in October 1827, he fell from a horse and was seriously injured. He later stated that it was during this time that he began to believe that the “kingdom” described in the Book of Isaiah and elsewhere in the Old Testament was entirely different from the Christian church.

Over the next five years, he developed the principles of his mature theology—most notably his conviction that the very notion of a clergyman was a sin against the Holy Spirit, because it limited the recognition that the Holy Spirit could speak through any member of the Church. During this time he joined an interdenominational meeting of believers (including Anthony Norris Groves, Edward Cronin, J. G. Bellett, and Francis Hutchinson) who met to “break bread” together in Dublin as a symbol of their unity in Christ. By 1832, this group had grown and began to identify themselves as a distinct Christian assembly. As they traveled and began new assemblies in Ireland and England, they formed the movement now known as the Plymouth Brethren.

It is believed that John Nelson Darby left the Church of Ireland around 1831.\(^2\) He participated in the 1831–33 Powerscourt Conference, an annual meeting of Bible students organized by his friend\(^3\) the wealthy widow Lady Powerscourt (Theodosia Wingfield Powerscourt). At the conference Darby publicly described his ecclesiological and eschatological views, including the pretribulation rapture.\(^4\) For about 40 years William Kelly (1821–1906) was his chief interpreter and continued to be a staunch supporter until his own death. Kelly in his work “John Nelson Darby as I knew him” stated that “a saint more true to Christ's name and word I never knew or heard of”.

Darby defended Calvinist \(^5\) doctrines when they came under attack from within the Church in which he once served. His biographer Goddard \(^6\) states, “Darby indicates his approval of the doctrine of the Anglican Church as expressed in Article XVII of the Thirty-Nine Articles” on the subject of election and predestination. Darby said:

“For my own part, I soberly think Article XVII to be as wise, perhaps I might say the wisest and best condensed human statement of the view it contains that I am acquainted with. I am fully content to take it in its literal and grammatical sense. I believe that predestination to life is the eternal purpose of God, by which, before the foundations of the world were laid, He firmly decreed, by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and destruction those whom He had chosen in Christ out of the human race, and to bring them, through Christ, as vessels made to honour, to eternal salvation.”\(^7\)
Later years

Darby traveled widely in Europe and Britain in the 1830s and 1840s, and established many Brethren assemblies. He gave 11 significant lectures in Geneva in 1840 on the hope of the church (L'attente actuelle de l'église.) [see references] These established his reputation as a leading interpreter of biblical prophecy. The beliefs he disseminated then are still being propagated (in various forms) at such places as Dallas Theological Seminary and Bob Jones University and by authors and preachers such as Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye.

In 1848, Darby became involved in a complex dispute over the proper method for maintaining shared standards of discipline in different assemblies that resulted in a split between Open Brethren, which maintained a congregational form of government and Exclusive Brethren. After that time, he was recognized as the dominant figure among the Exclusives, who also came to be known as "Darbyite" Brethren. He made at least 5 missionary journeys to North America between 1862 and 1877. He worked mostly in New England, Ontario, and the Great Lakes region, but took one extended journey from Toronto to Sydney by way of San Francisco, Hawaii, and New Zealand. A Geographical Index of his letters is currently available and lists where he traveled.[8] He used his classical skills to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek texts. In English he wrote a Synopsis of the Bible and many other scholarly religious articles. He wrote hymns and poems, the most famous being, "Man of Sorrows".[9] He was also a Bible Commentator. He declined however to contribute to the compilation of the Revised Version of the King James Bible.[10]

He died 1882 in Sundridge House, Bournemouth and is buried in Bournemouth, Dorset, England.[11]

Later influence

If one accepted Darby's view of the secret rapture... [Benjamin Wills] Newton pointed out, then many Gospel passages must be "renounced as not properly ours." ...this is precisely what Darby was prepared to do. Too traditional to admit that biblical authors might have contradicted each other, and too rationalist to admit that the prophetic maze defied penetration, Darby attempted a resolution of his exegetical dilemma by distinguishing between Scripture intended for the Church and Scripture intended for Israel...

The task of the expositor of the Bible was, in a phrase that became the hallmark of dispensationalism, "rightly dividing the word of truth".


Darby is noted in the theological world as the father of "dispensationalism", later made popular in the United States by Cyrus Scofield's Scofield Reference Bible. However, Darby held a view that would today be called hyperdispensationalist; for rather than identifying Pentecost as the start of the church age, Darby writes[12]:

"Stephen formed the link between Jewish rejection and the position and state of the church which followed...Stephen was the closing of the Jewish 'possibility of the dispensation.' But a new scene now opens—the regular Gentile form and order of the dispensation in the hands of the apostle Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision, the apostle of the Gentiles. Did he then derive it from the apostles? or was he indeed a successor to our Lord by earthly appointment and derivation? No; in no wise."

Charles Henry Mackintosh, 1820–1896, with his popular style spread Darby's teachings to humbler elements in society and may be regarded as the journalist of the Brethren Movement. Mackintosh popularised Darby, although not his hyperdispensational approach,[14] more than any other Brethren author. In the early twentieth century, the Brethren's teachings, through Margaret E. Barber, influenced the Little Flock of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee[15]

As there was no Christian teaching of a "rapture" before Darby began preaching about it in the 1830s, he is sometimes credited with originating the "secret rapture" theory wherein Christ will suddenly remove His bride, the
Church, from this world before the judgments of the tribulation. Some claim that this book was the origin of the idea of the "rapture." Dispensationalist beliefs about the fate of the Jews and the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Israel put dispensationalists at the forefront of Christian Zionism, because "God is able to graft them in again," and they believe that in His grace he will do so according to their understanding of Old Testament prophecy. They believe that, while the ways of God may change, His purposes to bless Israel will never be forgotten, just as He has shown unmerited favour to the Church, He will do so to a remnant of Israel to fulfill all the promises made to the genetic seed of Abraham.

Criticism
Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and contemporary of Darby published criticism of Darby and Brethrenism.[16] His main criticism was that Darby and the Plymouth Brethren rejected the vicarious purpose of Christ's obedience as well as imputed righteousness. He viewed these of such importance and so central to the gospel that it led him to this statement about the rest of their belief. "With the deadly heresies entertained and taught by the Plymouth Brethren, in relation to some of the most momentous of all the doctrines of the gospel, and to which I have adverted at some length, I feel assured that my readers will not be surprised at any other views, however unscriptual and pernicious they may be, which the Darbyites have embraced and zealously seek to propagate"

Works
- The Writings of J. N. Darby[17] courtesy of Stem Publishing[18]
- The Holy Scriptures (A New Translation from the Original Languages by J. N. Darby)[19] courtesy of Stem Publishing[18]
- A Letter on Free Will by J.N. Darby, Elberfeld, 23 October 1861[20]
- The Collected Writings Of J. N. Darby, Ecclesiastical No. 1, Volume 1: The Character Of Office In The Present Dispensation[21]

References
[2] The year in which Darby left the Church of Ireland, a branch of the Anglican Church, is not certain but a consensus of opinion is that it was possibly around 1831. Searches for formal documentation of his resignation have been made in the Church of Ireland archives, but nothing has been found.
[3] It is widely believed that Darby and Lady Powerscourt were romantically attached but friends persuaded him that any marriage may prove a distraction.
[8] " Thy Precepts (magazine), Jan/Feb 1996, Vol. 11, # 1" (http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com/pdf/Precepts-1996.pdf). "The Correspondents of John Nelson Darby, with geographical Index and Chart of Travels. For the three volumes of Letters of J. N. Darby, it gives the page #, the language it was written in, recipient, place written, and date written; also contains a geographical index and a chart of his travels."
house of Mr. Hammond, an ex-Clergyman of the Church of England." A large following attended the burial, "from eight to ten hundred" participating in prayers, singing hymns (some written by Darby), and reading, with comment, the Scriptures. "There has been a large plain stone to mark the resting place of the richly-gifted servant of the Lord" displaying the caption: JOHN NELSON DARBY "AS UNKNOWN AND WELL KNOWN." DEPARTED TO BE WITH CHRIST, 29TH APRIL 1882. AGED 81 2 COR. V. 21. Lord let me wait for thee alone, My life be only this, To serve Thee here on earth unknown, Then share Thy heavenly bliss. J. N. D

[12] Larry V. Crutchedfield (http://www.columbiaseminary.org/aboutus/faculty.html#larrycrutchfield). The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor. "Darby sees Stephen's testimony as the hinge upon which the transition between the Jewish and Christian order of things swings, for Stephen had seen Jesus in the heavens (undoubtedly a reference to Acts 7:55). 'Thus', says Darby, 'he formed the linked between Jewish rejection and the position and state of the church which followed.' At the death of Stephen, the 'Gentile dispensation' began as a distinct thing because that event serviced as a witness that the Jews were resisting the Holy Spirit just as their fathers had."


[14] Charles Henry Mackintosh. "The Assembly of God; or, The All-sufficiency of the Name of Jesus" (http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/mackintosh/Bk2/ASSEMBLY.html). "The termini of the church's earthly history are Pentecost (Acts 2), and the rapture. (1 Thess, 4: 16, 17)"

[15] Elmer L. Towns (2000-01-01). "The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever: from Pentecost to the Present" (http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=towns_books). Liberty University. Retrieved 2011-03-13. "Years later, Nee To-sheng, better known outside of China as Watchman Nee, was influenced by a single British missionary, Margaret E. Barber. In 1909, Barber had submitted to believer's baptism and left her Anglican mission to become an independent faith worker. She conducted "breaking of bread" meetings similar to those of the Christian Brethren. Nee To-sheng organized the Little Flock, a Brethren-style indigenous Chinese denomination. The True Jesus Church and Little Flock soon had more adherents than all other mission-sponsored churches combined."


• The Watching Servant, Words of Truth: Belfast, Northern Ireland
• John Nelson Darby — as I knew him, William Kelly, Words of Truth: Belfast, Northern Ireland

External links
• My Brethren (http://www.mybrethren.org/bios/framjnd.htm), a biography of J. N. Darby
• The writings of John Nelson Darby (http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/darby/) courtesy of Stem Publishing (http://www.stempublishing.com/)
• The Exclusive Brethren (http://www.theexclusivebrethren.com/), the only site endorsed by Taylor 'Exclusive Brethren'
• Darby & Other Resources (http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/byauthor/5/john_nelson_darby)
• J.N. Darby's Early Years (http://www.pre-trib.org/article-view.php?id=104)
• Correspondence between Darby and Rev. James Kelly of the Church of England – 5 megabytes (http://ia311507.5.megaherz.org/3/items/theclaimsofthechristianlutheranindicatorpdf/theclaimsofthechristianlutheranindicatorpdf)
• Darbyism Its Rise,Progress & Development (http://www.bruederbewegung.de/pdf/grovesdarbyism.pdf)
• Papers of John Nelson Darby (http://archives.li.man.ac.uk/ead/search/?operation=summary&rsid=203286&firstrec=1&numrec=20&highlight=1&hitposition=0) – Archive of Darby's personal papers at the John Rylands University Library, Manchester, England
• Continuing church truth taught by J. N. Darby and his contemporaries (http://www.biblecounsel.homestead.com/)
• Roy A. Huebner: Detailed historian regarding J. N. Darby, early Brethren, their theology, and dispensational truth (http://www.presenttruthpublishers.com/)
Dispensationalist theology

Dispensationalist theology refers to the unified teachings of Dispensationalism that address what other views teach as divergent theologies in the Old Testament and New Testament. Its name reflects a view that biblical history is best understood as a series of dispensations, or separated time-periods, in the Bible.

Each dispensation is said to represent a different way in which God deals with man. Some writers also believe that it also involves a different testing of Man. “These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God’s method of dealing with mankind, in respect to two questions: of sin, and of man’s responsibility,” explained C. I. Scofield. "Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment—marking his utter failure in every dispensation.”

The seven dispensational periods

Dispensationalism seeks to address what many see as opposing theologies between the Old Testament and New Testament. Its name comes from the fact that it sees biblical history as best understood in light of a series of dispensations in the Bible. Most dispensationalists cite seven dispensations although this is not a critical or foundational factor to the theology:

• the dispensation of innocence (Gen 1:1–3:7), prior to Adam's fall,
• of conscience (Gen 3:8–8:22), Adam to Noah,
• of government (Gen 9:1–11:32), Noah to Abraham,
• of patriarchal rule (Gen 12:1–Exod 19:25), Abraham to Moses,
• of the Mosaic Law (Exod 20:1–Acts 2:4), Moses to Christ,
• of grace (Acts 2:4–Rev 20:3—except for Hyperdispensationalists and Ultradispensationalists), the current church age, and
• of a literal, earthly 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom that has yet to come but soon will (Rev 20:4–20:6).

John Nelson Darby did not consider the Garden of Eden to represent a dispensation, and listed only six.

Each one of these dispensations is said to represent a different way in which God deals with man, specifically a different test for man. "These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with mankind, in respect to two questions: of sin, and of man's responsibility," explained C. I. Scofield. "Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment—marking his utter failure in every dispensation.”

Viewing the flow of biblical history as a series of "dispensations" may be seen in some works that predate Darby's dispensationalism. Joachim of Fiore proposed that human history would be divided into the three ages of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The term "dispensation" is drawn from Calvinist theology, as in the Westminster Confession, to describe the different forms of divine worship and law practiced in Judaism and Christianity. Some writers, such as L’Économie Divine by Pierre Poiret (1646–1719), listed multiple dispensations. However, these earlier works did not include the unique testing/failure motif described by Scofield or any hint of the four underlying tenets of classic dispensationalism listed below.

The four dispensational periods

An alternative to the above "seven-dispensations" approach derives from the question: How and by whom is God evangelizing lost men and women at any given time? A pattern can be traced through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. First, through various Gentile nations; second, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the progenitors of the nation Israel; thirdly, through Jesus Christ; fourthly, through the Church, the Body of Christ. (Israel becomes the focus of divine dealings again after the Rapture for 7 more years). This is followed by the Second Coming proper and the instituting of the millennial kingdom.
Dispensational theology

Basic Tenets of Dispensationalism

Progressive Revelation

One of the most important underlying theological concepts for dispensationalists is progressive revelation. While some nondispensationalists start with progressive revelation in the New Testament and refer this revelation back into the Old Testament, dispensationalists begin with progressive revelation in the Old Testament and read forward in a historical sense. Therefore there is an emphasis on discontinuity as seen in Scripture. Biblical covenants are intricately tied to the dispensations. When these Biblical covenants are compared and contrasted, the result is a historical ordering of different dispensations. Also with regard to the different Biblical covenant promises, dispensationalists place more emphasis on to whom these promises were written, the original recipients. This has led to certain fundamental dispensational beliefs, such as a distinction between Israel and the church.

Historical-Grammatical Interpretation

Another important theological concept is the emphasis on what is referred to as the historical-grammatical method of interpretation. This is often popularly referred to as the "literal" interpretation of Scripture. Just as it is with progressive revelation, the historical-grammatical method is not a concept or practice that is exclusive to dispensationalists. However, a dispensational distinctive is created when the historical-grammatical method of interpretation is closely coupled with an emphasis on progressive revelation along with the historical development of the covenants in Scripture.

