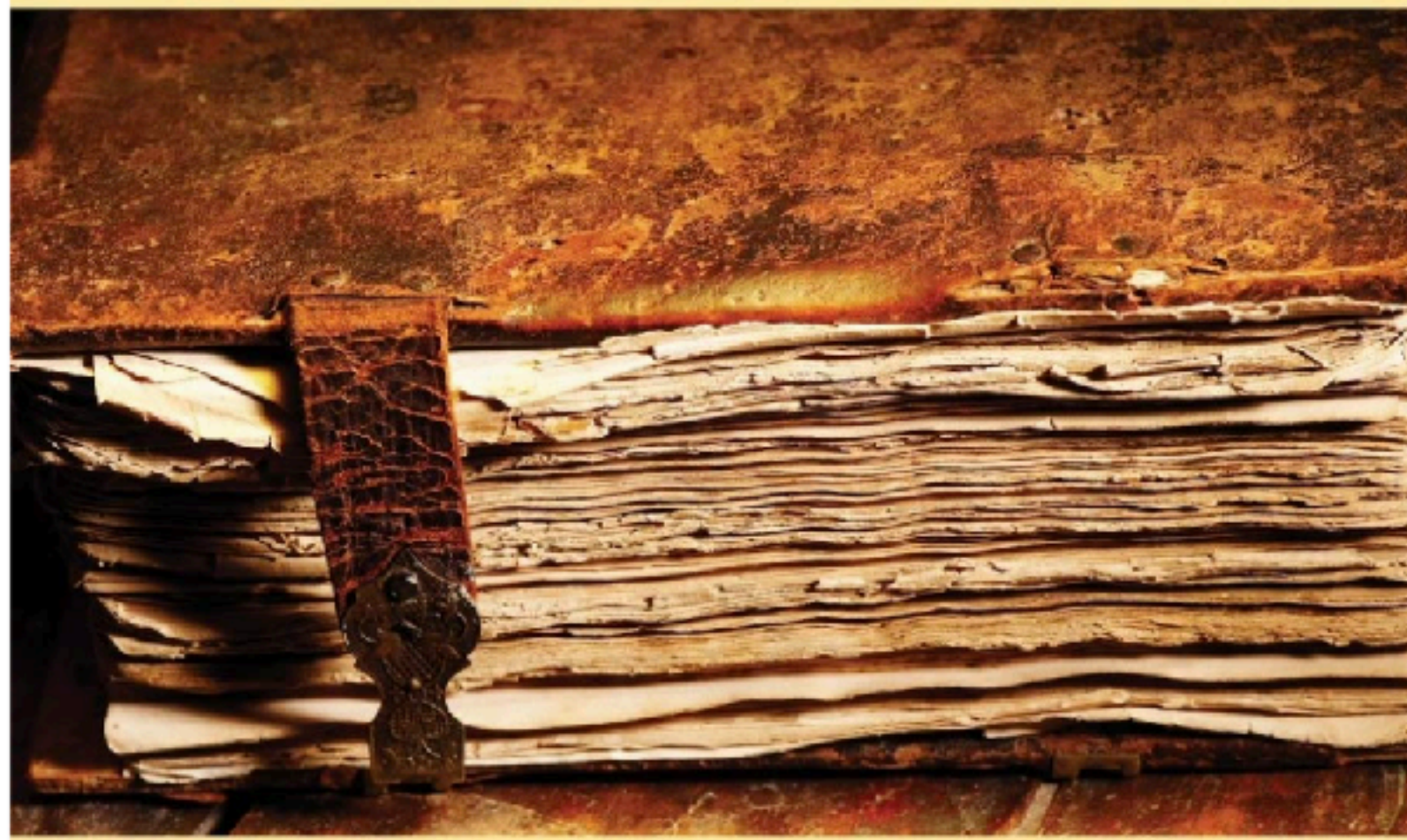


Dispensationalism Before Darby Debunked

Ancient DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

REFUTING THE MYTH THAT
DISPENSATIONALISM IS NEW



JAMES C. MORRIS



DISPENSATIONALISM BEFORE DARBY

Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth-Century
English Apocalypticism

WILLIAM C. WATSON

10. Right & happy
that the might see your life, and might
perfect that which is lacking in your
faith.

11. Now God himself and our Fa-
ther, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct
our way unto you.

12. And the Lords make you to in-
crease, & abound in love one towards a-
nother, and towards all men, even as
we do towards you:

13. To the end hee may stablish your
hearts blameable in holinesse before
God even our Father, at the coming
of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his
Saints.

ye brethren, which are in all Macedo-
nia: but we beseech you, brethren, that
ye increase more and more:

11. And that ye studer to be quiet, and
to doe your owne businesse, and to
worke with your owne hands, (as wee
commanded you:)

12. That ye may walke honestly to-
ward them that are without, and that
ye may have lacke of nothing.

13. But I would not have you to be
ignorant, brethren, concerning them
which are asleepe, that ye sorrow not,
even as others which have no hope.

