

## 22T08c INFER? – Dispensational

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table for INFER. I'm a scientist and engineer and in my profession, we use logical deductive reasoning. Another way to say it is, we infer things from other things. But it really is a guess, an educated guess but still just a guess. Believe it or not, many Christian doctrines use this same secular approach to interpret the Bible.

The question you need to ask is does it work? Well, that depends on what "it works" means. What is Right or Correct.

What do you know about the theory of the origin of the Universe? I'm sure some of you have heard of the Big Bang. I know this is not the modern term used by many scientist but the scientific community holds to a form of this theory. Which states that everything suddenly came into existence. As science has advanced, evidence of this sudden event becomes more and more apparent. I remember watching a debate between a renowned scientist atheist and renowned scientist Christian. In this debate, the atheist described this theory in great detail, then ended with this statement, "we don't know what the force was that created everything from nothing, but of course it can't be God". So, this kind of sums up the atheist theory of the origin of the Universe. There was nothing, then something happened and suddenly, spontaneously the universe existed. There are other theories about this and many other details but you get my point.

As Christians, we make fun of this because we know what that unseen something was. It was God creating everything with a word. But for the atheist scientist they need to make two gigantic leaps of faith.

Leap of faith #1: everything came from nothing. Or you might say it this way nothing created something. It sounds quite silly when stated this way. But this is a base framework of origin of the universe theories.

Leap of faith #2: The universe operates by specific intricate scientific laws like gravity, laws of thermodynamic, electromagnetics, etc., without which nothing could exist. A perfect design but without a designer.

So, what happens when do this same thing in our philosophy or bible interpretation. The something from nothing approach.

How many of you know JN Darby? I'll be honest I knew nothing about JN Darby until recently. I was researching the origin of several Christian doctrines. To my surprise, my research kept leading me to JN Darby. John Nelson Darby was an Anglo-Irish Bible teacher who live from 1800-1882. JN Darby rose to prominence in a period of Christian history when many pastors and ministers had begun to believe we lived in a Post-bible era, where the bible was no longer relevant, so Bible teaching was becoming less and less prominent. JN Darby gained fame by bucking this trend and teaching bible. JN Darby teachings lead to his revelation that the bible could only be interpreted if you

understood that all time is broken into dispensations and only those things in your dispensation apply to you. This is what is called Dispensational Theology. And depending on who you talk to will depend on how many dispensations they believe and when each dispensations start and stop. There is no real agreement other than dispensations are necessary to interpret the Bible. The most common version that I've seen is these 7 dispensations. 1) Innocence (Garden of Eden), 2) Conscience (after the Fall), 3) Human Government (after the Flood), 4) Promise (Abraham to Moses), 5) Law (Moses to Cross), 6) Grace (Cross to Rapture) and 7) Millennial Kingdom.

Before JN Darby, most Christian believe in Covenant theology that is Old and new Covenants. But Darby found covenant theology difficult to use to interpret the bible. In fact, he believed you could not interpret the bible using covenant theology. The phrase "Church Age" came from JN Darby although some credit earlier writer. JN Darby concepts include Pretribulation Rapture and others. Over time his philosophy has led to the theory of two separate salvation paths, one for Israel and one for the church.

Now supporters of dispensationalism say this is the only way you can interpret scriptures. Some who walk a line between Covenant theology and Dispensationalism will say it is a tool for understanding the bible and placing biblical teaching in perspective to your understanding.

All of this sounds good, very intellectual. Darby claims he had a divine revelation. He got something from nothing. No new scriptures only a new way of understanding that no one in the church had ever heard of or taught for 1800 years since Jesus and the Apostles.

Leap of Faith #1; Something from nothing. Somehow after hundreds of years, we discovered that the only way to interpret the scriptures was to use this methodology.

Leap of Faith #2: two separate salvation paths, one for Israel and one for the church. Without this assumption on which most dispensational teaching hinge. In Romans Chapter 11, the Apostle Paul is addressing this issue about the rejection of Israel and potential for restoration of Israel to God. I encourage you to read Romans Chapter 11 in its entirety, but here is a short excerpt. Romans 12:11-12 (NLT) says, *<sup>11</sup>Did God's people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! They were disobedient, so God made salvation available to the Gentiles. But he wanted his own people to become jealous and claim it for themselves. <sup>12</sup>Now if the Gentiles were enriched because the people of Israel turned down God's offer of salvation, think how much greater a blessing the world will share when they finally accept it.*

Jesus also makes clear there is but one way when His disciples were asking Him about where He was going and asking to see the father so they could believe, Jesus said this in John 14:6 ***Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.***

Paul says Israel can be grafted back into the root in Romans Chp 11, if and when they finally accept God's offer of salvation. How, just as Jesus said. Through Jesus, for He is the only way, the only truth and the only life. No one can come to Father God except through a relationship with Jesus. So, I don't personally believe there are two paths to salvation. But I could be wrong.

My point is not whether or not Dispensationalism is right or wrong. I'm actually indifferent. My point is does a doctrine like this help me to follow Jesus, help me to do the things Jesus has commanded me to do. Am I a better follower of Christ with this doctrine? The answer is No. This doctrine like all man-made doctrines, may be true but if they don't help me be a better follower of Jesus, then why. Why are we so focused on these side issues, instead of where our focus should be? On Jesus.

**Let's Pray. Father God, thank you for your word the Bible, Thank you for the holy spirit to guide us, so we don't need to guess. Help us to listen to you and allow you to give us the wisdom we lack such that we can have understanding. Give us the strength and will to evaluate what people say to determine if it is from you Lord or just from men. And Lord I pray if I said anything wrong today the listener would remember only what you wanted them to hear. I pray these things in your name Lord Jesus, Amen**

Again, I can't say if Dispensationalism is true or not. I can't say if any of their viewpoints are valid or not. I'm not God. But does this doctrine encourage you to follow Jesus or not. If it doesn't then, why do we teach it. If it does not make us better Christians, better followers of Jesus, then what's the point. Should we Infer ourselves to a place that makes us feel better or spend our life following Jesus. I'll leave that answer up to you.

Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table our series INFER? See you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God Bless.