Distinction Between Israel and the Church

All dispensationalists perceive a clear distinction between Israel and the church, particularly as different groups who receive a different set of promises. Dispensationalists hold that God provided the nation of Israel with specific promises which will be fulfilled at a future time in the Jews. The Church has received a different set of promises than that of Israel. Most dispensationalists also recognize "membership" overlap between Israel and the Church. Jewish Christians such as Paul, Peter and John are in this category. While most do not believe that Israel and the church are mutually exclusive groups, there is a small minority of past and present dispensationalists who do. Those who do hold that Israel and the church are mutually exclusive include some classical dispensationalists and virtually all ultradispensationalists.

Other Proposed Distinctions: Law and Grace

Classical dispensationalism teaches that law and grace are mutually exclusive concepts. Statements made by Scofield and other early classic dispensationalists teach a radical law-grace distinction. In other words, they teach that law contains no grace, and that grace is not conditioned on keeping the law. This does not mean that grace was missing from the dispensation of law, only that the law itself was diametrically opposed to grace, which operated by other means (such as promises and blessings). Some modern dispensationalists disagree with making such a radical distinction. In fact, Daniel Fuller, a non-dispensationalist, stated in his book Gospel and Law (p. 51) that "Although today's dispensationalism explains the relationship between law and grace in wording that is different from that of covenant theology, there is no substantial difference in meaning."
Types of dispensationalism

Traditional dispensationalism

The traditional view is the majority view for dispensationalists today. John Walvoord and Charles Ryrie are two traditional dispensational authors. The Revised Scofield Bible of the 1960s also reflects a traditional dispensational view, which is why traditional dispensationalists are sometimes called "Revised" dispensationalists.

Progressive dispensationalism

In the late 1980s a number of dispensational scholars—in particular Craig A. Blaising, Darrell L. Bock, and Robert L. Saucy -- proposed a significant new position developed from within dispensationalism. The major difference between traditional and progressive dispensationalism is in how each views the relationship of the present dispensation to the past and future dispensations.

Traditional dispensationalists perceive the present age of grace to be a parenthesis or "intercalation" with relation to past and future dispensations. In general that means God's plans as revealed in the past dispensations have been "put on hold" until after the rapture. Progressive dispensationalists however hold that this present dispensation is a key link between past dispensations and the future dispensations. In general that means God's plans have continued in this present dispensation, marking it as a crucial link between past and future dispensations and not a parenthesis. This idea of a key link or progression between dispensations has resulted in the label progressive dispensationalism.

Progressive dispensationalism holds much in common with traditional dispensationalism, including a distinction between Israel and the Church, a future rapture, a 7 year tribulation, and the rule of Christ over the earth centered in Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom.

Both progressive and traditional dispensationalists hold to a clear distinction between Israel and the Church. In short, God has provided the nation of Israel with specific promises such as possession of the land, promises which will be fulfilled in the future. Both Progressive and traditional dispensationalists do recognize some "membership" overlap between the Israel and the Church: Jewish Christians such Paul, Peter, and John are both Jewish (of Israel) and Christian (members of the church). This is in contrast to ultradispensationalists who see the Church and Israel as mutually exclusive.

Both progressive and traditional dispensationalists hold to a distinctly "dispensational" end-time view with a pretribulation rapture and a millennial kingdom with Jesus physically reigning from Jerusalem. This common view with traditional dispensationalism is also what clearly distinguishes progressive dispensationalism from historical premillennialism.

The reasons for progressives holding to a progression of dispensations as opposed to a parenthesis is related to: 1) the relationship between the covenants, and 2) hermeneutics.

Relationship between the covenants

One of the most crucial covenants which highlight the differences between progressive and traditional dispensationalists is the new covenant. In the past, dispensationalists have had a surprising variety of views with regard to the new covenant. Some dispensationalists (Charles Ryrie, Walvoord in the 1950s) argued for two new covenants: one new covenant for the church and another new covenant for Israel. Other dispensationalists (Darby and John Master) argued for one new covenant applied only to Israel. And still other dispensationalists (Scofield and John McGahey 1950s) have argued for one new covenant for 1) believing Israel today and an ongoing partial fulfillment, and for 2) a future believing Israel when Jesus returns for a complete fulfillment.

Progressive dispensationalists, like Scofield and McGahey, argue for one new covenant with an ongoing partial fulfillment and a future complete fulfillment for Israel. Progressives hold that the new covenant was inaugurated by Christ at the last supper. Progressives hold that while there are aspects of the new covenant currently being fulfilled,
there is yet to be a final and complete fulfillment of the new covenant in the future. This concept is sometimes referred to as an already-but not yet fulfillment.

Hermeneutics
Both traditional and progressive dispensationalists share the same historical-grammatical hermeneutic. As with all dispensationalists, progressive revelation is emphasized so that the dispensationalist interprets the Old Testament in such a way as to retain the original meaning and audience. Thus progressives, like traditionalists, place great emphasis on the original meaning and audience of the text.

The primary differences in hermeneutics between traditionalists and progressives are that 1) progressives are more apt to see partial or ongoing fulfillment, and 2) progressives are more apt to utilize Complementary hermeneutics.

These differences between traditionalists and progressives show up in how one views the Old Testament texts and promises in the New Testament and how they are handled by the New Testament writers.

For traditionalists who perceive the present dispensation as a parenthesis, the standard approach has been to view Old Testament quotations in the New Testament as applications rather than fulfillment. If an Old Testament quotation is said to have a fulfillment role in the New Testament, then that may imply that the present dispensation is no longer a parenthesis, but has a relationship or connection with the prior dispensation.

In contrast, progressives, instead of approaching all Old Testament quotations in the New Testament as application, attempt to take into account the context and grammatical-historical features of both OT and New Testament texts. An Old Testament quote in the New Testament might turn out to be an application, but it also might be a partial fulfillment or a complete fulfillment or even something else.

Complementary hermeneutics means that previous revelation (such as the Old Testament) has an added or expanded meaning alongside the original meaning. For example in Jeremiah 31:31-34, the original recipients of the new covenant were Jews - i.e., "the house of Israel and the house of Judah." Progressives hold that in Acts 2, believing Jews first participated in the new covenant based on Jer 31:31-34. Gentiles were not named as original participants. However, additional revelation came in Acts 9-10 concerning believing Gentiles where God (through Peter and Cornelius) formally accepted believing Gentiles as co-heirs with the Jews. In other words God used additional NT revelation to further expand the participants of the new covenant to include believing Gentiles. God did not replace the original recipients or change the original meaning of the new covenant, he simply expanded it. This expansion of meaning while keeping the original intact is called complementary hermeneutics.

Hyper-dispensationalism and Ultra-dispensationalism
The majority of dispensationalists are known as Acts 2 dispensationalists, or mainstream dispensationalism. They believe the present church began on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. The majority also believe the New Testament epistles of James through Jude were written directly to the present church. Likewise, most dispensationalists also believe the doctrine contained in the Four Gospels also pertains to the present church.

However, there are two minority camps within dispensationalism commonly referred to as hyper-dispensationalists and ultra-dispensationalists. One camp, known as the Mid-Acts view, believe the church began with the Apostle Paul in Acts chapters 9-15. The second camp believe that the church began with the Apostle Paul in Acts 28:28 in Paul's announcement "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."[3] The latter camp differs over the relevance of Paul's ministry from the middle of Acts to the end of the book, and consequently over Paul's epistles written prior to the so-called Prison Epistles.

Both camps believe that the Church of today is based on Paul's unique ministry. This belief is referenced in Scripture in what may be referred to as the "Pauline Distinctive" and the "Gospel of the Grace of God", and marks an unmistakable shift away from the Mosaic law and the beginning of a completely new Church, called the physical "Body of Christ" consisting of both Jews and Gentiles "in one body."[10] It is this distinction, rather than eschatology as such, that marks both camps.
One notable implication of both hyper-dispensationalism and ultra-dispensationalism is the view that the doctrine contained in the four Gospels (biographies of Jesus' earthly ministry) and many of the New Testament epistles written by the Twelve Apostles was applicable to the Jews of Jesus' day, and which will come to fruition in the coming millennial kingdom. These books are held as proclaiming the "Gospel of the Kingdom", and as such are not applicable for the Christian, largely Gentile, church of today. The Pauline Epistles are held to be the primary authority for the Church as they proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God.

The prefixes "hyper" or "ultra" simply mean "farther than", and are not meant to be derogatory terms, although some mainstream dispensationalists use them as such. These two groups are called "hyper-dispensationalists" and "ultra-dispensationalists" because they tend to take dispensational concepts farther than their more traditional brethren.

**Classical dispensationalism**

Early dispensational writers such as Darby and Chafer are referred to as classical dispensationalists. This view differs from today's traditional or "revised" dispensationalists. The early Scofield Bible (but not the Revised Scofield Bible) reflects a classical dispensational view. Classical dispensationalists are a small minority today, and Miles Stanford is one writer who represents this point of view.

**Biblical arguments in favor of dispensationalism**

- The Apostles determined at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) that it was not necessary for Gentiles to become Jewish in order to become Christians. Thus, the church is not a sect of Judaism but a separate entity.
- The term "Israel" is used 75 times in the New Testament. At least 73 of the 75 times, it refers to the physical nation of Israel.
- Similarly, it is argued that the terms "church" and "kingdom" are never used interchangeably in Scripture.
- Paul claims that Israel will be grafted in again (Rom 11).

**Biblical arguments in opposition to dispensationalism**

- The issues between dispensationalist theology and others involve issues in biblical interpretation, including taking texts literally or figuratively, contextually or hermeneutically, issues involving predictive prophecy concerning Israel, conditions upon prophesies, and interpreting texts in (eisegesis), or (exegesis).
- For example, interpreting the Book of Revelation, the New Jerusalem's dimensions are accepted at face value, including its height of 12,000 stadia (about 1,400 miles) as literal, and understanding the seven cities of Asia to represent periods of church history figuratively.
- Regarding conditions: Deuteronomy 28:58–64 indicates that the promises of God were conditional. "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book [...] the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone." The conditional nature of predictive prophecy is explained clearly in Jer 18:1–10, with immediate application to God's people in Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 11–17). It is also the subject of the entire book of Jonah. Both Jeremiah and Jonah indicate that prophecies can be conditional even when the conditions are not explicitly stated. Other prophecies without stated conditions are understood as conditional (e.g., 2 Sam 12:14–23).
- One example of differing opinions is contained in Titus 2:13, in which some separate the "glorious hope" from the "blessed appearance" by the seven-year tribulation period.
- Progressive Dispensationalists conceives of the church as a substitution for the Kingdom of God, and as the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose and plan: the faithful remnant of the Jews (the faithful apostles and the earliest Jewish disciples) accepted Jesus as Messiah, joined by a great multitude of Gentiles who have come to faith through their ministry. Progressives see the church as the new Israel, and is the heir of God's promises to the
unbelieving nation. This theme begins with the preaching of John the Baptizer (see Matt 3:9–10), continues throughout the ministry of Jesus (see Matt 21:43), and is confirmed by the apostolic ministry (Acts 10:35–43; Rom 9:22–33; 1 Pet 2:4–10; etc.).

- Romans 11 speaks of the "olive tree" (Israel) as having branches broken off (unbelieving Jews) and branches grafted in (believing Gentiles). The broken branches can be grafted back in, however, if the unbelieving Jews were to come to faith in Jesus: "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again" (Rom 11:23). As far as God is concerned, then, the entire tree—roots, trunk, natural branches (the faithful remnant), and grafted branches (believing Gentiles)—is still Israel and subject to divine blessing under the New Covenant. Classical Dispensational theology holds that Israel and the church are two completely separate entities, and the church (wild olive branch) is held by the root - Israel, specifically Paul's letters.

- Passages such as Deut 6:4 ("Hear, O Israel, the L ORD our God, the L ORD is one." NIV) and Ps 103:17–18 ("But from everlasting to everlasting the L ORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.") are seen as stating that there is only one entity and one covenant. (Dispensational theology - "his" covenant does not necessarily imply only "one" covenant. God made a covenant with "Abraham" and his "Seed" - meaning Christ. Abraham's children through Jacob (Israel) are promised the land portions, esp Ezekiel's prophesies, and Christ's children are promised eternal life, and inheritance reserved in heaven.)

- Jeremiah 31 says that the New Covenant will be with the "house of Israel" and the "house of Judah." (Dispensational theology take this as to mean the New Covenant described in Ezekiel for the Kingdom Age (1,000 yr reign of Christ).) Progressive dispensational blend Israel with the Church.

- Progressive Dispensationalists claim that passages in which "kingdom" and "church" are interchangeable. These include the Parables of the Kingdom (Mark 4; Matt 13; Luke 8); Jesus' veiled prediction of His resurrection (Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16,18; Matt 26:29); verses about entering or seeing the kingdom (Classical Dispensational see entering, seeing, inheritance as a "reward" for faithful service)(e.g., Mark 10:23–25; Matt 19:23–24; Luke 18:24–25; John 3:3,5); the spiritual nature of the kingdom (Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20); and Christians as citizens of the kingdom (e.g., Col 1:13; Rev 1:6; 5:10). A key passage is Christ's announcement that He will found His church and give to Peter the keys of the kingdom (Matt 16:18–19), which is analogous to saying, "I will build my house and give you the keys to my residence." (Dispensational theology sees Peter as an apostle to the circumcised (Israel), not to the Gentiles.) Progressive Dispensational claim "Israel", "God's people," and "the church" are interchangeable based on Rom 9:6-8 states that "not all those who are descended from Israel are Israel," going on to indicate that genetic hereditary links to Abraham do not constitute membership in the true Israel, although faith in Christ does. (Dispensational theology - this could also mean those who are children by lineage are not children of faith, however some in Israel are children of faith.)

- Galatians 3 indicates that there is no "Jew or Greek" in Christ, but only those with faith in Christ, etc. At the end of Galatians, Paul says, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God." If there is no circumcision or uncircumcision (of the flesh), what is this "Israel of God"? Progressive Dispensational claims it must be the saved believers of the "New Covenant", who have experienced the circumcision of the heart mentioned in Rom 1:28–29 and Col 2:11–13. (Dispensational theology recognizes 3 classes now, Jews, Gentiles, and the New Creation, not abolishing the people of Israel, and not counting unbelieving Gentiles into New Creations.)

- According to Progressives, Dispensational theology portrays a God with changing covenants and requirements that may not be part of a single plan for salvation. They claim it is contrary to the orthodox understanding that God is immutable. (Dispensational theology simply sees God working differently in different ways at different times. God can still be immutable and work in different ways to different people in different times.)

- Saved believers of the new covenant are God's children irrespective of their race; this is a major theme in the New Testament: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (the Beatitudes - Matthew 5:9 and
Dispensationalist theology


• Progressive claim Dispensationalists de-emphasize human efforts to achieve peace because of the belief that an increase of war and famine is prophesied and inevitable. Some dispensationalists have taught that international peace institutions such as the United Nations may be paving the way for the reign of the Antichrist. (Dispensational theology simply recognize Christ’s prophecies, and believe Jesus words of what will happen. Paul says that the removal of believers must happen (Rapture) for the Son of Perdition to come, so the claim that dispensationalists are lazy, and de-emphasize human effort is error.)

