

Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: Key Protestant
Reformation Doctrines

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The Conservative Response (20th Century) Review

- **The 20th century saw a resurgence of orthodox doctrine regarding the authority of Scripture and other Protestant Reformation doctrine with the rise of:**
 - Intellectual Fundamentalism
 - Mainline Denominational Splits into Liberal and Conservative Denominations
 - Evangelicalism
- **A number of other movements also arose that sought on one hand a return to orthodoxy but acknowledged on the other hand some revised interpretation of the Scriptures were necessary to make Christianity relevant.**
 - Neo Orthodoxy
 - Populist Fundamentalists
 - Dispensationalists
 - Pentecostals
 - Charismatics
- **The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (October 26 -29 1978)**

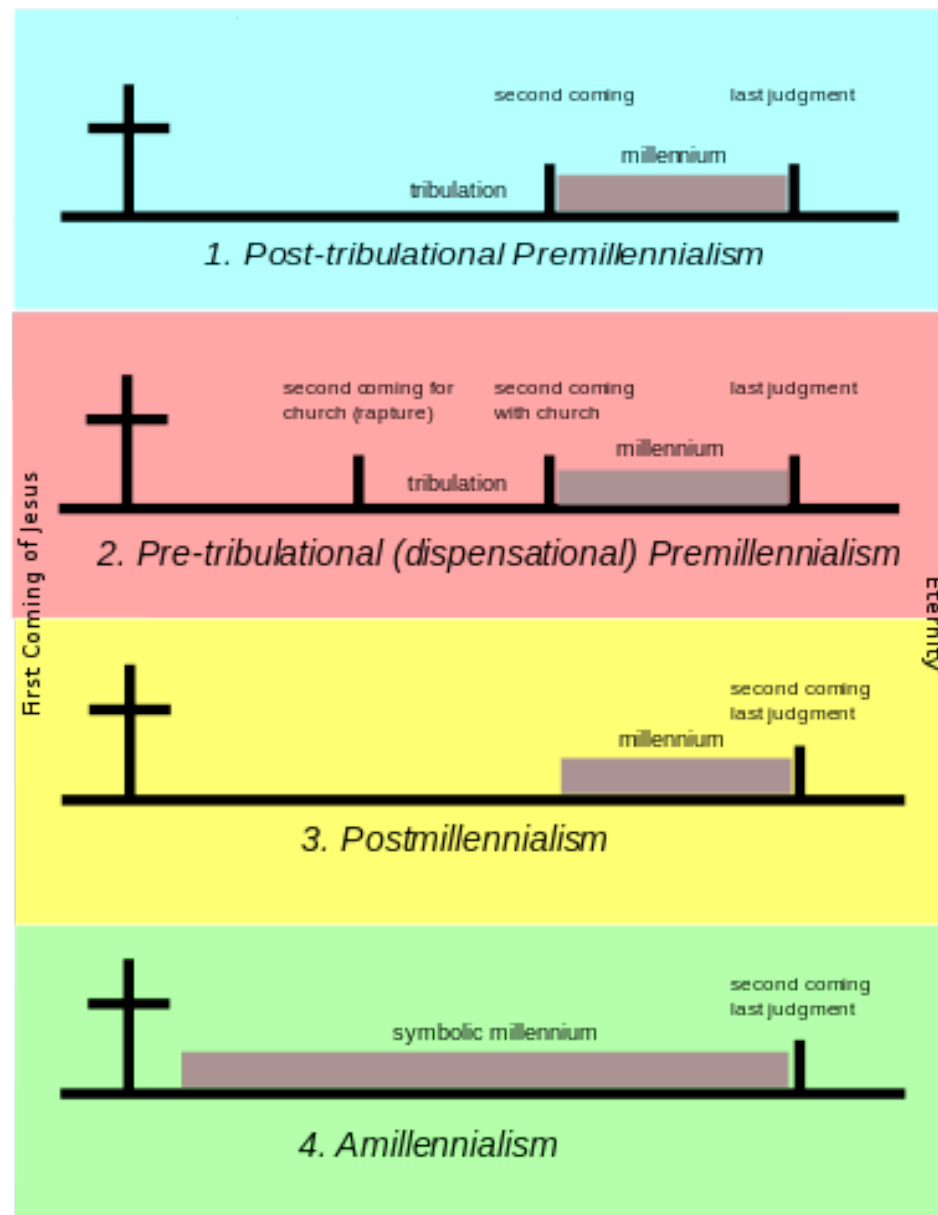
Early 20th Century Conservatives Respond – The Dispensationalists