14. For if we beleve that Jesus died,

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"This book shows that elements of later dispensational teaching
occurred in nearly every period before J. N. Darby."

DAVID BEBBINGTON, *Emeritus Professor of History, University of Stirling*

DISCOVERING DISPENSATIONALISM

TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISPENSATIONAL THOUGHT
FROM THE FIRST TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

EDITED BY

CORY M. MARSH & JAMES I. FAZIO

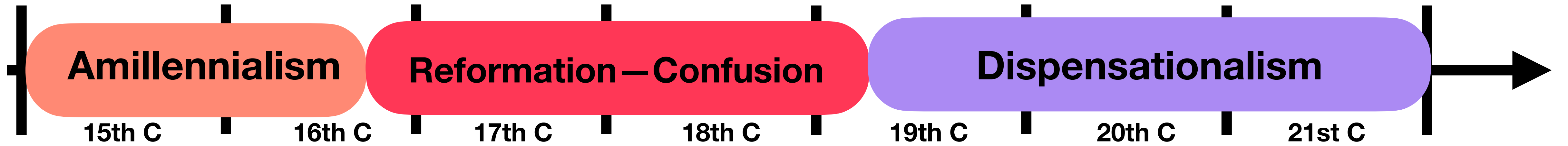
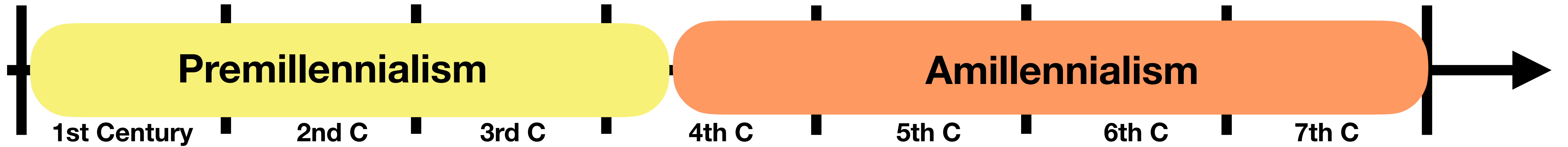
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What is Dispensationalism?

Dispensationalism

Historic Premillennialism

- A More Literal Historical Grammatical Hermeneutic
 - Emphasis on the biblical covenants
 - Begins with the Old Testament
 - History may be viewed through various periods
- Sees an overly rigid distinction between Israel and the Church
 - Divides the NT into portions “for Israel” and “for the Church.”
 - Pretribulational Rapture