• In Matt 24:36, 42, 44 we find "No one knows about the day and hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father [...] because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him," and Acts 1:7 states, "It is not for you to know the dates or times which the Father has set by his own authority." Progressives claim Dispensational violate these statements by claiming to predict roughly (or sometimes exactly) when prophesied events will occur. (Dispensational theology simply looks forward to the Coming of Christ, and His Kingdom.)

• Some that have claimed dispensational theology draw up purported timetables for the fulfillment of prophecy. For example, dispensationalist Hal Lindsey wrote a book with the title The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon. None of the prophecies made by Lindsey were fulfilled. Edgar Whisenant's 88 Reasons Why the Rapture will be in 1988 has likewise been set aside by the passing of the years.

• Progressives claim the old distinction between Jew and Gentile is permanently erased in Christ: "Remember that at the time you were separated from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:12–14). (Dispensational theology say there is still two groups of people, only the hostility between the two has been destroyed, not the specific people groups. Gentile believers are "brought near" through Christ.)

• The Apostle Paul describes one plan of salvation open to Gentile and Jew alike (Rom 1:16–17; Gal 3:26–29). (Dispensational theology include two separate messages/gospels, one revealed by revelation to Paul - the Apostle to the Gentiles, and one to Peter, the Apostle to the Jews. Paul's gospel is found in 1 Cor 15:1-4.)

Alternatives to dispensationalism

Prior to dispensationalism's 19-20th century inception and systemization, Covenant Theology was the prominent Protestant view regarding redemptive history and is still the view of the Reformed churches. A relatively recent view, which is seen as a third alternative, especially among Reformed Baptists, is called New Covenant Theology.

Latter Day Saint Beliefs

In the Latter Day Saint movement, a dispensation is a period of time in which God gave priesthood authority to men on the Earth through prophetic callings. Between each dispensation is an apostasy where the priesthood is absent.[11] The LDS Bible Dictionary says:

A dispensation of the gospel is a period of time in which the Lord has at least one authorized servant on the earth who bears the holy priesthood and the keys, and who has a divine commission to dispense the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth.[12]

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that there have been many dispensations, and use the Bible and modern revelation to identify and clarify some of them.[12] They also make note of dispensations occurring among the Lost Tribes of Israel as well as Book of Mormon peoples, namely the Nephites and the Jaradites.[12]
Adamic Dispensation

According to Latter-day Saint scriptures an angel appeared to Adam and Eve soon after they were driven out of the Garden of Eden, who taught them the gospel and gave him priesthood authority which he passed down to his children. (see Moses 5:6–9, Moses 6:64–65) Eventually they “began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish” (see Moses 5:12–13) and the priesthood was lost thus ending the dispensation in apostasy.

Dispensation of Enoch

See (Moses 7:69; Doctrine and Covenants D&C 107:48, D&C 107:53.

After Enoch and the people of Zion were taken from the earth, the wicked people became very numerous.

Dispensation of Noah

See Moses 8:19–20.

Dispensation of the meridian of time

This dispensation’s authority was in Jesus Christ himself and then with the apostles after his death and resurrection. Following their death, shortly after the record of the Bible, and before the Nicene creed, the Earth fell into the great apostasy.

Dispensation of the fulness of times

The dispensation of the fulness of times is the last dispensation before the second coming of Jesus Christ. It was begun with the restoration of the church in 1830 and continued with the restoration of all the priesthood keys of each prior dispensation restored.

References


[3] [Acts 28:28 ”Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”]

[4] [Romans 11:13 “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.”]

[5] [Romans 16:25 ”Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.”]

[6] [Acts 20:24 ”But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”]

[7] [Romans 8:3 ”For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”]

[8] [Ephesians 1: 22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”]

[9] [Ephesians 5:30 ”For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”]

[10] [Ephesians 2:16 “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”]


Dispensationalism is a nineteenth-century evangelical development based on a futurist biblical hermeneutic that sees a series of chronologically successive "dispensations" or periods in history in which God relates to human beings in different ways under different Biblical covenants. As a system, dispensationalism is rooted in the writings of John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) and the Brethren Movement. The theology of dispensationalism consists of a distinctive eschatological "end times" perspective, as all dispensationalists hold to premillennialism and most hold to a pretribulation rapture. Dispensationalists believe that the nation of Israel (not necessarily the same as the state of Israel) is distinct from the Christian Church, and that God has yet to fulfill His promises to national Israel. These promises include the land promises, which in the future result in a millennial kingdom where Christ, upon His return, will rule the world from Jerusalem for a thousand years. In other areas of theology, dispensationalists hold to a wide range of beliefs within the evangelical and fundamentalist spectrum.

With the rise of dispensationalism, some conservative Protestants came to interpret the Book of Revelation as predicting future events (futurism), rather than predicting events that have taken place throughout history (historicism) or predominantly associated to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (preterism).

Concepts

Progressive revelation

One of the most important underlying theological concepts for dispensationalism is progressive revelation. While some non-dispensationalists start with progressive revelation in the New Testament and refer this revelation back into the Old Testament, dispensationalists begin with progressive revelation in the Old Testament and read forward in a historical sense. Therefore there is an emphasis on a gradually developed unity as seen in the entirety of Scripture. Biblical covenants are intricately tied to the dispensations. When these Biblical covenants are compared and contrasted, the result is a historical ordering of different dispensations. Also with regard to the different Biblical covenant promises, dispensationalism places emphasis on to whom these promises were written, the original recipients. This has led to certain fundamental dispensational beliefs, such as a distinction between Israel and the Church.

Historical-grammatical interpretation

Another important theological concept is the emphasis on what is referred to as the historical-grammatical method of interpretation. This is often popularly referred to as the "literal" interpretation of Scripture. Just as Israel literally experienced the curses spoken of in the Old Testament, dispensationalists believe that they will one day, literally, receive the blessings spoken of in the Old Testament. Just as it is with progressive revelation, the historical-grammatical method is not a concept or practice that is exclusive just to dispensationalists. However, a dispensational distinctive is created when the historical-grammatical method of interpretation is closely coupled with an emphasis on progressive revelation along with the historical development of the covenants in Scripture.

Distinction between Israel and the Church

All dispensationalists hold to a clear distinction between Israel and the Church. Israel is an ethnic nation consisting of Jews, beginning with Abraham and continuing in existence to the present. The church consists of all saved individuals in this present dispensation - i.e., from the "birth of the Church" in Acts until the time of the Rapture. The distinction between Israel and the Church is not mutually exclusive, as there is a recognized overlap between the two. The overlap consists of Jewish Christians (such as Peter and Paul) who are ethnically Jewish and also have faith in Jesus Christ. Dispensationalists also believe that toward the end of the Tribulation, Israel as a nation will turn and embrace Jesus as their Messiah right before His second coming during the Great Tribulation. The
spectrum of teaching on Israel and the Church may be depicted as below:[9]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocates</th>
<th>Dual Covenant Theology</th>
<th>Classical Dispensationalism</th>
<th>Progressive Dispensationalism</th>
<th>New Covenant Theology</th>
<th>Covenant Premillennialism</th>
<th>Covenant Theology</th>
<th>Supersessionism</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Classical dispensationalists refer to the present day Church as a "parenthesis" or temporary interlude in the progress of Israel's prophesied history.[10] Progressive dispensationalism "softens" the Church/Israel distinction by seeing some Old Testament promises as expanded by the New Testament to include the Church. However, progressives never view this expansion as replacing promises to its original audience, Israel. [11]

New Covenant Theology is the middle-ground between dispensationalism and supersessionism. In Catholicism and Covenantalism, the church is not a replacement for the nation of Israel but an expansion of it where Gentiles are "grafted into" the existing covenant community.[12]

**Dispensations**

The label "dispensationalism" is derived from the idea that biblical history is best understood through division into a series of chronologically successive dispensations. The number of dispensations held are typically three, four, seven or eight. The three- and four-dispensation schemes are often referred to as minimalist, as they recognize the commonly held major breaks within Biblical history. The seven- and eight-dispensation schemes are often closely associated with the announcement or inauguration of certain Biblical covenants. Below is a table comparing the various dispensational schemes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schemes</th>
<th>Genesis 1-3</th>
<th>Genesis 3-8</th>
<th>Genesis 9-11</th>
<th>Genesis 12 to Exodus 19</th>
<th>Exodus 20 until Birth of the Church</th>
<th>Church Age until Rapture</th>
<th>Revelation 20:4-6</th>
<th>Revelation 20-22</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 or 8</td>
<td>Innocence or Edenic</td>
<td>Conscience or Antediluvian</td>
<td>Civil Government</td>
<td>Patriarchal or Promise</td>
<td>Mosaic or Law</td>
<td>Grace or Church</td>
<td>Millennial Kingdom</td>
<td>Eternal State or Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dispensational Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Dispensational Scheme</td>
<td>Patriarchal</td>
<td>Mosaic</td>
<td>Ecclesial</td>
<td>Zionic</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Dispensational Scheme (minimalist)</td>
<td>Law</td>
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**Start of the Church Age**

Mainstream dispensationalists such as Scofield [13] [14] and Ironside [15] identify Pentecost, in the second chapter of Acts, with the start of the Church as distinct from Israel; this may be referred to as the 'Acts 2' position. So-called hyperdispensationalists believe that the church started after Acts 2, focusing primarily on the ministry of Paul. Advocates of the 'mid Acts' position, such as Darby [16] [17] identify the start of the church after the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, or with the salvation of Saul in Acts 9,[18] or with Paul's first missionary journey in Acts 13. The 'Acts 28' position, most notably expounded by E. W. Bullinger, begins the church after the 28th and concluding chapter of Acts. Hyperdispensationalists are considered divisive[19] notably because they reject[20] the rite of water baptism practiced by almost all Christian denominations.
Dispensationalists are premillenialists who affirm a future, literal 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ which merges with and continues on to the eternal state in the "new heavens and the new earth,"[21] and they hold that the millennial kingdom will be theocratic in nature and not mainly soteriological, as it is viewed by George Ladd and others who hold to a non-dispensational form of premillennialism. Dispensationalism is known for its views respecting the nation of Israel during this millennial kingdom reign, in which Israel as a nation plays a major role and regains a king, a land, and an everlasting kingdom.

The vast majority of dispensationalists hold to the pretribulation rapture, with small minorities holding to either a mid-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture.[22]
**History**

The concept of arranging divisions in Biblical history dates back to Irenaeus in the second century. Other Christian writers and leaders since then, such as Augustine of Hippo and Joachim of Fiore (1135–1202), have also offered their own arrangements of history.[1] Many Protestant and Calvinist writers, including Herman Witsius, Francis Turretin, and Isaac Watts also developed theological schemes and divisions in history, in particular after the Westminster Confession of Faith noted "various dispensations." Other concepts such as premillennialism and the rapture also predated dispensationalism as a system. Stemming from the Reformed tradition emerged the Covenant Theology, which deals with biblical history as different covenants between God and mankind, but not dispensations.

As a system, dispensationalism is rooted in the Plymouth Brethren movement in the 1830s of Ireland and England, and in the teachings of John Nelson Darby (1800–1882). Darby traveled extensively to continental Europe, New Zealand, Canada and the United States in an attempt to make converts to the Brethren movement. Over time, Darby's eschatological views grew in popularity in the United States, especially among Baptists and Old School Presbyterians.[2] United States of America

John Nelson Darby is recognized as the father of dispensationalism,[1] later made popular in the United States by Cyrus Scofield's Scofield Reference Bible. Charles Henry Mackintosh, 1820–1896, with his popular style spread Darby's teachings to humbler elements in society and may be regarded as the journalist of the Brethren Movement. CHM popularised Darby more than any other Brethren author.

As there was no Christian teaching of a "rapture" before Darby began preaching about it in the 1830s, he is sometimes credited with originating the "secret rapture" theory wherein Christ will suddenly remove His bride, the Church, from this world before the judgments of the tribulation. Dispensationalist beliefs about the fate of the Jews and the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Israel put dispensationalists at the forefront of Christian Zionism, because "God is able to graft them in again," and they believe that in His grace he will do so according to their understanding of Old Testament prophecy. They believe that, while the methodologies of God may change, His purposes to bless Israel will never be forgotten, just as He has shown unmerited favour to the Church, He will do so to a remnant of Israel to fulfill all the promises made to the genetic seed of Abraham.

Dispensationalism was first introduced to North America by James Inglis (1813–1872), through a monthly magazine called *Waymarks in the Wilderness* (published intermittently between 1854 and 1872). In 1866, Inglis organized the Believers’ Meeting for Bible Study, which introduced dispensationalist ideas to a small but influential circle of American evangelicals. After Inglis’ death, James H. Brookes (1830–1898), a pastor in St. Louis, organized the
Dispensationalism

Niagara Bible Conference to continue the dissemination of dispensationalist ideas. Dispensationalism was boosted after Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) learned of “dispensational truth” from an unidentified member of the Brethren in 1872. Moody became close to Brookes and other dispensationalists, and encouraged the spread of dispensationalism, but apparently never learned the nuances of the dispensationalist system.

Dispensationalism began to evolve during this time, most significantly when a significant body of dispensationalists proposed the "pre-tribulation” Rapture. Dispensationalist leaders in Moody's circle include Reuben Archer Torrey (1856–1928), James M. Gray (1851–1925), Cyrus I. Scofield (1843–1921), William J. Erdman (1833–1923), A. C. Dixon (1854–1925), A. J. Gordon (1836–1895) and William Eugene Blackstone, author of the bestselling book of the 1800s titled, “Jesus is Coming” (Endorsed by Torrey and Erdman). These men were activist evangelists who promoted a host of Bible conferences and other missionary and evangelistic efforts. They also gave the dispensationalist movement institutional permanence by assuming leadership of the new independent Bible institutes such as the Moody Bible Institute (1886), the Bible Institute of Los Angeles—now Biola University (1908), and the Philadelphia College of the Bible—now Philadelphia Biblical University (1913). The network of related institutes that soon sprang up became the nucleus for the spread of American dispensationalism.

The efforts of C.I. Scofield and his associates introduced dispensationalism to a wider audience in America through his Scofield Reference Bible. The publication of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909 by the Oxford University Press for the first time displayed overtly dispensationalist notes to the pages of the biblical text. The Scofield Reference Bible became a popular Bible used by independent Evangelicals and Fundamentalists in the U.S. Evangelist and Bible teacher Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871–1952), who was influenced by C.I. Scofield, founded Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, which has become the flagship of Dispensationalism in America. More recently, the Baptist Bible Seminary in Clark Summit, Pennsylvania (USA), became another dispensational school.

The Grace Movement, which began in the 1930s with the teaching ministries of J.C. O'Hair, Cornelius R. Stam, Henry Hudson and Charles Baker has been labeled "ultra" or "hyper" dispensationalism. The term serves to distinguish a theological system that departs from the tenets of dispensationalism.

The contrasts between law and grace, prophecy and mystery, Israel and the Church, the body of Christ were promoted by Scofield, Barnhouse and Ironside, then studied and taught by O'Hair, Stam and other "grace" teachers. It is however contended by dispensational teachers such as Charles C. Ryrie, J. Dwight Pentecost and Arnold Fruchtenbaum that ultradispensationalism is removed enough from dispensationalism to not any longer be dispensationalism at all.

