

119

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Error of Dispensationalism

TEACHING SUMMARY

Dispensationalism is examined through its division of biblical history into successive administrations and its separation of Israel from the church. The teaching focuses on claims that the church is a previously unrevealed body with a different relationship to God's law. It challenges the claim that grace displaces Torah.

The central response is that God has one body of people under one Messiah. Passages describing one body, one flock, and Gentiles as fellow heirs are read together. The word translated church refers to an assembly and is also used for Israel in the wilderness. These connections support continuity in God's people and instructions.

Romans 11 pictures believing Gentiles as wild branches grafted into an existing olive tree. The branches receive nourishment from its root and must not become arrogant toward the natural branches. Ephesians 2 likewise describes those once far away as brought near to Israel's commonwealth and covenants. Gentiles neither form a separate tree nor replace Israel.

Jeremiah's new covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, with God's law written on their hearts. The study connects that promise with restoration and the inclusion of the nations. The same instruction for native and sojourner reinforces its argument. Obedience is understood as the response of God's redeemed people rather than a means of earning salvation.

Yeshua's promise to build His assembly is interpreted through the prophets' promises of restoration. Amos speaks of rebuilding David's fallen tent, and Acts 15 connects that promise with the Gentiles. Peter's use of Joel at Pentecost and his message about restoring all things in Acts 3 are considered in the same setting. Messiah fulfills the prophets' announcements.

Binding and loosing must apply God's established instructions, not authorize changing them. Matthew 5 is used to argue that fulfilling the Law does not mean abolishing it. The passing of heaven and earth is distinguished from Yeshua's words at the cross. The study concludes that believers should understand grace, covenant membership, and obedience within the unity of the whole Word.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The study challenges a separation of Israel and the church into two peoples.
- Scripture describes believers as one body under Messiah.
- Israel in the wilderness is described as an assembly or church.
- Gentile believers are grafted into an existing olive tree.
- The root supports the branches, not the reverse.
- Those once far away are brought near to Israel's covenants.
- The new covenant places God's law on the heart.
- The prophets announce restoration that includes the nations.
- Acts 15 connects Gentile inclusion with David's fallen tent.
- Fulfilling the Law is distinguished from abolishing it.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. The number of dispensations listed in the teaching's overview is _____.
2. The body of believers has one head, the _____.
3. Romans 11 uses an _____ tree to explain Gentile inclusion.
4. The tree's _____ supports the branches.
5. Jeremiah's new covenant puts God's law on His people's _____.
6. Ephesians 3 describes Gentiles as fellow _____.

Challenging

1. The Greek word discussed for assembly or church is _____.
2. Israel's congregation in the wilderness is mentioned in Acts chapter _____.
3. The prophet who describes rebuilding David's fallen tent is _____.
4. The Jerusalem discussion connecting that prophecy with Gentiles appears in Acts chapter _____.
5. Peter explains the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost by citing the prophet _____.
6. The new covenant names the house of Israel and the house of _____.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which distinction between Israel and the church does the teaching challenge, and why?

2. How do the one-body passages support the teaching's argument?

3. How does the olive-tree illustration address both Gentile inclusion and arrogance toward Israel?

4. How is Jeremiah's new-covenant promise used to discuss the place of God's law?

5. How do Amos, Acts 15, and Peter's Pentecost message connect the assembly with prophetic restoration?

6. How does the teaching distinguish fulfilling the Law from abolishing it in Matthew 5?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. seven — Teaching overview of seven dispensations
2. Messiah — Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18
3. olive — Romans 11:17–24
4. root — Romans 11:18
5. hearts — Jeremiah 31:33
6. heirs — Ephesians 3:6

Challenging

1. ekklesia — Teaching explanation of ekklesia; Acts 7:38
2. 7 — Acts 7:38
3. Amos — Amos 9:11
4. 15 — Acts 15:14–18
5. Joel — Acts 2:16–18
6. Judah — Jeremiah 31:31

FACILITATOR DISCUSSION NOTES

Suggested responses follow the teaching. Invite discussion and personal application; these are not additional required answers.

1. The source challenges a sharp separation of Israel and the church into peoples with different divine instructions. It explicitly rejects both separation and replacement. Ask participants to describe the particular claims being tested before evaluating them; do not assume every person using the label dispensationalist holds every claim in the overview.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, Ephesians 3:6 and John 10:16. The teaching connects one body, fellow heirs and one flock under Messiah. Ask how these texts support its account of shared belonging and what unity should look like among believers with different backgrounds.
3. Romans 11:17–24 describes Gentile branches sharing an existing root, standing by faith and being warned against pride. The teaching identifies the cultivated tree with Israel. Discuss how receiving nourishment and belonging should produce gratitude and humility rather than contempt for Jewish people or other believers.
4. Jeremiah 31:31–33 names Israel and Judah and promises the law within them and on their hearts. The source sees continuity of instruction with a renewed people. Retain its order: grace and faith bring people into the covenant, and obedience expresses love rather than purchasing salvation.
5. Acts 15:14–18 appeals to Amos in explaining Gentile inclusion; Acts 2:16–18 appeals to Joel for the Spirit being poured out. The teaching places both in a restoration framework. Trace each quotation and distinguish the scriptural words from the teaching's explanation of how the promises fit together.
6. Read Matthew 5:17–19 as a unit. The teaching understands fulfillment as bringing out the law's full meaning and rejects abolition. It distinguishes the finished work at the cross (John 19:30) from the future new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1–6). Ask how the surrounding sentences support its interpretation and what practical response follows.