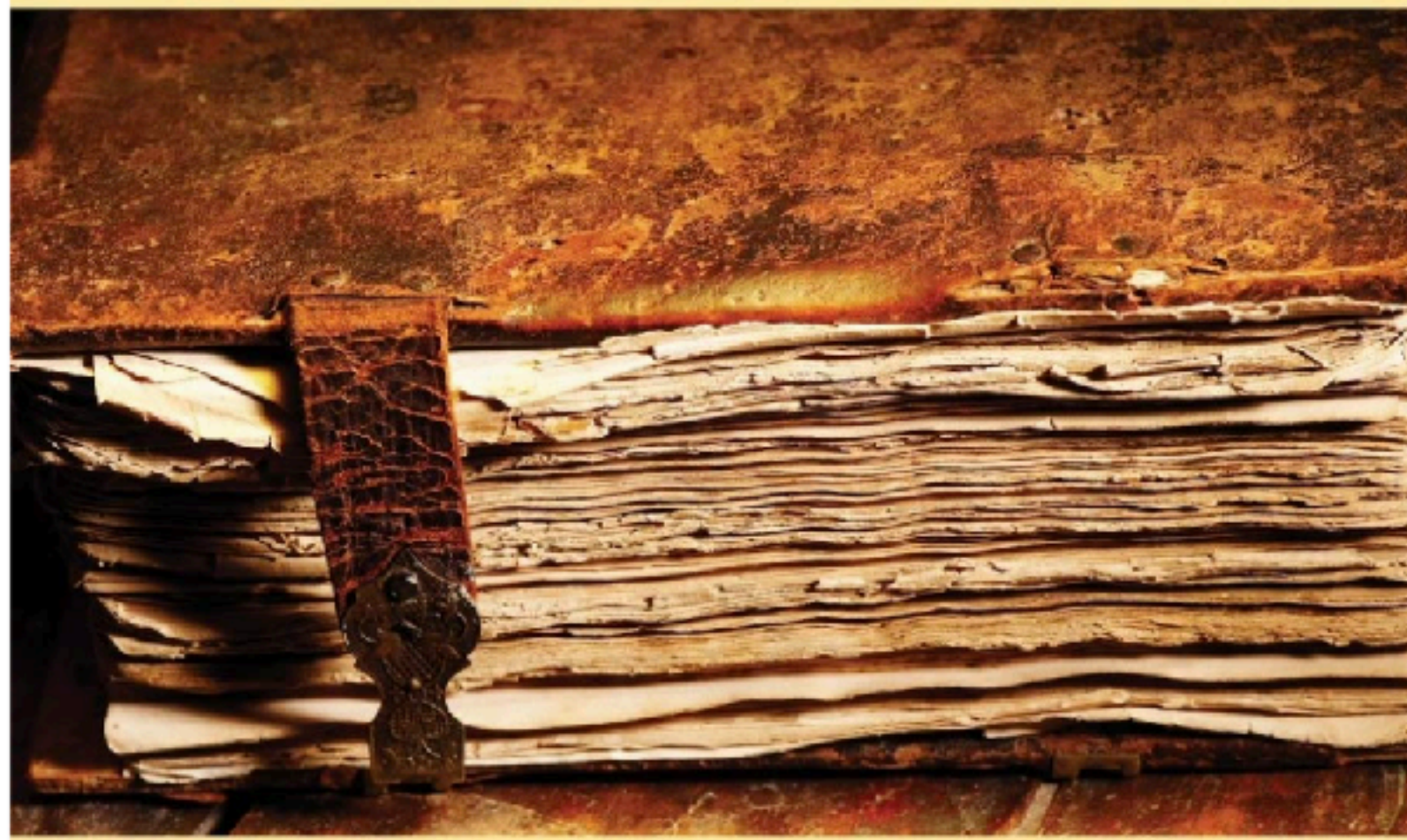


The Great Embarrassment

- The fact that Pretribulational Dispensationalism is unknown throughout Church history is very embarrassing to Pretribbers.
- Thus, in recent years, many Pretrib Dispensationalists have begun claiming that Darby simply recovered something that had always existed.
- This has led to the publication of at least three books in recent years.

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DISCOVERING DISPENSATIONALISM