Dispensationalism has become very popular with American evangelicalism, especially among nondenominational Bible churches, Baptists, Pentecostal and Charismatic groups. Most mainline Protestants generally reject dispensationalism.

Influence
Dispensationalism rejects the notion of supersessionism, sees the Jewish people as the true people of God, and sees the modern State of Israel as identical to the Israel of the Bible. John Nelson Darby taught, and most subsequent dispensationalists have consistently maintained, that God looks upon the Jews as his chosen people even as they remain in rejection of Jesus Christ, and God continues to have a place for them in the dispensational, prophetic scheme of things. Dispensationalists teach that a remnant within the nation of Israel will be born again, called of God, and by grace brought to realize they crucified their Messiah. Dispensationalism is unique in teaching that the Church is a provisional parenthesis, a "mystery" period, meaning that it was not revealed in the Old Testament, directly, which period will end with the rapture of the church and the Jewish remnant entering the Great Tribulation. Israel will finally recognize Jesus as their promised Messiah during the trials that come upon them in this Tribulation. Darby's teachings envision Judaism as continuing to enjoy God's protection literally to the End of Time, and teach that God has a separate 'program', to use J. Dwight Pentecost's term, for each Israel and the Church. Dispensationalists teach that God has eternal covenants with Israel which cannot be broken.

While stressing that God has not forsaken those physically descended from Abraham through Isaac, dispensationalists do affirm the necessity for Jews to receive Jesus as Messiah. They hold that God made unconditional covenants with Israel as a people and nation in the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and the New Covenant. Dispensationalism has had a pronounced effect on Christians' attitude toward Israel; many thousands of Christians are presently lovers of Israel, and Zionists, because they believe that God has not rejected Israel as His people.

**Judaism**

Christian Dispensationalists sometimes embrace what some critics have pejoratively called *Judeophilia*—ranging from support of the state of Israel, to observing traditional Jewish holidays and practicing traditionally Jewish religious rituals. (*See also* Christian Zionism, Jewish Christians, Judaizers, and Messianic Judaism (below)). Dispensationalists typically support the modern state of Israel, recognize its existence as God revealing His Will for the Last Days, and reject anti-Semitism.[23]

**Messianic Judaism**

Dispensationalists tend to have special interest in the Jews because the dispensationalist hermeneutic honors Biblical passages that list Jews as amongst God's chosen people (the others would be the Gentiles in the church, and proselytes to Judaism). Some Messianic Jews (Messianic Judaism), however, reject dispensationalism in favor of a related but distinct hermeneutic, called Olive Tree Theology.[24] The name "Olive Tree Theology" refers to the passages of Romans 11:17-18: "If some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive, were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree, then don't boast as if you were better than the branches!" Jews who accept dispensationalism are instead called Hebrew Christians. This view has some resemblance to that held in Roman Catholicism, as described above.
Antichrist

Some dispensationalists, such as the late fundamentalist Jerry Falwell, have asserted that the Antichrist will be a Jew, based on a belief that the Antichrist will falsely seem to some Jews to fulfill prophecies of the Messiah more accurately than Jesus did.\[25\]

However, many dispensationalists do not accept this belief, and claim that a number of scriptures do not cite any evidence, such as Daniel 9:27.

Such dispensationalists claim that this "prince" will be of the same people that destroyed the Jewish city in 70 AD, i.e., of Roman origin and therefore will not be Jewish. However, other dispensationalists base the nationality of the army that destroyed Jerusalem as compromising an Arab and Syrian ethnicity, and therefore the Antichrist, or the "prince", shall not be of Roman origin, but middle eastern.\[26\] \[27\]

In turn, this "prince" will stand up "against the Prince of princes" and destroy many "by peace" (Dan 8:25); and will be responsible for the false "peace and safety" that will precede the destructive day of the Lord (1 Thess 5:2–3).

Some believe this man will be a Jew, based in part on John 5:43, where the Lord stated that the unbelieving Jews would receive another who "shall come in his own name" (as opposed to the Lord Himself, who came in the Father's name). Further evidence is taken from Daniel 11:37, "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all", although in a passage as late as Daniel, a better translation is probably, "He will reject the gods (Eloha) of his fathers." The prophet Daniel refers to this man as "a vile person", who will "obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Dan 11:21). This belief is not essential to dispensationalism.

Darby himself taught the Antichrist will be a Jew, and the Beast, a separate person, will be the political leader of the revived Roman empire.\[28\]

World politics

Dispensationalism teaches that Christians should not rely on spiritual good from earthly governments (though they are to pray for peace in the state or country which they are in, and believe that government is ordained by God (Rom 13:1-7)), or success in any endeavor to be prominent in the present world, or start a church kingdom, since the Kingdom of God is seen as yet to come. Instead, people should expect social conditions to decline as the end times draw nearer. Dispensationalist readings of prophecies (such as Daniel 9:27, "And he [the Antichrist] will make a covenant [a peace contract] with the many [the nation of Israel along with the nations that oppose it] . . . ") often teach that the Antichrist will appear to the world as a peacemaker. Dispensationalists are usually not inclined to look upon the actions of the United Nations with favor, because they view this entity as working toward ungodly goals, such as contributing to the erection of the superstructure for the coming government of the Antichrist. Almost all dispensationalists reject the idea that a lasting peace can be attained by human effort in the Middle East, and believe instead that "wars and rumors of wars" (Matt. 24:6) will increase as the end times approach. Dispensationalist beliefs often underlie the religious and political movement of Christian Zionism.

Dispensationalists teach that churches which do not insist on Biblical literalism set forth an inconsistent method of interpretation with respect to the area of Bible prophecy, and view it as a step towards theological liberalism which rejects Scripture being inerrant. They are averse to ecumenism and other attempts to create church organizations that cross denominational boundaries such as the World Council of Churches.
United States politics

Political analyst Richard Allen Greene has argued that dispensationalism has had a major influence on the foreign policy of the United States. This influence has included continued support for the state of Israel. [29]

Political commentator Kevin Phillips points out in his book *American Theocracy* (2006) how dispensationalists and other fundamentalist Christians, together with the oil lobby, have provided political support for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, without approval of the United Nations.

Fiction

Dispensationalist themes form the basis of the popular *Left Behind* series of books. However, not all dispensationalists agree with the theology of authors Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

References

[8] Harry A. Ironside. "Not Wrath, but Rapture" (http://www.gotothebible.com/HTML/notwrath.html). "The prophetic clock stopped at Calvary; it will not start again until "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."
[9] Mike Stallard. "PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM" (http://faculty.bbc.edu/msallard/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/PDChallenge.pdf). "Ladd starts the eschatological kingdom in the Gospels. Progressives start the kingdom with the ascension of Christ. The most significant difference, however, is that Ladd treats the Church as a kind of "New Israel" in his commentary on Revelation. Progressive dispensationalism in no way advocates that the Church replaces Israel as in Ladd and in a more developed way in Covenant Theology (including brands of covenant premillennialism)."
[10] Harry A. Ironside. "The Great Parenthesis" (http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/article/10425). "It is the author’s fervent conviction that the failure to understand what is revealed in Scripture concerning the Great Parenthesis between Messiah’s rejection, with the consequent setting aside of Israel nationally, and the regathering of God’s earthly people and recognition by the Lord in the last days, is the fundamental cause for many conflicting and unscriptural prophetic teachings. Once this parenthetical period is understood and the present work of God during this age is apprehended, the whole prophetic program unfolds with amazing clearness."
[11] Mike Stallard. "PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM" (http://faculty.bbc.edu/msallard/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/PDChallenge.pdf). "some OT promises can be expanded by the NT. However, this expansion is never viewed as replacing or undoing the implications of that OT promise to its original audience, Israel. For example, the Church’s participation in the New Covenant taught in the NT can add the Church to the list of recipients of the New Covenant promises made in the OT. However, such participation does not rule out the future fulfillment of the OT New Covenant promises to Israel at the beginning of the Millennium. Thus, the promise can have a coinciding or overlapping fulfillment through NT expansions of the promise."
[12] Vern Poythress (1986). "Understanding Dispensationalists" (http://www.frame-poythress.org/Poythress_books/bdisp/bd4.html#12). pp. section 12. Retrieved 2011-03-01. "Now some Jews have been cut off from their place in the olive tree, so that Gentiles might be grafted in. But Jews in their cutting off remain cultivated olive branches, and they can be grafted in again. This is quite consistent with the fact that there is only one holy (cultivated) olive tree, hence one people of God, and one root."
[14] Isaac Watts (1812). *The Harmony of all the Religions which God ever Prescribed to Men and all his Dispensations towards them* (http://books.google.com/?id=UOAAAJAAJ&pg=PA327&q=israel+watts+Harmony+of+all+the+Religion&qvonepage& q=ppentecost#f=false). "The kingdom of Christ, therefore, or the christian dispensation was not properly set up in all its forms, doctrines and duties, till the following day of Pentecost, and the pouring down of the Spirit upon the Apostles".
[15] Harry A. Ironside. "Wrongly Dividing The Word of Truth. Chapter 3: The Transitional Period. Is the Church of The Acts the Body of Christ?" (http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/article/181). "Here we are distinctly informed as to the way in which the Body has been brought into existence, and this is exactly what place at Pentecost."
[16] Larry V. Crutcherfield (http://www.columbiaseminary.org/aboutus/faculty.html#larrycrutcherfield). *The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor*. "Darby sees Stephen's testimony as the hinge upon which the transition between the Jewish and Christian order of things swings, for Stephen had seen the heavens in the heavens (undoubtedly a reference to Acts 7:55). 'Thus', says Darby, 'he formed the linked between
Dispensationalism

Further reading

Dispensationalism

- O'Hair, J. C. *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* (http://www.bereanbiblesociety.org)

**External links**

- The Dispensational Berean (http://dispensationalberean.com/new)
- Dispensationalism articles (http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Dispensationalism/)
The Way International

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Founder(s)</th>
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<td>Focus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.theway.org">http://www.theway.org</a></td>
</tr>
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The Way International is a non-denominational Christian ministry based in New Knoxville, Ohio, with home fellowships located in the United States and in over 30 other countries.[3] It was founded by Victor Paul Wierwille in 1942 as a radio program, and became The Chimes Hour Youth Caravan in 1947,[4] and The Way, Inc., in 1955. The ministry distributes works such as The Way Magazine through its publishing company, the American Christian Press, and has developed classes and other programs in several languages. It formed The Way Corps in 1970, a leadership training program, which continues today. The Way actively offers classes in biblical studies to its followers, highlighting The Way of Abundance and Power class series.

The Way promotes itself as a Biblical research, teaching, and fellowship ministry, providing service and direction on how to understand the bible so people can apply it and manifest the more abundant life.[5] http://www.theway.org/topic.php?page=about&lang=en

The Way has received criticism for some of its internal policies, including a practice known as "Mark and Avoid" which instructs followers to avoid individuals whose practices cause division and offenses to the doctrine (Romans 16:17), and for its belief and promotion of living debt-free. Due to these and other practices, the ministry came under scrutiny as an alleged cult.

In 2000, the president of The Way, Craig Martindale, resigned following allegations of sexual misconduct.[6] Rosalie F. Rivenbark now heads the organization along with 4 other members on the board of directors.

History

Radio ministry

On October 3, 1942, Victor Paul Wierwille began a live radio program dubbed "Vesper Chimes." Wierwille assembled a group of youth to help him from local churches. The program was broadcast from WLOK in Lima, Ohio, where the youth would sing and perform alongside Wierwille's sermons that included incidents and "principles of the abundant life." Vesper Chimes began broadcasting directly from St. Jacob's in 1943 as a supplement to their church. Soon afterwards, the program was renamed "The Chimes Hour Youth Caravan." Wierwille's published his first book, Victory Through Christ in 1945, compiling his radio sermons addressed to young people. In 1947, The Chimes Hour Youth Caravan incorporated and Wierwille was named President alongside a board of directors. That
The Way International

year, The Way: The Chimes Hour Young People's Publication began publishing writings by young people associated with the radio program each month. Starting in 1948, Wierwille began broadcasting every morning in addition to the regular program. Nearly ten years following the first broadcast, "The Van Wert Gospel Gift Shop and Multigraph Printing and Publishing Co." opened for business and released the first issue of The Way Magazine.\(^7\) The Chimes Hour Youth Caravan continued to have radio and public performances until April 1953, at which time the Nielsen ratings showed that 70,000 homes were tuned in on Sundays, broadcasting over radio station WLW, Cincinnati.\(^8\) Wierwille continued to broadcast his meditations over WIMA (formerly WLOK), Lima, WONW, Defiance, and WRFD, Worthington until 1955.\(^9\)

**Power For Abundant Living**

In October 1953, Wierwille began teaching his first class, called "Receiving the Holy Spirit Today", which he based on a series he attended earlier that year in Calgary, Alberta. He received some criticism for drawing heavily on B. G. Leonard's "Gifts of the Spirit" class, and soon changed the name to "Power for Abundant Living". The class was initially taught live, with Wierwille traveling to each location personally. In 1967, the Foundational and Intermediate classes were filmed, and classes began to be run without Wierwille's presence. Wierwille continued teaching an advanced class in New Knoxville until filmed versions were put together in the late 1970s.

**Beginnings of The Way**

Wierwille incorporated under the name "The Way" in 1955, and resigned employment in the Evangelical and Reformed Church in 1957. He initially held meetings in his own home, and later constructed the Ecumenical Biblical Research Center on his family's farm in 1961, establishing it as his ministry's headquarters. Wierwille continued to teach Power for Abundant Living, and held additional seminars each summer for specialized classes. Wierwille recruited a board of directors from his former graduates, but disbanded it in the late 1950s. Wierwille explained his decision to disband the board in a later book, saying that the board was not supporting him in his decisions and it was not their purpose to argue with him, but to support his decisions. From then on, The Way was run by a board of Trustees headed by Wierwille as President, Ermal Owens as Vice President, and Wierwille's brother Harry Ernst Wierwille as secretary-treasurer.

**Membership growth**

The Way's membership grew in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In January 1968, Wierwille's visited San Francisco to meet with another ministry to promote his classes. Some of the groups he met with later incorporated, becoming The Way East (based in Rye, New York) and The Way West (based in San Francisco, CA). Wierwille also recruited a number of new members on his trip, marking a period of large growth for his ministry.\(^10\)

In 1970, Wierwille began an outreach program entitled "Word Over the World" to draw renewed interest in his ministry. WOW ambassadors volunteered for one year to preach and recruit new students. These ambassadors were required to find part-time work and spend time witnessing for a set number of hours each week. Ambassadors were organized into "families" of four, and were typically sent out in "branches" of two to seven families. In some years, cities designated as "Outreach Cities" were sent hundreds of ambassadors at a time. Growth continued into the late 1980s, particularly in the United States, Europe, South America and Africa. WOW festivals modeled after the Rock of Ages, and were held in Great Britain, several South American countries and in Zaire. The program was discontinued in 1995 and replaced a year later by a six-month "Way Disciples Outreach Program."
"Passing the mantle"

In 1982 Wierwille installed L. Craig Martindale as President and accepted the title President Emeritus. Martindale had joined The Way in 1971 while a student at the University of Kansas. He served as head of the Way Corps Director from 1977 to 2000 (retaining that position while President). An elaborate ceremony accompanied Martindale's installation as President, including a passing of a literal mantle representing Wierwille's authority passing to Martindale.