- According to Dispensationalism there are seven different divisions of human history. Each one is characterized by a specific theme and the way God deals with humans. The seven time periods are:
 1. Innocence – Adam under probation prior to the Fall. Ends with expulsion from the Garden of Eden.
 2. Conscience – From the Fall to the Great Flood. Ends with the worldwide deluge.
 3. Human Government – After the Great Flood through the Tower of Babel.
 4. Promise – From Abraham to Moses. Ends with the refusal to enter Canaan and the 40 years of unbelief in the wilderness..
 5. Law – From Moses to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
 6. Grace – From the cross to the rapture of the church. The rapture is followed by the wrath of God comprising the Great Tribulation. Some use the terms Age of Grace or the Church Age for this dispensation.
 7. Millennial Kingdom – A 1000 year reign of Christ on earth centered in Jerusalem. Ends with God's judgment on the final rebellion.

Early 20th Century Conservatives Respond – The Dispensationalists

- Each divine dispensation features a cycle:
 1. God reveals himself and his truth to humanity in a new way.
 2. Humanity is held responsible to conform to that revelation.
 3. Humanity rebels and fails the test.
 4. God judges humanity and introduces a new period of probation under a new administration.

Comparison of Christian millennial teachings



Early 20th Century Conservatives Respond – The Pentecostals

- Pentecostalism arose in the early 20th century with the Azusa Street meetings in Los Angeles led by William J. Seymour, an African American preacher.
 - Pentecostalism adheres to the inerrancy of the Bible and the necessity of accepting Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. It is distinguished by belief in the baptism in the Holy Spirit that enables a Christian to live a Spirit-filled and empowered life. This empowerment includes the use of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and divine healing.
 - Today there are over 700 Pentecostal denominations plus many independent churches. It is estimated that there are at least 280 million Pentecostals worldwide.
- The **Charismatic Movement** is the international trend of historically mainstream Christian congregations adopting beliefs and practices similar to Pentecostalism. The essence of the movement is the use of spiritual gifts (*charismata*). Among Protestants, the movement began around 1960. Among Roman Catholics, it originated around 1967.

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (October 26 -29 1978)

1. **We affirm** that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God. **We deny** that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition or any other human source.
2. **We affirm** that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture. **We deny** that Church creeds, councils or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.
3. **We affirm** that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God. **We deny** that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.
4. **We affirm** that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation. **We deny** that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. **We further deny** that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's Work of Inspiration.

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5. **We affirm** that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive. **We deny** that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. **We further deny** that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.
6. **We affirm** that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration. **We deny** that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.
7. **We affirm** that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us. **We deny** that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.
8. **We affirm** that God in His Work of Inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared. **We deny** that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

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9. **We affirm** that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write. **We deny** that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.
10. **We affirm** that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. **We further affirm** that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original. **We deny** that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. **We further deny** that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.
11. **We affirm** that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses. **We deny** that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

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- 12. We affirm** that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit. **We deny** that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. **We further deny** that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.
- 13. We affirm** the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture. **We deny** that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. **We further deny** that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of materials, variant selections of material in parallel accounts or the use of free citations.
- 14. We affirm** the unity and internal consistency of Scripture. **We deny** that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

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- 15. We affirm** that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration. **We deny** that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.
- 16. We affirm** that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history. **We deny** that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.
- 17. We affirm** that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word. **We deny** that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.
- 18. We affirm** that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. **We deny** the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching or rejecting its claims to authorship.

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19. We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. **We further affirm** that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ. **We deny** that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, **we further deny** that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

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