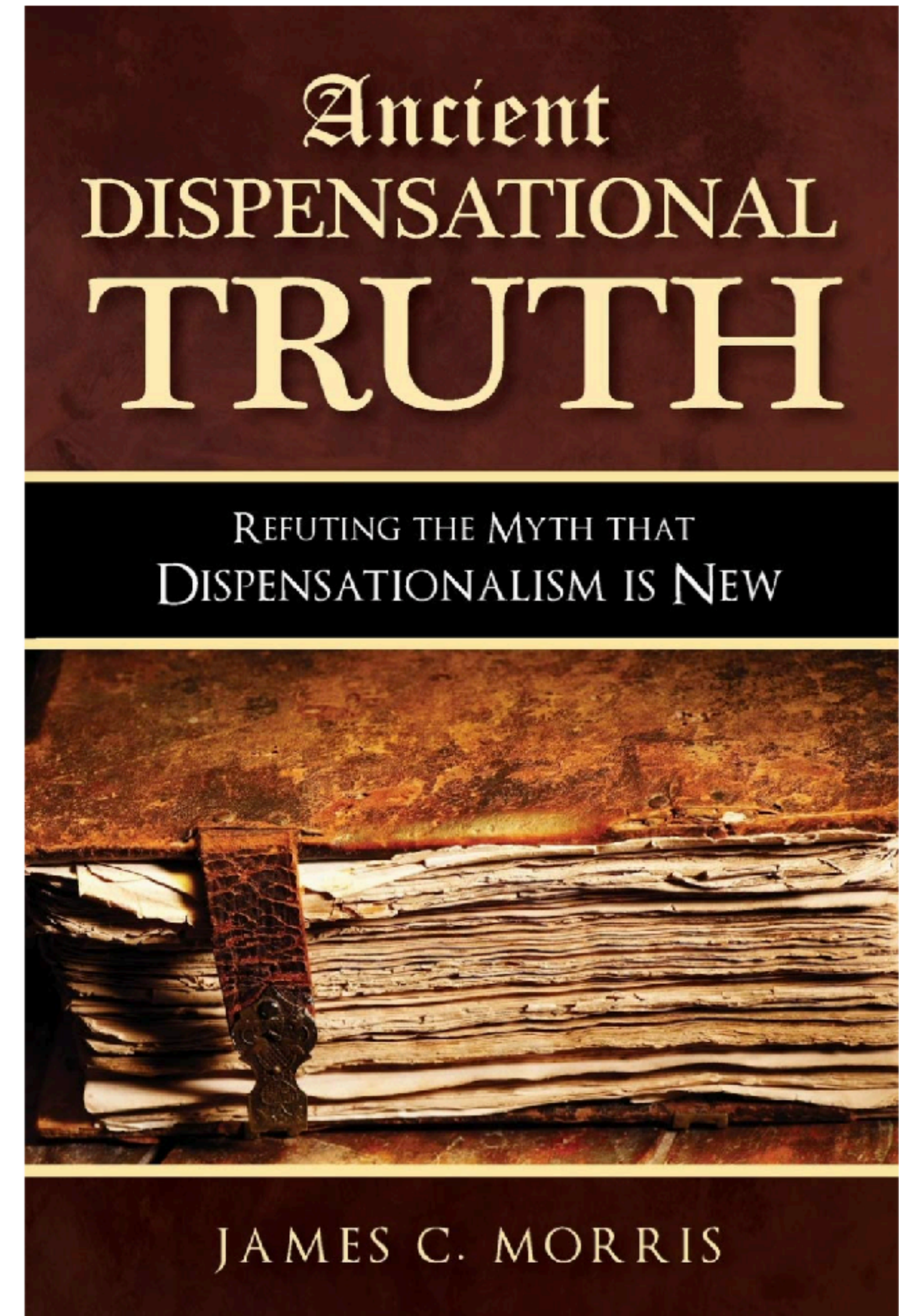
TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISPENSATIONAL THOUGHT
FROM THE FIRST TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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- The first book we will address is “Ancient Dispensational Truth” by James C. Morris
- Morris’ book is far less academic than the others
- The subtitle is: “Refuting the Myth that Dispensationalism is New”



- Dispensationalism is a theological system created by John Nelson Darby in the 1930s.
- It is not merely a few unrelated doctrines, rather it is a theological system with several interconnected doctrines.

↑
Dispensationalism
↓

Historic Premillennialism

- A More Literal Historical Grammatical Hermeneutic
 - Emphasis on the biblical covenants
 - Begins with the Old Testament
 - History may be viewed through various periods
- Sees an overly rigid distinction between Israel and the Church
 - Divides the NT into portions “for Israel” and “for the Church.”
 - Pretribulational Rapture

Dispensationalism Defined:

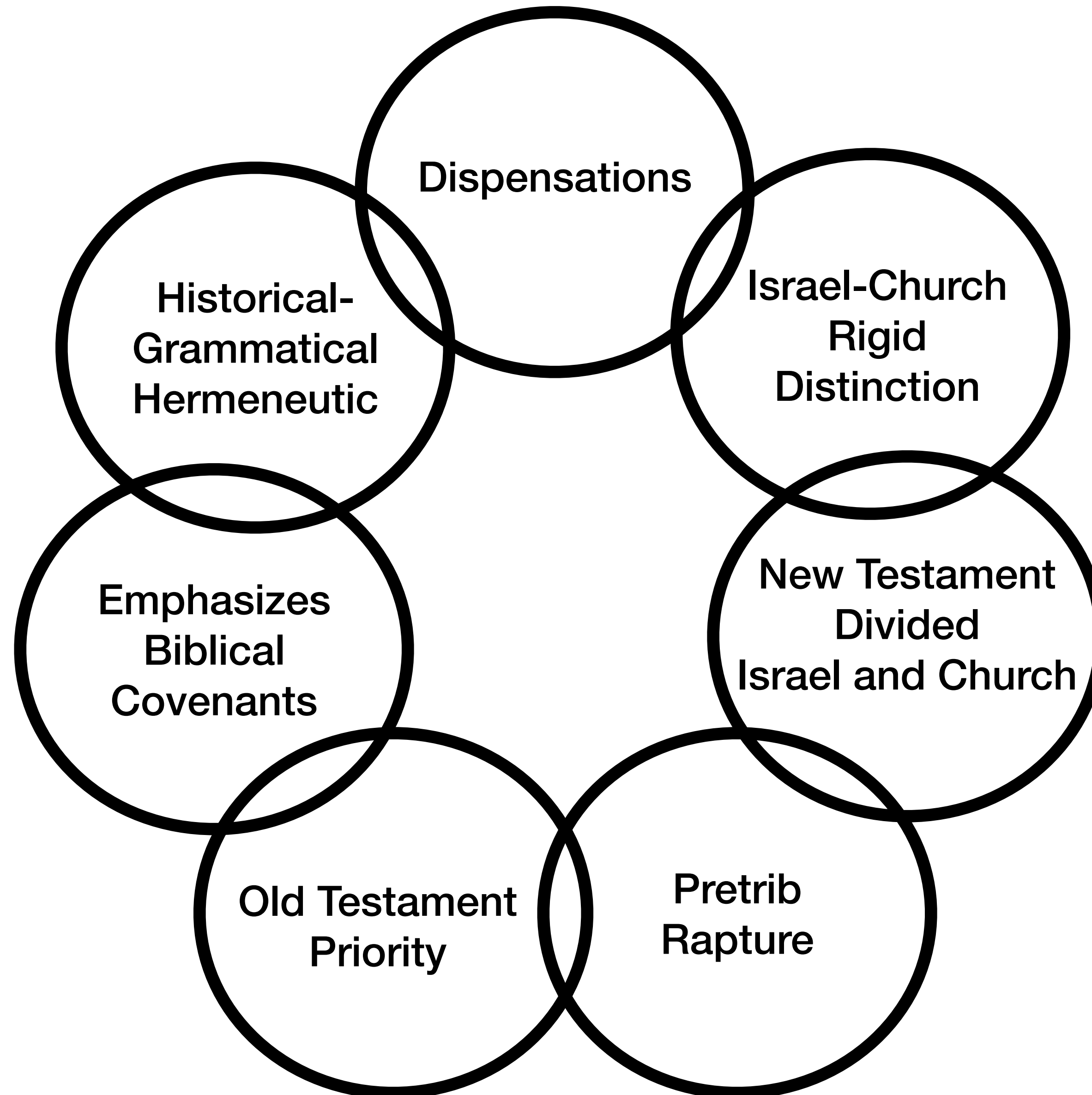


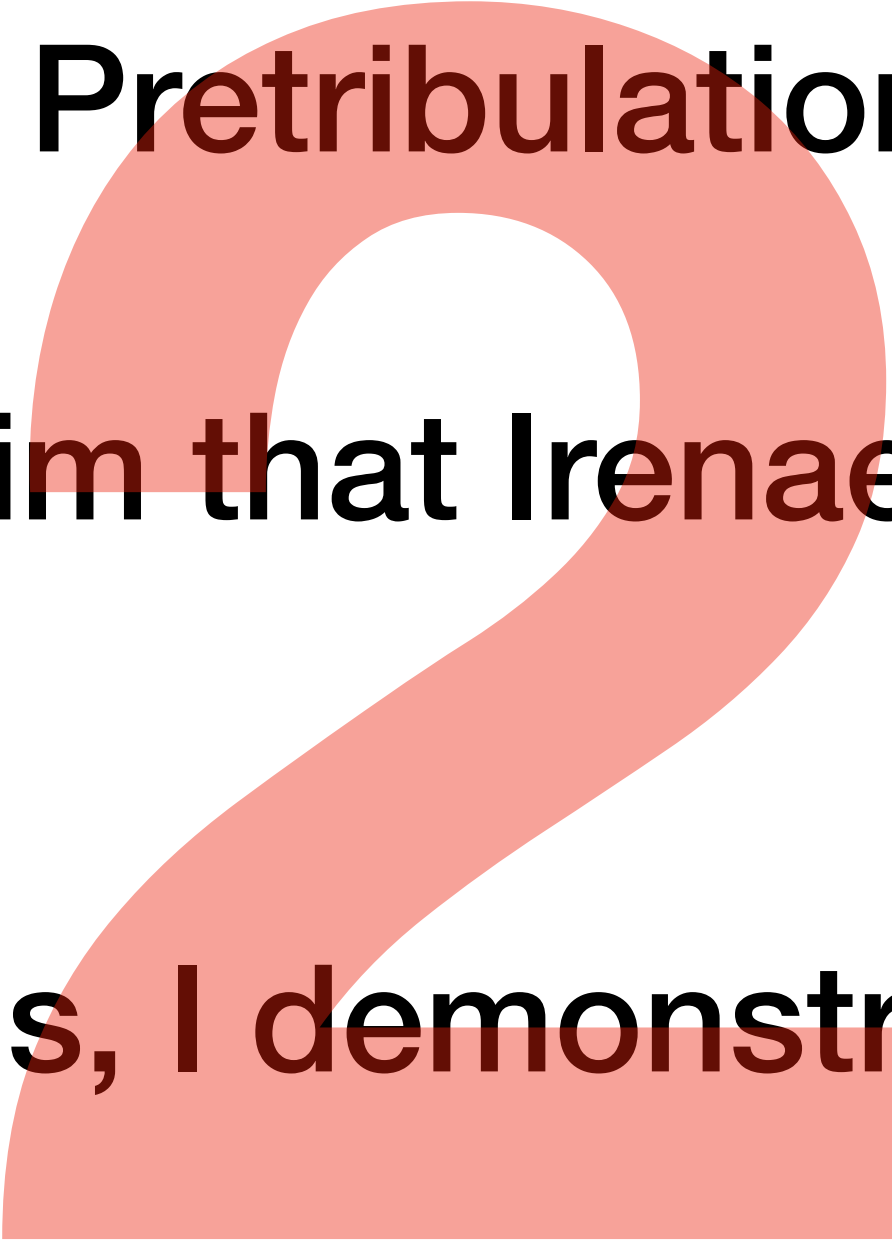
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- 1. Belief in dispensations**
- 2. Literal hermeneutic**
- 3. Against Replacement Theology**
- 4. End Time Restoration of Israel**
- 5. Daniel's Seventieth Week Future**
- 6. Pretrib Rapture**

- **The presence of individual doctrines does not prove the presence of the system as a whole.**
- **Any effort to say that Dispensationalism is older than Darby is simply not true.**
- **Watchtower (Jehovah's Witnesses) Theology does not predate its founder, Charles Taze Russell.**
- **Islam does not predate Muhammad.**

- **Imagine if one were seeking to prove that Watchtower (Jehovah's Witness) doctrine is actually very ancient.**
- **One could point to the existence of Arianism or annihilationism, or premillennialism.**
- **But individually, none of these things prove that Watchtower Theology as system existed before it actually was created.**

- 
- In chapter six, Morris attempts to show that the early Christians believed in a Pretribulational Rapture.
 - He only attempts to claim that Irenaeus and Victorinus were Pretribulationists
 - In two previous sessions, I demonstrated such claims to be beyond ridiculous.

Irenaeus

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast” ... And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.

(Against Heresies, V, 26, 1)

“When taken within the context of all of Irenaeus’ writings, it appears that he was not teaching pretribulationism.”