After Wierwille died on May 20, 1985 of hepatocellular carcinoma and melanoma, a period of disagreement developed between Martindale and some of the organization's other leaders and followers, lasting until the early 1990s, along with a general decline in numbers. (See section below on "Splinter Groups")

In 2000, Martindale's term as president was ended following allegations of sexual misconduct and Rev. Rosalie F. Rivenbark replaced him. The Board is now called the Board of Directors, consisting of five directors, with Rivenbark as Chairman of the Board.

Structure

Organization

The Way International headquarters is located in New Knoxville, Ohio, and presently they also own and operate Camp Gunnison—The Way Household Ranch in Gunnison, Colorado. The Way is organized into branches located in the United States and in over 30 other countries, generally consisting of several household fellowships. The Way focuses on these fellowships as a basic organizational unit. Meetings are run in each home by fellowship coordinators who have completed The Way of Abundance and Power class series. The Way International claims no official membership other than the Board of Directors; individuals who participate in fellowships are referred to as "followers of the way," or "believers."

Classes

The Way offers three sequential classes covering the beliefs of the organization. The Foundational and Intermediate classes are required prior to taking any other classes. To qualify for the Advanced class, which is held specially in Ohio each summer, a student must first complete the Foundational and Intermediate classes twice, in addition to "Defeating the Adversary".

- The Foundational Class on The Way of Abundance and Power
- The Intermediate Class on The Way of Abundance and Power
- The Advanced Class on The Way of Abundance and Power
- Defeating the Adversary
- Living God's Word as a Family
For many years, The Way offered a three-part "Power for Abundant Living" class, taught live by Wierwille beginning in 1953. This class was offered in video and audio tape form from 1968 until it was replaced in 1995 by Martindale's class "The Way of Abundance and Power," which was restructured and refilmed in 2006.\[13\]

**Leadership**

As founder of The Way, Victor Paul Wierwille served as the organization's principal leader from 1942 to 1982. In 1947, The Chimes Hour Youth Caravan incorporated as a nonprofit religious organization with Wierwille serving as president aside a Board of Directors. The name of the corporation officially changed from The Chimes Hour Youth Caravan to The Way in 1955. The Board of Directors was discontinued in the 1970s, and in 1982, during The Way's fortieth anniversary celebration, Wierwille installed L. Craig Martindale as his succeeding president. Until his death in 1985, Wierwille held the title President Emeritus. Martindale served as The Way's President between 1982 and 2000, and was replaced by the former Vice President, Rosalie F. Rivenbark, following allegations of sexual misconduct.

**Board of Trustees**

From 1956 to 2001, The Way operated with a Board of Trustees, namely the offices of president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer. The original Board of Trustees was, Victor Wierwille, president, Ermal Owens, vice president, and Harry Wierville (Wierville's brother), secretary-treasurer. In 1977, the vice president and secretary-treasurer positions were filled by Wierwille's son, Donald Wierwille, and Howard Allen respectively. Victor Wierwille continued to hold his position until Martindale became President in 1982. In 1996, Rivenbark was appointed vice president and in 2000 she succeeded Martindale as president. Other served as Trustees for shorter terms.

**Board of Directors and Officers**

In 2001, to conform with Ohio state law, the Board of Trustees became known as the Board of Directors. Since that time, others have served on the Board of Directors fulfilling shorter terms than the original Trustees. Currently, The Way also functions with Senior Officers and Junior Officers.

**Programs**

**The Way Corps**

In 1970 Wierwille formalized his selection and training of ministry leaders by starting "The Way Corps". The inspiration for the term "Way Corps" came from his admiration for the United States Marine Corps. The Way Corp's motto is "It Is Written," and the The Way's website currently describes the program as "Leadership training for Advanced Class graduates who have a heart's desire and passion to function as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ." \[14\]

Prior to the First Corps, which began training in 1970, Wierwille invited a group of Way followers to New Knoxville for training and teaching. He disbanded the group for reasons which were never made public, other than a statement in *The Way: Living in Love* that they "couldn't get it together among themselves," and that Wierwille "gave them the privilege to leave" \[15\] In later years, this group was referred to as "The Zero Corps." (Groups who trained and graduated from the program together were at one time referred to "First Corps," "Second Corps," etc., referring to the order in which they graduated.)
Originally, the Way Corps was a 2-year program, with both years of training in-residence, participants living and working at Way International Headquarters in New Knoxville, Ohio. After a few years, a third year of training, called an “interim” year, was inserted between the 2 years, in which The Way Corps student was given a one year assignment before completing training (the Family Corps, a Way Corps program for families that included children, usually had this year tacked onto the end and was called a "practicum" year). Eventually, a fourth year of training, called an apprentice year, was added before the on-campus training during which a prospect was expected to meet certain requirements, including raising tuition and sponsorship.

As currently constituted, The Way Corps training consists of a preparatory year called the "Candidacy Year," followed by an "Apprentice Year," when the prospect leads a group of Way Disciples, and then two years of in-residency training at The Way International's headquarters in New Knoxville, Ohio, and at Camp Gunnison—The Way Household Ranch in Gunnison, Colorado.

Requirements
After completing the Advanced class, a follower may apply for enrollment. Before one can enter the program, however, the local leadership approves the applicant's entrance. Sponsorship requirements, as well as class prerequisites, change from time to time.

Graduation
Upon completion of the four-year curriculum, graduates receive an non-accredited degree in theology. The graduating Way Corps can be sent out to different states or countries to coordinate Branches or fulfill other assigned responsibilities, or remain at Headquarters or Gunnison as staff. Way Corps duties include providing spiritual leadership at all levels and carrying out decisions made by the Board of Directors. Way Corps promotional materials mention "A Lifetime of Christian Service."

Ordination and clergy
The Way has ordained Way Corps graduates over the years, and both men and women serve as clergy. Neither graduation from the Way Corps nor accepting a high leadership position guarantee ordination. At times state or region coordinators, and even members of the Board of Trustees have been laymen, while clergymen and women have served as fellowship coordinators, or without official responsibility whatsoever.

Dismissal from Way Corps
A member may be dropped from being Way Corps at any time without prior notice, although in recent years this practice has become uncommon. A policy titled Mark and Avoid was a major contributor to Way Corps discharge.

The College Division
The College Division program housed students in Emporia, KS, alongside Way Corps, for one year and two year programs. First-year classes included Beginning Greek, Harmony of the Gospels, and Old Testament History, while second-year classes included Aramaic, Hebrew, Advanced Greek, and Biblical research project. Classes were held during the day in addition to required fellowships. The College Division was sometimes invited to collaborate with the Way Corps in events such as the LEAD camping program or lessons in public speaking. The College Division had fewer participants than Way Corps or WOWs (varying in number from a handful to several dozen), but the College Division was considered more prestigious than other groups.
**Rock of Ages**

A yearly gathering of Way followers in New Knoxville, Ohio, known as "The Rock of Ages Festival," was a popular Way event from 1970 until 1995, when it was discontinued. One of the purposes of the festival was to welcome home returning WOW Ambassadors and to send out a new group on their yearly assignment. Some regional groups (states are known as "Limbs") now hold annual meetings instead. According to Way Corps conferences, one reason for the termination of the festival was the suspected teenage sexual relations on campus grounds.\[16\] The Rock of Ages typically had between 5,000 and 20,000 in attendance, with an international representation of Way followers.

**Whitby Mansion**

At one time, The Way maintained a historical archive at Sidney, located in the building now known as the "Whitby Mansion." As well as historic documents, the mansion also housed a collection of artworks.\[17\]

**Publications**


Victor Paul Wierwille became associated in 1957 with Aramaic Bible scholar George M. Lamsha,\[20\] and Lamsha finished his translating the Lamsa Bible in Wierwille's home.\[21\] Lamsha and Wierwille produced the first American Aramaic New Testament in 1960.\[21\]

**Aramaic Publications:**

  - Volume 1 Matthew – John
  - Volume 2 Acts – Philemon
  - Volume 3 Hebrews – Revelation

**Beliefs and doctrines**

Students are encouraged to follow a list of biblical research principles, instructing that the Bible should be taken literally wherever possible, and where this is not possible, it should be assumed that the language is figurative. The Way encourages its followers to study their publications before beginning any personal research on a subject. In his book *Order My Steps in Thy Word*, Wierwille asserts that God designed the universe to support the Earth and the Earth to support his children who could love God in return.

The Way rejects the Trinity, and teaches that, unlike God, Jesus is not omniscient, omnipotent, or omnipresent. According to their ministry, Jesus did not exist before his birth except in the foreknowledge of God. The Way teaches that at his birth, God created the sperm to fertilize Mary's ovum, and is the literal father of Jesus. Wierwille writes in his book, "Receiving the Holy Spirit Today", that the Holy Spirit is a reference to God, rather than a separate entity or person. He contrasts this term with the "holy spirit" (lower case), which he believes is a reference to a divine gift from God.\[22\] Wierwille claims that English translators of the Bible missed this distinction, and that Greek manuscripts were written in uncial script, which further confused the subject. The Way teaches that there are nine manifestations of the holy spirit and every born again Christian can inherently operate all nine. The list is...
derived from I Corinthians 12:7–10 (King James Version). Speaking in tongues, he claims, energizes the "effectual operation" of the other eight manifestations. According to Wierwille, speaking in tongues has numerous benefits for a believer.

The Way claims that there were four people crucified with Jesus, rejecting the standard interpretation which holds that there were two. Wierwille writes that different Greek words were used for those crucified with Jesus in the different Gospel accounts, as well as discrepancies in timing, statements, and actions of the characters in the narrative. Two malefactors (kakourgoi) were initially led and crucified with Jesus in Luke 23:32, then two robbers (lestai) were later crucified after his accusation was fastened in Matthew 27:38. Accordingly, two others were crucified on both sides of Jesus for a total of four. Additionally, they hold that the cross upon which Jesus was crucified was not the traditional t-shaped cross, but rather a stake or the trunk of a tree. The Way maintains that Jesus did not carry his cross for any distance. Rather, after leaving the judgment hall, the soldiers immediately compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear the cross all the way to Calvary per the three Gospel accounts in Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21 and Luke 23:26. The one account in John 19:17 which states "And he bearing his cross...", Wierwille believes refers to Jesus's spiritual bearing of sin. Wierwille also preaches that the "thorn in the flesh" in 2 Corinthians 12:7 is individuals sent by Satan to disrupt the apostle Paul's ministry, not an illness as it is commonly interpreted.

The Way teaches that the dead do not immediately go to heaven or hell, rather death is a continuing state which will end at the tribulation. Wierwille also writes that the unsaved simply "die a second and final death." Way followers reject baptism, holding that it wasn't intended as a continuing practice after Pentecost, and that it applied only to Israel. Wierwille further teaches that once a person is born again, they receive holy spirit and cannot lose it through any sinful acts.

The Way teaches that tithing 10% of one's net income to the church is a minimum requirement. Additional giving is called "abundant sharing", and "plurality giving" refers to giving away all money which isn't essential to live. Wierwille included his booklet on abundant sharing, Christians Should Be Prosperous, in his Foundational Class materials. Martindale frequently promoted increasing one's proportion of giving in Sunday teachings.

In his class Christian Family and Sex, Wierwille teaches that the original sin was masturbation. He compares the tree of life to verses where people were figuratively referred to as trees, and the fruit of the tree of knowledge with the human genitalia. In the Foundational Class on The Way of Abundance and Power, Martindale expands on this doctrine, concluding that virtually every word in Genesis 3:6 has a sexual connotation. Influenced by his belief that homosexuality was the lowest degradation of sexuality, he teaches that the original sin of mankind was Eve having lesbian sex with the Devil, who had "come into concretion" in the form of a beautiful woman.

Controversial practices

Mark and avoid

"Mark and Avoid" is a term for a form of shunning involving the separation of certain people from the main body of followers in the Way. The term is derived from the Biblical passage Romans 16:17 (King James Version)

(17) Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

This practice is reportedly used when, according to the judgment of the Board of Directors of The Way International, a person has met the criteria which would warrant separation from the other followers of The Way. In recent years, usage of the Mark and Avoid system has declined. "Spiritual Probation" was an intermediate step introduced by Martindale in which a follower was prohibited from contact with active followers for a set period of time, usually six months. When certain criteria were met, the follower was allowed back into full participation in Way activities. Generally, a letter to a high level coordinator was required, outlining the steps to be taken by the follower to ensure the "error" was corrected and they were back "in fellowship". Abundant sharing was also required during this period.
Debt

In the mid-nineties The Way began to teach extensively on debt, taking a position that God's Will was for a believer to have no debt, including car loans and mortgages citing Proverbs 22:7: "The borrower is servant to the lender" and Romans 13:8: "Owe no man any thing". Eventually it became a requirement for all active Way Corps to be debt-free. A prerequisite for enrollment in the Advanced Class on the Way of Abundance and Power and various "Advanced Class Specials" was that the student be debt-free. Participants in fellowships were encouraged to get or stay out of debt, sometimes selling homes to meet this standard.

Splinter groups

By the early 1990s, following the 1982 retirement of Wierwille and his death in 1985, a number of splinter groups had formed from the main body of The Way.

- Christian Family Fellowships
- The American Fellowship Services
- Christian Biblical Counsel (renamed Living Hope in 2005)
- Great Lakes Fellowship
- Pacific West Fellowship
- Spirit & Truth Fellowship International (also Christian Educational Services, 2005)
- The Foundation of Life (2008)
- Living Truth Fellowship (2009)

The formation of splinter groups took place in the wake of actions by L. Craig Martindale after his appointment to replace Wierwille, including the implementation of new rules and beliefs, and the dissension among its leadership when Rev. Chris Geer initially read the authored 40,000 word document titled "The Passing of the Patriarch" to the Trustee leadership and Way headquarters staff. In it, Geer claimed that Wierwille, during his final weeks, revealed observations, concerns and recommendations regarding the unbiblical direction of the Way and the lack of Biblical leadership by Martindale. The document was later read to the Way Corps who disseminated the information throughout The Way.

The splinter groups' presence as organizations became significant in 1989, when L. Craig Martindale fired all Way staff-including local "branch", "territory", "limb" and "region" leaders who did not sign an "oath of allegiance" document to him. Martindale demanded that Way leaders declare openly whether they were supporting him or Geer as titular leader of The Way. Many leaders, as well as followers, saw this demand as unbiblical and withdrew voluntarily from association from The Way. Others, including those who did not choose sides, were dismissed. Shortly afterwards, Martindale sent a letter to all members announcing the firings. In the aftermath, according to figures cited by Martindale at The 1994 Word in Business and Profession Conference in Dallas, Texas, approximately 80% of the membership at the time had left The Way either by their own decision or by being dismissed. Large numbers of ex-Way followers formed the foundation of the splinter groups.

In recent years, since Martindale stepped down from president and left The Way, administrative authority and decision making has been spread across a larger base of leaders, checks and balances.

Criticism and cult allegations

Some groups have considered The Way's beliefs, viewed as heretical by a number of denominations, to be evidence of cult status. There have also been some accusations during The Way's history of sexual abuse, excessive control over members' lives, and brainwashing. The anti-cult movement (ACM) attempts to raise public consciousness of what they feel are the dangers of cult membership. They view a cult as a religious or other group that uses deceptive recruitment techniques to lure new members into the organization, and then subjects them to sophisticated mind-control techniques to reduce their ability to think and act individually (brainwashing).
Given The Way's high-intensity nature, in the 1970s, there were some instances of family members, who weren't a part of The Way, hiring deprogrammers to illegally abduct their loved one because they believed exposure to these doctrines or the followers was harmful. According to the Counter Cult Movement's (CCM) definition of a cult, the Way International would qualify. Note that this organization identifies a cult as being "basically Christian, but one which also holds some heretical beliefs." They define Heresy as "any deviation from the tenets of the historical Protestant Christian faith." According to CCM's diagnosis, Mormons, Roman Catholics, the Unification Church, United Churches, and hundreds of other new religious groups would also fall within the CCM's definition of being a "cult".

According to Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance (OCRT) "It appears that The Way operates like most high-intensity religious groups: their followers enter the organization because they perceive it to offer positive value to their life. If and when it becomes negative, they drift away."

Plagiarism charges

Side-by-side comparisons of some of Wierwille's earlier books (Power For Abundant Living, Receiving the Holy Spirit Today and the Studies in Abundant Living Series) with previously-published works by other authors, including J.E. Stiles and E.W. Bullinger, show instances of verbatim copying, indicating plagiarism.[35] J.E. Stiles and B.G. Leonard, other authors whom Wierwille was said to have borrowed from, are mentioned by Wierwille at various times, but not credited as sources in any of Wierwille's publications.

External links

- The Family Tables [38] – Website maintained by a current follower.
- Eternally Blessed [40] – Supportive profile of founder Victor Paul Wierwille.
- About The Way International [41] - Documents, history, critique and criticisms cataloged by Dr. John Juedes on behalf of Messiah Lutheran Church.

References

[8] Born Again to Serve, p. 89
American Christian Press

American Christian Press serves as the publishing arm of The Way International Biblical research, teaching and fellowship ministry, operating out of New Knoxville, Ohio.

Ongoing publications


Published works

Wierwille, Victor Paul.


**Martindale, Loy Craig.**


**Other Authors**


**Aramaic New Testament Publications**

  • Volume 3 (Hebrews-Revelation) ISBN 0-910068-75-5
Reprints by The Way International

K.C. Pillai

E.W. Bullinger

Other Authors

Studies in Abundant Living Series
Studies in Abundant Living, Vols I - V are each a compilation of previously published pamphlets, Way Magazine articles or transcriptions of teachings. Some chapters are repeated, sometimes in expanded form in other books. At times these books, as well as Power for Abundant Living, Receiving the Holy Spirit Today and Christians Should Be Prosperous were included as part of the package with The Way's foundational class.

European Christian Press
European Christian Press was the publishing arm of The Way in Great Britain Ltd., which was at one time associated with The Way International. They published several books of collected teachings of Way founder VP Wierwille, edited by Christopher Geer.
- Take A Stand For God. ISBN 1-870676-40-8
- We are His - He is Ours: The Honesty of Leadership. ISBN 1-870676-25-4
- Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus. ISBN 1-870676-35-1
- *Our Times* (Collection of paid editorials previously printed in New Knoxville, Ohio area newspapers)
Victor Paul Wierwille

Victor Paul Wierwille (December 31, 1916 - May 20, 1985) was the founder of The Way International (TWI).

**Biography**

He was raised in and later ordained by the Evangelical and Reformed Church (a predecessor of the United Church of Christ) in 1941, and he officially left that church in 1957. Wierwille graduated from Mission House College with Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Theology degrees.[1] He then studied at The University of Chicago Divinity School and received a Master of Theology in practical theology from Princeton Theological Seminary.[2] Wierwille later studied at Pikes Peak Bible Seminary and Burton College, a non-accredited institution, and received a doctorate in theology.

In 1942 he started the precursor to The Way International, Vesper Chimes, which was a radio show broadcast from Lima, Ohio, incorporating in 1947 as The Chimes Hour Youth Caravan. He incorporated as The Way Incorporated in 1955, maintaining that this was the name that early Christians used for themselves basing his assertion on several uses of "the way" or "this way" in Acts of the Apostles. Later the official name became The Way International.

Wierwille authored several books which are printed by The Way International's American Christian Press publishing organization. One book was *Jesus Christ is Not God*, in which he addressed his belief that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God and Messiah but not a persona of the Christian God or a pre-existent being.[3] Wierwille wrote three other works which focused on Jesus Christ and the concept of the Holy Spirit: *Jesus Christ Our Passover*, *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed*, and *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today*. Other major works include *Power for Abundant Living*, *Christians Should Be Prosperous*, *Are the Dead Alive Now?* and his *Studies in Abundant Living* five-volume series.

Wierwille, became associated in 1957[4] with Aramaic Bible scholar George M. Lamsa who finished his translation work for the *The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts (Lamsa Bible)* in Wierwille's home.[5] Lamsa and Wierwille together produced the first American Aramaic grammar in 1960 for the study of Biblical manuscripts with the ancient Estrangelo letters.[6] Believing the original New Testament was written in Aramaic, he was a supporter of George Lamsa's translation of the Bible, and used it frequently.
After graduating from B.G. Leonard's *Gifts of the Spirit* class in Calgary, Alberta, Wierwille began teaching a similar class that he initially called *Receiving the Holy Spirit Today* but soon changed to *Power for Abundant Living* (PFAL). Eventually he expanded it into a teaching series, including a foundational, intermediate and advanced class. Wierwille was the President of The Way International from its incorporation until he retired from leadership in October, 1982; passing the presidency to L. Craig Martindale. He died on May 20, 1985 of hepatocellular carcinoma and melanoma.

**External links**

- The Way International[^36] - Official Website
- Victor Paul Wierwille - Profile[^40]
- Victor Paul Wierwille - Biography[^7]
- Wierwille CD's[^42]

**Teachings and Quotes**

**Audio Recordings:**

- Audio Recording : Religion[^8]
- Audio Recording : The Believer's Peace[^9]

**Quotes:**

- Motivated By the Goodness of God[^10]
- 7 Characteristics of a Faithful Minister[^11]
- 8 Victor Paul Wierwille Quotes[^12]
- 7 Victor Paul Wierwille Quotes[^13]

**References**

[^3]: "Jesus Christ is Not God. American Christian Press. 1975"  
[^7]: [http://www.biblicalresearchjournal.org/brij-pages_html/001mm04_teachings_vpw.html](http://www.biblicalresearchjournal.org/brij-pages_html/001mm04_teachings_vpw.html)  
[^8]: [http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpw02.mp3](http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpw02.mp3)  
[^9]: [http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpw03.mp3](http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpw03.mp3)  
[^10]: [http://www.3dentourage.com/word/goodness.htm](http://www.3dentourage.com/word/goodness.htm)  
[^11]: [http://www.3dentourage.com/word/seven.htm](http://www.3dentourage.com/word/seven.htm)  
[^12]: [http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpwq1.htm](http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpwq1.htm)  
[^13]: [http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpwq2.htm](http://www.3dentourage.com/word/vpwq2.htm)
Way Productions

Way Productions is an overall name given for different groups of musicians affiliated with The Way International. Their lyrics are based on the beliefs and practices of The Way International. They perform every Sunday afternoon at The Way’s headquarters in New Knoxville, Ohio for the Way’s Sunday teaching services. They also perform at special events put on at various times throughout the year.

Musical styles

• Gospel
• Rock and Roll
• Soul
• Country/Western

Musical Groups

Official

• Singing Ladies of the Way
• The Present Truth.

Unofficial or former

• Good Seed
• High Country Trio
• Hope
• Joyful Noise
• Pressed Down, Shaken Together and Running Over
• Sing it Dave
• Selah (from the 1970s)
• The Victors
• Agape (UK)
• Take it
• Acts 29
• CORE
• Ted Ferrell
• Age of Grace
• Branded
• New Horizons
• Breakthrough
**External links**


Pressed Down MySpace: http://www.myspace.com/presseddownshakentogetherrunningover

Joe Fair @ IAC:

**CORE**

**References**

The Way College of Biblical Research – Indiana Campus

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The Way College of Biblical Research Indiana was used by The Way International for its leadership training program and biblical research seminars located in Rome City, Indiana for 20 years. Purchased in 1976, the 197-acre (0.80 km²) site located on the north side of Rome City previously housed the historic Kneipp Springs health spa which was developed between 1897 and 1910 by Dr. W.G. Geiermann, and operated by the Catholic Order of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood convent.[1]

The campus housed nearly 6,000 students and staff between 1977 and 1997, and the campus held accelerated biblical research seminars and classes from 1979-1996.[2] The campus operation was moved to Gunnison, Colorado in spring of 1998, and Sylvan Springs, Inc., a non-profit group, purchased the facility for use as a family centre serving northeast Indiana.[3]

References

Pauline Christianity

Pauline Christianity is a term used to refer to the Christianity associated with the beliefs and doctrines espoused by Paul of Tarsus through his writings. Most of orthodox Christianity relies heavily on these teachings and considers them to be amplifications and explanations of the teachings of Jesus. Others perceive in Paul's writings, teachings that are radically different from the original teachings of Jesus documented in the canonical gospels, early Acts and the rest of the New Testament, such as the Epistle of James. Proponents of the perceived Pauline distinctive form of this religion include Marcion of Sinope, the 2nd century theologian, an excommunicated heretic who asserted that Paul was the only apostle who had rightly understood the new message of salvation as delivered by Christ. Opponents of the same era include the Ebionites and Nazarenes, Jewish Christians who rejected Paul for straying from "normative" Judaism; see also List of events in early Christianity. Pauline Christianity, as an expression, first came into use in the 20th century among those scholars who proposed different strands of thought within Early Christianity, wherein Paul was a powerful influence. It has come into widespread use among non-Christian scholars and depends on the claim, advanced in different ages, that the form of the faith found in the writings of Paul is radically different from that found elsewhere in the New Testament, but also that his influence came to predominate. Reference is also made to the large number of non-canonical texts, some of which have been discovered during the last hundred years, and which show the many movements and strands of thought emanating from Jesus's life and teaching or which may be contemporary with them, some of which can be contrasted with Paul's thought. Of the more significant are Ebionism and Gnosticism (see below). However, there is no universal agreement as to Gnosticism's relationship either to Christianity in general or the writings of Paul in particular, see Paul and Gnosticism.

The expression is also used by modern Christian scholars, such as Ziesler and Mount, whose interest is in the recovery of Christian origins and the contribution made by Paul to Christian doctrine; see also Paleo-orthodoxy, Christian Reconstructionism, and Restorationism (Christian primitivism).

Characteristics of 'Pauline Christianity'

The characteristics of the critical use of the term take a number of forms. They are partly political and partly theological.

Political

From a political perspective, Robert Eisenman sees Pauline Christianity as a method of taming a dangerous sect among radical Jews and making it palatable to Roman authorities. Pauline Christianity was essentially based on Rome and made use of the administrative skills which Rome had honed. Its system of organization with a single bishop for each town was, on this view, the means by which it obtained its hegemony.
**Theological**

The theological aspect is the claim that Paul transmuted Jesus the Jewish Messiah into the universal (in a wider meaning "catholic") Saviour. Pauline theology is also a term referring to the teaching and doctrines especially espoused by the apostle Paul through his writings. Mainstream Christianity relies on Paul's writings as integral to the biblical theology of the New Testament and regards them as amplifications and explanations consistent with the teachings of Jesus and other New Testament writings. Christian scholars generally use the term expressing interest in the recovery of Christian origins and the contribution made by Paul to Christian doctrine. Others, especially non-Christian scholars, claim to see a Pauline distinctive different from that found elsewhere in the New Testament, a distinctive that unduly influenced later Christianity.

**Other views**

The use of the term by Christian scholars, such as John Ziesler, is altogether different. Pauline Christianity is the development of thinking about Jesus in a gentile missionary context; Christopher Rowlands concludes that Paul did not materially alter the teachings of Jesus. Much of this view turns on the significance of the Council of Jerusalem. According to this view, James decreed that Christianity was for the Gentiles and not just for the Jews, and quoted the prophet Amos in support of this position (the *Apostolic Decree* is found in Acts 15:19-21). He entrusted Paul among others with bringing their decision to Antioch (15:22-31).

Christians themselves disagree as to how far there was tension between Paul and the Jerusalem Church. (See Paul of Tarsus). One difficulty is the tension between Acts and Paul's letters; another is the disparity between his views in different letters. Galatians is reserved about the teaching of the Jerusalem church and is hostile toward Jews (whom he calls "Judaizers") who would impose Jewish distinctives, codified in the Mosaic Law, on Gentile converts; in Romans Paul is deeply concerned about the spiritual condition and ultimate destiny of the Jewish people.

**Paul's view of the subject**

That people saw different disciples of Christ as representing different teachings was addressed by Paul himself, in the 1st letter to the Corinthians: (1 Cor 1:10–18)

> I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas(Peter)"; still another, "I follow Christ."

> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

**As a pejorative term**

The pejorative use of the expression "Pauline Christianity" relies in part upon a thesis that Paul's supporters, as a distinct group, had an undue influence on the formation of the canon of scripture, and also that certain bishops, especially the Bishop of Rome, influenced the debates by which the dogmatic formulations known as the Creeds came to be produced, thus ensuring a Pauline interpretation of the gospel. The thesis is founded on differences between the views of Paul and the apostles in Jerusalem, and also between the picture of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles and his own writings, such that it is claimed that the essential Jewish or Old Testament character of the faith was lost.

The argument made that Christian doctrine (that is, the teachings of Jesus) was subsequently distorted by Paul and the Church of Rome depends, first of all, on a view as to how the canon of Scripture came to be compiled, about
which little is known (for details, see Biblical canon). The earliest references to Paul's writing are fragmentary: Clement of Rome, writing about AD 95, quotes from Romans; Ignatius of Antioch (d. AD 115) quotes from 1 Corinthians, Romans, and from 1 Timothy and Titus as if authoritative, not merely as the opinion of one writer. On the other hand, not everyone agreed with the process of reception: according to Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, writing in the latter half of the 2nd century, the Ebionite Christians rejected Paul as an apostate from the law, using only a version of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, known as the Gospel of the Ebionites.