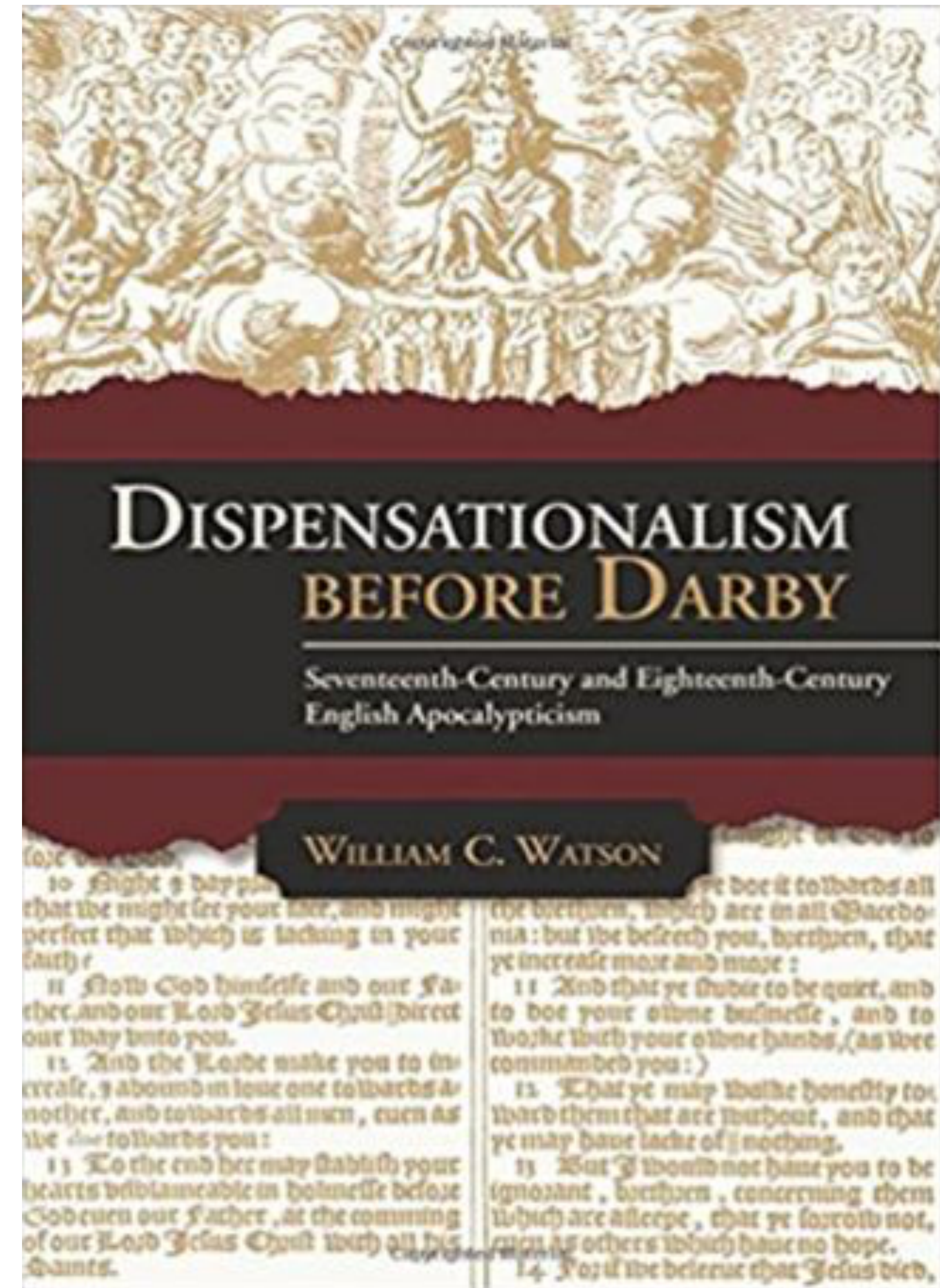
**—Dr. Tommy Ice, Director of the Pretrib
Research Center**

Victorinus

“The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself under Antichrist against the church.”

(Commentary on the Apocalypse, 20)

- The next book we will review is “Dispensationalism Before Darby” by William C. Watson.



- **Watson shows that some elements of Dispensationalism were taught before the 19th Century.**
- **Again, Dispensationalism is a system, not individual doctrines.**
- **Watson desperately tries, but fails to show a single example of a Pretribulational Rapture.**
- **This is the primary purpose behind the book.**

“William Watson plows new ground in researching the history of eschatological thought prior to the nineteenth century. *To put it simply, Darby did not invent the pretribulational rapture idea.*” —Ed Hindson D. Min. D Phil.


DISPENSATIONALISM BEFORE DARBY

“William Watson plows new ground in researching the history of eschatological thought prior to the nineteenth century. *To put it simply, Darby did not invent the pretribulational rapture idea.*”

Ed Hindson, D.Min., D.Phil., *Dean & Distinguished Professor of Religion*
School of Religion, Liberty University

Review from Amazon:

“As mentioned in the first paragraph, a common argument against Dispensationalism (*and the pretribulation rapture*) is that it was invented by John Nelson Darby around 1830. *Watson proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that this popular belief is absolutely false and those who promote it grossly mischaracterize church history...*”

- 
- **Watson has very poor understanding of various theological systems (Amillennialism, Premillennialism, and Postmillennialism).**
 - **His book is filled with misunderstanding the positions of others, often placing them in categories they do not belong in.**

Horrible Logic

- Watson consistently uses very faulty logic in his argumentation.
- For example, he begins by making a big deal of the fact that the word “rapture” was used by some earlier writers—as if the term only refers to a Pretrib Rapture.
- Post-tribbers or Pre-Wrathers, and even most Amillennialists believe in a rapture.
- This is the kind of horrible logic and sleight of hand that permeates the book.