As to his influence, there are considerable differences of scholarly opinion concerning how far Paul did in fact influence Christian doctrine. Among the most radical is G.A. Wells, a professor of German rather than of theology, whose view is that Jesus was a mythical figure and that Christianity was in good part invented by Paul. More widely influential is the view of the 19th century German theologian F.C. Baur, founder of the Tübingen school, that Paul was utterly opposed to the disciples, based upon his view that Acts was late and unreliable and who contended that Catholic Christianity was a synthesis of the views of Paul and the Judaising church in Jerusalem. Since Harnack, the Tübingen position has been generally abandoned, though the view that Paul took over the faith and transformed the Jewish teacher to the Son of God is still widely canvassed. It depends on a comparison between the books of the New Testament which cannot be made here, but see Paul of Tarsus, and the claims of Ultradispensationalists such as E. W. Bullinger who view the distinction abhorred by the Ebionites as positive and essential doctrine. On the other side, the idea that Paul invented Christianity is disputed by numerous Christian writers. Christopher Rowlands contends that, "the extent of his influence on Christian thought has been overestimated". Thus, though thirteen letters under his name appear in the New Testament, the great controversies of the 3rd and 4th centuries were about the Person of Christ and the nature of God - the so-called Christological and Trinitarian debates - in which St. Paul does not greatly feature; likewise, the Nicene Creed contains no doctrine of atonement. Moreover, while the influence of the Church of Rome was very important in the creed debates, Greek theologians such as Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa were formidable figures. The resolution of these controversies at the Council of Chalcedon was not dictated by the Bishop of Rome or Latin Christendom, but was made more difficult by the necessary task of translating technical terms between the two languages of Greek and Latin, and not by arguments over Pauline theology.

As for the New Testament itself, there are evident tensions between the Judaizing party and Paul's views, which are made plain by a comparison between Acts and Paul's letters. How far Paul is to be taken as anti-Jewish (pro-Hellenization or Romanization) is a matter of disagreement, but there has been widespread acknowledgement of the view of W. D. Davies that the essential Jewishness of Paul's Christian perspective has been underplayed. In Davies' view, Paul replaced the Torah, the Jewish Law or Mosaic Law, with Christ. In any case, "the problems with which he wrestles in his letters were probably typical of many which were facing the Christian sect during this period".

Further, by contrast one of the common features of Protestant churches, certainly in English-speaking countries and those influenced by the reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin, is their use of formulations other than the ancient Creeds, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which Pauline formulations play a much greater part. Ideas such as justification by faith, which, though not absent from Catholic formulations, play a much more central role in Protestant thinking, where they are considered fundamental Christian truths and essential for defining the Gospel.

As to the conclusion that Paul distorted rather than developed the faith, this depends upon a judgment as to wherein lies the right path. Henry Chadwick, former Oxford don, commented about a later controversy: "It was not that the heretics departed from the road; it was that they took a path along which the road was not subsequently built." Roman Catholics, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, conservative Protestants, and most Messianic Jews contend that Paul's writings were a legitimate interpretation of the Gospel. Those who disagree with them either argue that Paul distorted the original and true faith or claim that Christianity is, largely, his invention. The former include such secular commentators as the philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Bertrand Russell, whose criticisms are based
upon their moral objections to Paul's thought; others thinkers, such as Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou, also agree with this interpretation, but hold much more more positive opinions about Paul's theological influence.

Christians anarchists, such as Leo Tolstoy and Ammon Hennacy, believe Paul corrupted Jesus' teachings. Tolstoy believed Paul was instrumental in the church's "deviation" from Jesus' teaching and practices, whilst Hennacy believed "Paul spoiled the message of Christ."[22] [23]

Notes
[1] Harris, Stephen L., Understanding the Bible. Palo Alto: Mayfield. 1985. p. 316-320. Harris cites Galatians 6:11, Romans 16:22, Colossians 4:18, Thessalonians 2 3:17, Philemon 19. Joseph Barber Lightfoot in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians writes: "At this point [Galatians 6:11] the apostle takes the pen from his amanuensis, and the concluding paragraph is written with his own hand. From the time when letters began to be forged in his name (Thessalonians 2 2:2; Thessalonians 2 3:17) it seems to have been his practice to close with a few words in his own handwriting, as a precaution against such forgeries... In the present case he writes a whole paragraph, summing up the main lessons of the epistle in terse, eager, disjointed sentences. He writes it, too, in large, bold characters (Gr. pelikois grammasin), that his handwriting may reflect the energy and determination of his soul."
[4] Ziesler John, Pauline Christianity (OUP 2001) Zielesler comments "Pauline Christianity is the earliest for which we have direct documentary evidence..."
[6] Ziesler, John Pauline Christianity
[9] cf James Tabor The Jesus Dynasty (Simon & Schuster 2006): Tabor contends that Paul led the church in its decisive break with the Ebionites, whose teaching contained the authentic teachings of Jesus,
[12] L. Michael White, "From Jesus to Christianity"
[13] F. F. Bruce, "Paul & Jesus"
[17] See also New Perspective on Paul and Ed. Sanders Paul and Palestinian Judaism
[18] see also Supersessionism
[19] [Rowlands, Christopher, ibid. p.196
[20] but see also Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification
[21] Articles - People who have understood Paul is Anti-Christ - Oneness - True Faith (http://www.wizanda.com/modules/article/view. article.php/article=52)
[22] Tolstoy, Leo (1882). Church and State. "This deviation begins from the times of the Apostles and especially from that hankerer after mastership Paul"

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**External links**

• New Perspective on Paul (http://www.thepaulpage.com)

Marcion of Sinope

Marcion of Sinope (Greek: Μαρκίων Σινώπης, ca. 85-160) was a well known bishop in early Christianity. His theology, which rejected the deity described in the Jewish scriptures as inferior or subjugated to the God proclaimed in the Christian gospel, was denounced by the Church Fathers and he was excommunicated. His rejection of many books contemporarily considered scripture in the Catholic part of the church prompted this church to develop a Catholic canon of scriptures.

Life

Hippolytus records that Marcion was the son of the bishop of Sinope, in Pontus. His near-contemporaries Rhodon and Tertullian described him as a ship owner. Marcion probably was consecrated a bishop, likely an assistant or suffragan of his father at Sinope.

Epiphanius states that after beginnings as an ascetic, he seduced a virgin and was accordingly excommunicated by his father, prompting him to leave his home town. This account has been doubted by many scholars, who consider it "malicious gossip". More recently, Bart D. Ehrman suggests that this "seduction of a virgin" was a metaphor for his corruption of the Christian Church, with the Church portrayed as the undefiled virgin.

Bishop Marcion had travelled to Rome about 142/143. But since the Marcionite church was already widespread at the time of his excommunication, it is more likely that his founding of Marcionite style churches had started much earlier. Bishop Marcion made a notable donation of 200,000 sesterces to the church. Conflicts with the bishops of Rome arose and he was eventually excommunicated by the Church of Rome, his donation being returned to him. After his excommunication, he returned to Asia Minor where he continued to lead his many church congregations and teach the Christian gospel in its Marcionite or Pauline version.

Teachings

Study of the Jewish Scriptures, along with received writings circulating in the nascent Church (the majority of which were eventually incorporated into the New Testament canon) led Marcion to conclude that many of the teachings of Jesus were incompatible with the actions of the god of the Old Testament, Yahweh. Marcion responded by developing a dualist system of belief around the year 144. This dual-god notion allowed Marcion to reconcile supposed contradictions between Old Covenant theology and the Gospel message proclaimed by Jesus.

Marcion affirmed Jesus to be the saviour sent by the Heavenly Father, and Paul as His chief apostle. In contrast to the nascent Christian church, Marcion declared that Christianity was distinct from and in opposition to Judaism. Marcion did not claim that the Jewish Scriptures were false. Instead, Marcion asserted that they were to be read in an absolutely literal manner, thereby developing an understanding that YHVH was not the same god spoken of by Jesus, e.g. in the Genesis account of YHVH walking through the Garden of Eden asking where Adam was, Marcion read this to mean that YHVH physically walked through the Garden without foreknowledge of Adam's whereabouts. Marcion argued that this proved YHVH inhabited a physical body (unlike the Heavenly Father) and that YHVH was ignorant and without universal foreknowledge, attributes wholly incompatible with the Heavenly Father professed by Jesus.

According to bishop Marcion, the god of the Old Testament, whom he called the Demiurige, the creator of the material universe, is a jealous tribal deity of the Jews, whose law represents legalistic reciprocal justice and who
punishes mankind for its sins through suffering and death. Contrastingly, the god that Jesus professed is an altogether different being, a universal god of compassion and love who looks upon humanity with benevolence and mercy.

Marcion held Jesus to be the son of the Heavenly Father but understood the incarnation in a docetic manner, i.e. that Jesus' body was only an imitation of a material body. Marcion held that Jesus paid the debt of sin that humanity owed via his crucifixion, thus absolving humanity and allowing it to inherit eternal life.[8]

Marcion was the first to propose a New Testament canon. His canon consisted of only eleven books grouped into two sections: the Evangelikon, being a version of the Gospel of Luke,[9] and the Apostolikon, a selection of ten letters of Paul the Apostle who Marcion considered the correct interpreter and transmitter of Jesus' teachings. Both sections were purged of elements relating to Jesus' childhood, Judaism, and material challenging Marcion's dualism. Marcion also produced his Antitheses contrasting the Demiurge of the Old Testament with the Heavenly Father of the New Testament.

Marcion and Gnosticism

Marcion is sometimes described as a Gnostic philosopher. In some essential respects, Marcion proposed ideas which would have aligned well with Gnostic thought. Like the Gnostics, he argued that Jesus was essentially a divine spirit appearing to men in the shape of a human form, and not someone in a true physical body.[8]

However, Marcionism conceptualizes God in a way which cannot be reconciled with broader Gnostic thought. For Gnostics, every human being is born with a small piece of God's soul lodged within his/her spirit (akin to the notion of a 'Divine Spark').[8] God is thus intimately connected to and part of His creation.[8] Salvation lies in turning away from the physical world (which Gnostics regard as an illusion) and embracing the God-like qualities within yourself.[8] Marcion, by contrast, held that the Heavenly Father (the father of Jesus Christ) was an utterly alien god; he had no part in making the world, nor any connection with it. Out of mercy, he intervened in the world to save humanity.[8]

Legacy

Bishop Marcion was among the first to be declared a heresiarch in the year 144 for his deviations from the more conservative theological viewpoints of the main body of bishops. His purely Pauline or Marcionite interpretation of the gospel of Jesus Christ furthered the notion in the early catholic church centred on Rome that certain gospel interpretations should be designated as orthodox, while others should be rejected, condemned and labelled as heretical. Reacting to the popularity of the churches led by bishop Marcion east of Rome, the Catholic Church set out to systematise, fixate and impose a set of beliefs that would demarcate more clearly the outlines of their interpretation of orthodox Christianity. The suppression of the Marcionist form of Christianity is thus viewed[10] as a catalyst for the development of the catholic canon, the establishment of a centralised church law, and the structuring of the Catholic Church with its orthodox dogmas in general, which remained a relatively unchallenged mainstay in Christendom until the Protestant Reformation.

The church that Marcion founded had expanded throughout the known world within his lifetime, and was a serious rival to the Catholic Church. Its adherents were strong enough in their convictions to have the church retain its expansive power for more than a century. It survived Christian controversy, and imperial disapproval, for several centuries more.[11]

Marcion was the first Christian leader to propose and delineate a canon (a list of officially sanctioned religious works). In so doing, he established a particular way of viewing religious texts that persists in Christian thought today. After Marcion, Christians began to divide texts into those that aligned well with the "measuring stick" (Greek kanón literally means measuring stick) of accepted theological thought, and those that should be rejected. This essential bifurcation played a major role in finalising the structure and contents of the collection of works now called the Bible. An initial impetus for finalising the catholic version of the christian canon stemmed from opposition to
Marcion's first Christian canon.

Some ideas similar to those of Marcion's reappeared among the Bulgarian Bogomils of the 10th century and the Cathars of southern France in the 13th century.

Notes

[1] http://khazarzar.skeptik.net/books/justinus/apolog1g.htm
[6] Tertullian dates the beginning of Marcion's teachings 115 years after the crucifixion of Jesus, which he placed in AD 26/27 (Adversus Marcionem, xix).
[7] 115 years and 6 months from the Crucifixion, according to Tertullian's reckoning in Adversus Marcionem, xv.

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• Wilson, R. S. M arcion: A Study of a Second-Century Heretic (London:Clarke) 1933
Marcionism was an Early Christian dualist belief system that originated in the teachings of Marcion of Sinope at Rome around the year 144; see also Christianity in the 2nd century.

Marcion believed Jesus Christ was the savior sent by God and Paul of Tarsus was his chief apostle, but he rejected the Hebrew Bible and the God of Israel (YHWH Elohim). Marcionists believed that the wrathful Hebrew God was a separate and lower entity than the all-forgiving God of the New Testament. This belief was in some ways similar to Gnostic Christian theology; notably, both are dualistic.

Marcionism, similar to Gnosticism, depicted the Hebrew God of the Old Testament as a tyrant or demiurge (see also God as the Devil). Marcion was labeled as gnostic by Eusebius, Marcion's canon consisted of eleven books: A gospel consisting of ten chapters from the Gospel of Luke edited by Marcion (the current canonical Gospel of Luke has 24 chapters); and ten of Paul's epistles. All other epistles and gospels of the 27 book New Testament canon were rejected. Paul's epistles enjoy a prominent position in the Marcionite canon, since Paul is credited with correctly transmitting the universality of Jesus' message. Other authors' epistles were rejected since they seemed to suggest that Jesus had simply come to found a new sect within broader Judaism. Religious tribalism of this sort seemed to echo Yahwism, and was thus regarded as a corruption of the "Heavenly Father"'s teaching.

Marcionism was denounced by its opponents as heresy, and written against, notably by Tertullian, in a five-book treatise Adversus Marcionem, written about 208. Marcion's writings are lost, though they were widely read and numerous manuscripts must have existed. Even so, many scholars (including Henry Wace) claim it is possible to reconstruct and deduce a large part of ancient Marcionism through what later critics, especially Tertullian, said concerning Marcion.
History

According to Tertullian and other writers of the mainstream Church (which scholars refer to as Proto-orthodox Christianity), the movement known as Marcionism began with the teachings and excommunication of Marcion from the Early centers of Christianity Catholic Church around 144. Marcion was reportedly a wealthy shipowner, the son of a bishop of Sinope of Pontus, Asia Minor. He arrived in Rome c. 140, soon after Bar Kokhba's revolt. That revolution, along with other Jewish-Roman wars (the Great Jewish Revolt and the Kitos War), provides some of the historical context of the founding of Marcionism; see also Anti-Judaism in the Roman Empire. Marcion was excommunicated from the Catholic Church because he was threatening to make schisms in the church.[4]

Marcion used his personal wealth, (particularly a donation returned to him by the Catholic Church after he was excommunicated), to fund an ecclesiastical organization. Marcionism continued in the West for 300 years, although Marcionistic ideas persisted much longer.[5]

The organization continued in the East for some centuries later, particularly outside the Byzantine Empire in areas which later would be dominated by Manichaeism.

Schism within Marcionism

By the reign of emperor Commodus Marcionism was divided into various opinions with various leaders; among whom was Apelles, whom Rhodo describes as: "...priding himself on his manner of life and his age, acknowledges one principle, but says that the prophecies are from an opposing principle, being led to this view by the responses of a maiden by name Philumene, who was possessed by a demon".

But others, among whom were Potitus and Basilicus, held to two principles, as did Marcion himself. Others consider that there are not only two, but three natures. Of these, Syneros was the leader and chiet.[6]

Teachings

Marcion declared that Christianity was distinct from and in opposition to Judaism, see also Anti-Judaism. He rejected the entire Hebrew Bible, and declared that the God of the Hebrew Bible was a lesser demiurge, who had created the earth, but was (de facto) the source of evil.

The premise of Marcionism is that many of the teachings of Christ are incompatible with the actions of the God of the Old Testament. Focusing on the Pauline traditions of the Gospel, Marcion felt that all other conceptions of the Gospel, and especially any association with the Old Testament religion, was opposed to, and a backsliding from, the truth. He further regarded the arguments of Paul regarding law and gospel, wrath and grace, works and faith, flesh and spirit, sin and righteousness, death and life, as the essence of religious truth. He ascribed these aspects and characteristics as two principles, the righteous and wrathful God of the Old Testament, who is at the same time identical with the creator of the world, and a second God of the Gospel, quite unknown before Christ, who is only love and mercy.[7]

Marcionites held maltheistic views of the God of the Hebrew Bible (known to some Gnostics as Yaltabaoth), that he was inconsistent, jealous, wrathful and genocidal, and that the material world he created was defective, a place of suffering; the God who made such a world is a bungling or malicious demiurge.

"In the God of the [Old Testament] he saw a being whose character was stern justice, and therefore anger, contentiousness and unmercifulness. The law which rules nature and man appeared to him to accord with the characteristics of this God and the kind of law revealed by him, and therefore it seemed credible to him that this God is the creator and lord of the world (κοσμοκράτωρ [English transliteration: kosmokrator/cosmocrator]). As the law which governs the world is inflexible and yet, on the other hand, full of contradictions, just and again brutal, and as the law of the Old Testament exhibits the same features, so the God of creation was to Marcion a being who united in himself the whole gradations of attributes from justice to malevolence, from obstinacy to inconsistency."[8]
In Marcionite belief, Christ was not a Jewish Messiah, but a spiritual entity that was sent by the Monad to reveal the truth about existence, and thus allowing humanity to escape the earthly trap of the demiurge. Marcion called God, the Stranger God, or the Alien God, in some translations, as this deity had not had any previous interactions with the world, and was wholly unknown. See also the Unknown God of Hellenism.

In various popular sources, Marcion is often reckoned among the Gnostics, but as the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (3rd ed.)* puts it, "it is clear that he would have had little sympathy with their mythological speculations" (p. 1034). In 1911 Henry Wace stated:

"A modern divine would turn away from the dreams of Valentinianism in silent contempt; but he could not refuse to discuss the question raised by Marcion, whether there is such opposition between different parts of what he regards as the word of God, that all cannot come from the same author.

A primary difference between Marcionites and Gnostics was that the Gnostics based their theology on secret wisdom (as, for example, Valentinus who claimed to receive the secret wisdom from Theudas who received it direct from Paul) of which they claimed to be in possession, whereas Marcion based his theology on the contents of the Letters of Paul and the recorded sayings of Jesus — in other words, an argument from scripture, with Marcion defining what was and was not scripture. Also, the Christology of the Marcionites is thought to have been primarily Docetic, denying the human nature of Christ. This may have been due to the unwillingness of Marcionites to believe that Jesus was the son of both God the Father and the demiurge. Classical Gnosticism, by contrast, held that Jesus was the son of both, even having a natural human father; that he was both the Messiah of Judaism and the world Savior.

Scholars of Early Christianity disagree on whether to classify Marcion as a Gnostic: Adolf Von Harnack does not classify Marcion as a Gnostic, whereas G. R. S. Mead does.

Von Harnack argued that Marcion was not a Gnostic in the strict sense because Marcion rejected elaborate creation myths, and did not claim to have special revelation or secret knowledge. Mead claimed Marcionism makes certain points of contact with Gnosticism in its view that the creator of the material world is not the true deity, rejection of materialism and affirmation of a transcendent, purely good spiritual realm in opposition to the evil physical realm, the belief Jesus was sent by the "True" God to save humanity, the central role of Jesus in revealing the requirements of salvation, the belief Paul had a special place in the transmission of this "wisdom", and its docetism. According to the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica article on Marcion, Marcion was not a Gnostic.

Marcionism shows the influence of Hellenistic philosophy on Christianity, and presents a moral critique of the Old Testament from the standpoint of Platonism. According to Harnack, the sect may have led other Christians to introduce a formal statement of beliefs into their liturgy (see Creed) and to formulate a canon of authoritative Scripture of their own, thus eventually producing the current canon of the New Testament.
Marcion is believed to have imposed a severe morality on his followers, some of whom suffered in the persecutions. In particular, he refused to re-admit those who recanted their faith under Roman persecution; see also Lapsi (Christian).

**Marcionite canon**

Tertullian claimed Marcion was the first to separate the *New Testament* from the *Old Testament*. Marcion is said to have gathered scriptures from Jewish tradition, and juxtaposed these against the sayings and teachings of Jesus in a work entitled the *Antithesis*. Besides the *Antithesis*, the Testament of the Marcionites was also composed of a *Gospel of Christ* which was Marcion's version of Luke, and that the Marcionites attributed to Paul, that was different in a number of ways from the version that is now regarded as canonical. It seems to have lacked all prophecies of Christ's coming, as well as the Infancy account, the baptism, and the verses were more terse in general. It also included ten of the Pauline Epistles (but not the Pastoral Epistles or the Epistle to the Hebrews, and, according to the Muratorian canon, included a Marcionite Paul's epistle to the Alexandrians and an epistle to the Laodiceans) in bringing together these texts, Marcion redacted what is perhaps the first New Testament canon on record, which he called the Gospel and the Apostolikon, which reflects his belief the writings reflect the apostle Paul and Jesus.

The Prologues to the Pauline Epistles (which are not a part of the text, but short introductory sentences as one might find in modern study Bibles), found in several older Latin codices, are now widely believed to have been written by Marcion or one of his followers. Harnack notes:

"We have indeed long known that Marcionite readings found their way into the ecclesiastical text of the Pauline Epistles, but now for seven years we have known that Churches actually accepted the Marcionite prefaces to the Pauline Epistles! De Bruyne has made one of the finest discoveries of later days in proving that those prefaces, which we read first in Codex Fuldensis and then in numbers of later manuscripts, are Marcionite, and that the Churches had not noticed the cloven hoof."

Conversely, several early Latin codices contain Anti-Marcionite prologues to the Gospels.

**Reaction to Marcion by early Christians**

According to a remark by Origen (*Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 15.3), Marcion "prohibited allegorical interpretations of the scripture". Tertullian disputed this in his treatise against Marcion, as did Henry Wace:

"The story proceeds to say that he asked the Roman presbyters to explain the texts, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," and "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment," texts from which he himself deduced that works in which evil is to be found could not proceed from the good God, and that the Christian dispensation could have nothing in common with the Jewish. Rejecting the explanation offered him by the presbyters, he broke off the interview with a threat to make a schism in their church."

Tertullian, along with Epiphanius of Salamis, also charged that Marcion set aside the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, and used Luke alone. Tertullian cited Luke 6:43-45 (a good tree does not produce bad fruit) and Luke 5:36-38 (nobody tears a piece from a new garment to patch an old garment or puts new wine in old wineskins), in theorizing that Marcion set about to recover the authentic teachings of Jesus. Irenaeus claimed,

"[Marcion's] salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation."

Tertullian also attacked this view in *De Carne Christi*.

Hippolytus reported that Marcion's phantasmal (and Docetist) Christ was "revealed as a man, though not a man", and did not really die on the cross. However, Ernest Evans, in editing this work, observes:
Marcionism

“This may not have been Marcion’s own belief. It was certainly that of Hermogenes (cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem*) and probably other gnostics and Marcionites, who held that the intractability of this matter explains the world’s many imperfections.

Recent scholarship

In *Lost Christianities*, Bart Ehrman contrasts the Marcionites with the Ebionites as polar ends of a spectrum with regard to the Old Testament. Ehrman acknowledges many of Marcion’s ideas are very close to what is known today as “Gnosticism”, especially its rejection of the Jewish God, the Old Testament, and the material world, and his elevation of Paul as the primary apostle. In the PBS documentary, *From Jesus to Christ*, narrated by Elaine Pagels, Ehrman, Karen King, and other secular New Testament scholars, Marcion’s role in the formation of the New Testament canon is discussed as pivotal, and the first to explicitly state it. There were early Christian groups, such as the Ebionites, that did not accept Paul as part of their canon.

Robert M. Price, a New Testament scholar at Johnnie Colemon Theological Seminary, considers the Pauline canon problem: how, when, and who collected Paul’s epistles to the various churches as a single collection of epistles. The evidence that the early church fathers, such as Clement, knew of the Pauline epistles is unclear. Price investigates several historical scenarios and comes to the conclusion and identifies Marcion as the first person known in recorded history to collect Paul’s writings to various churches together as a canon, the Pauline epistles. Robert Price summarizes,

> But the first collector of the Pauline Epistles had been Marcion. No one else we know of would be a good candidate, certainly not the essentially fictive Luke, Timothy, and Onesimus. And Marcion, as Burkitt and Bauer show, fills the bill perfectly.

If this is correct, then Marcion’s role in the formation and development of Christianity is pivotal.

Marcionism in Modern history

Historic Marcionism, and the church Marcion himself established, appeared to die out around the 5th century, although similarities between Marcionism and Paulicianism, a later heresy in the same geographical area, indicate that Marcionist ideas may have survived and even contributed to heresies in Bulgaria and France. Whether or not that is the case, Marcion’s influence and criticism of the Old Testament are discussed to this very day. Marcionism is discussed in recent textbooks on early Christianity, such as *Lost Christianities* by Bart Ehrman. Marcion claimed to find problems in the Old Testament; problems which many modern thinkers cite today (see Criticism of the Bible and Biblical law in Christianity), especially its alleged approval of atrocities and genocide.

Many atheists, agnostics, and secular humanists agree with Marcion’s examples of Bible atrocities, and cite the same passages of the Old Testament to discredit Christianity and Judaism. Most Christians agree with Marcion that the Old Testament’s alleged approval of genocide and murder are inappropriate models to follow today. Some Christian scholars, such as Gleason Archer and Norman Geisler, have dedicated much of their time to the attempt to resolve these perceived difficulties, while others have argued that *just punishments* (divine or human), even capital punishments, are not genocide or murder because murder and genocide are *unjustified* by definition (see Christian Reconstructionism).

On the other hand, because of the rejection of the Old Testament which originates in the Jewish Bible, the Marcionites have been believed by some Christians to be anti-Jewish. Indeed, the word *Marcionism* has sometimes been used in modern times to refer to anti-Jewish tendencies in Christian churches, especially when such tendencies have been thought to be surviving residues of ancient Marcionism.

For some, the postulated problems of the Old Testament, and the appeal of Jesus are such that they identify themselves as modern day Marcionites, and follow his solution in keeping the New Testament as sacred scripture, and rejecting the Old Testament canon and practices. A term sometimes used for these groups is “New Testament
Marcionism

Only Christians”. Carroll R. Bierbower is a pastor of a church he says is Marcionite in theology and practice.\[30\] The Cathar movement, historically and in modern times, reject the Old Testament for the reasons Marcion enunciated. It remains unclear whether the 11th century Cathar movement is in continuation of earlier Gnostic and Marcion streams, or represents an independent re-invention. John Lindell, a former Methodist and Unitarian Universalist pastor, advocates Christian deism, which does not include the Old Testament as part of its theology.\[31\]

Notes

[1] (115 years and 6 months from the Crucifixion, according to Tertullian's reckoning in Adversus Marcionem, xv)
[2] "Marcion was the most earnest, the most practical, and the most dangerous among the Gnostics, full of energy and zeal for reforming, but restless rough and eccentric. He has a remote connection with modern questions of biblical criticism and the canon. He anticipated a rationalistic opposition to the Old Testament and to the Pastoral Epistles, but in a very arbitrary and unscrupulous way. He could see only superficial differences in the Bible, not the deeper harmony. He rejected the heathen mythology of the other Gnostics, and adhered to Christianity as the only true religion; he was less speculative, and gave a higher place to faith. But he was utterly destitute of historical sense, and put Christianity into a radical conflict with all previous revelations of God; as if God had neglected the world for thousands of years until he suddenly appeared in Christ. He represents an extreme anti-Jewish and pseudo-Pauline tendency, and a magical supranaturalism, which, in fanatical zeal for a pure primitive Christianity, nullifies all history, and turns the gospel into an abrupt, unnatural, phantomlike appearance. Marcion was the son of a bishop of Sinope in Pontus, and gave in his first fervor his property to the church, but was excommunicated by his own father, probably on account of his heretical opinions and contempt of authority..86 He betook himself, about the middle of the second century, to Rome (140–155), which originated none of the Gnostic systems, but attracted them all. There he joined the Syrian Gnostic, Cerdo.” History of the Christian Church, Volume II: Ante-Nicene Christianity. A.D. 100-325. Marcion and his School by PHILIP SCHAFF (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaaff/hcc2.v.xiii.xvi.html)
[10] G. R. S. Mead, Fragments of a Faith Forgotten: Some Short Sketches among the Gnostics of the First Two Centuries (London, 1906), p. 246. (http://books.google.com/books?id=TgRv8m2WGy8C&pg=PA246&dq="it+is+evident+that+the+Marcionite+tradition"&hl=en&ei=Tu09TYKOMsOclgexprH-Bg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q="it+is+evident+that+the+Marcionite+tradition"&f=false)
[13] McDonald & Sanders, editors, The Canon Debate, 2002, chapter 18 by Everett Ferguson, page 310, quoting Tertullian's De praescriptione haereticorum 30: “Since Marcion separated the New Testament from the Old, he is necessarily subsequent to that which he separated, inasmuch as it was only in his power to separate what was previously united. Having been united previous to its separation, the fact of its subsequent separation proves the subsistence also of the man who effected the separation.” Page 308, note 61 adds: “[Wolfram] Kinzig suggests that it was Marcion who usually called his Bible testamentum [Latin for testament].”
[20] From the perspectives of Tertullian and Epiphanius (when the four gospels had largely canonical status, perhaps in reaction to the challenge created by Marcion), it appeared that Marcion rejected the non-Lukan gospels, however, in Marcion's time, it may be that the only gospel he was familiar with from Pontus was the gospel that would later be called Luke. It is also possible that Marcion's gospel was actually modified by his critics to become the gospel we know today as Luke, rather than the story from his critics that he changed a canonical gospel to get his version. For example, compare Luke 5:39 to 5:36-38, did Marcion delete 5:39 from his Gospel or was it added later to counteract a Marcionist interpretation of 5:36-38? One must keep in mind that we only know of Marcion through his critics and they considered him a major threat to the form of Christianity that they knew. John Knox (the modern writer, not to be confused with John Knox the Protestant Reformer) in Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon (ISBN 0-404-16183-9) proposed that Marcion's Gospel may have preceded Luke's Gospel and Acts. (http://ontruth.com/marcion.html)
[23] Against Heresies, 1.27.3 (http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-58.htm#P6650_1591742)
References


External links

- The Marcionite Research Library (http://www.marcionite-scripture.info/)