- In Chapters 7 and 10: “*Concepts of a Pretribulational Rapture and Tribulation in Seventeenth Century England*” and “*The Pretribulational Rapture and Tribulation in Eighteenth Century England*” Watson fails to show a single example of a Pretribulational rapture was ever believed during this period.
- He cites over twenty different writers, are bizarrely he even acknowledges that most of them were not Pretrib!
- He only claims that six were pretrib:

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654, John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734,

5

Ephraim Huit 1643

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654,
John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734,

“Deliverance from outward trials is expressed by the Lord coming in the clouds... Our Lord in Matthew 24:30 and his beloved disciple John in Rev 1:10, do couple this coming of the Son of Man in the clouds with the wailing of the Jews.”

—Ephraim Huit

Huit placed our “deliverance from outward trials” as occurring when Jesus returns in the clouds in Matthew 24:10, after the tribulation.

6 Captain John Brown 1654

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654, John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734.

- Bizarrely, on page 152, Watson says Brown believed in a “mid-tribulational rapture,” but then says he was “clearly pre-trib” on page 172.

Browne believed in a premillennial, mid-tribulation rapture:

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654, John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734,

- So which is it? Was Browne mid-tribulational or was he “clearly pre-trib”?
- These kinds of contradictions and inconsistencies permeate Watson’s work.

- **Brown places the rapture AFTER the Abomination that Causes Desolation.**
- **He was either Mid-Trib or Pre-Wrath.**

- **Watson says: “The things Browne wrote might just as easily have been written by Christian novelist Joel Roseberg last week. Those who ridicule Dispensationalism as a new idea need to read in the eschatology of the Puritans of the seventeenth century.” (p. 149)**
- **This statement is simply nonsense.**

7

John Birchensha 1660

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654,
John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734,

“John Birchensha (ca. 1605-1681) believed that the 1260 day/years of Daniel ended in 1641, marking the beginning of the great battle of Armageddon (which he understood to be the English Civil War), when the saints began to fight back against the forces of the Antichrist. He believed in many comings of Christ...”

—William Watson

Birchensha was clearly very confused. Why is the world would Watson claim such an individual to support his view?

8 Samuel Hutchinson 1667

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654,
John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734,

“His (Hutchinson’s) order of events was: First the tribulation, then the rapture, then Armageddon...” —William Watson p.159

“When we see the people of God in such distress (tribulation) as was never known in the Word, then we may look for Christ’s appearance for the deliverance of them.” —Samuel Hutchinson

“In 2 Thess 2:1, the Saints shall be gathered together unto him, according to that in Matthew 24:31” —Samuel Hutchinson

Mathew 24:31 specifically takes place “after the tribulation.”

Hutchinson was 100% post-trib!!

9 Joshua Sprigg 1676

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654,
John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734,

**Joshua Sprigg... hinted at a secret coming of Christ before
“his glorious appearance.”**

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654,
John Birchensha 1660, Samuel Hutchinson 1667, Joshua Sprigg 1676, Sayer Rudd 1734,

**Watson says that a hint is all Birchensha offers, yet still list
him as “clearly pre-trib.”**

10

Sayer Rudd 1734

Those clearly pre-trib Rapture: Ephraim Huit 1643, John Browne 1654,
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“Baptist pastor and physician taught that Christ will descend several times.”

—William Watson

Again, why would Watson claim someone with such convoluted view of the end times as supporting his view?

- **Watson repeatedly states: “Very little of what John Nelson Darby taught in the mid-nineteenth century was new.”**
- **That “very little” that was new, is the part that made Dispensationalism so distinct from Historic Premillennialism.**
- **The things that were “new” were taken and modified from a handful of fringe teachers with very confused doctrines.**
- **Pretribulational Dispensationalism (Darbyism) is a new theological system.**

“Is pretribulationism as theologically bankrupt as its critics profess, or are there answers to these charges? If there are reasonable answers, then the burden of proof and historical argumentation shifts back to the critics. Rapture critics must acknowledge and interact with the historical and theological evidence.”

—Tommy Ice and Timothy Deny