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THE SINAITIC COVENANT AND LAW IN THE THEOLOGY OF DISPENSATIONALISM

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The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the dispensational position on the Sinaitic covenant and law and to evaluate it. The design of the study includes three major sections: the historical (chaps. 2-3), the descriptive (chap. 4), and the critical (chaps. 5-6).

Chap. 2 presents the meaning of dispensationalism and briefly outlines its origin and its modern development in North America. Chap. 3 reviews the covenant theologians' hermeneutics in respect to the Sinaitic covenant and their conflicts with dispensationalists, with an analysis of the main differences between the old and new positions of dispensational theology on the Sinaitic covenant and law. Most covenant theologians consider the Sinaitic covenant as the continuum of the previous covenants and reject the dispensational idea of the covenant of works.

Chap. 4 presents the contemporary dispensational concept of the fundamental features of the Sinaitic covenant and law. According to it, the Sinaitic covenant is conditional, temporal, and legal; and because it is an indivisible unit, the Mosaic law, including the Decalogue, has been abolished at the cross and has become irrelevant to the church. The phrase "the law of Christ" means the law of love rather than a concrete corpus of Christian norms.

Chaps. 5 and 6 evaluate the dispensational view of the Sinaitic covenant and law. The basic problem does not arise from the covenant itself, but from Israel, which regarded it as a juridical relationship without faith and love. Unconditionality (the expression of God's love) and conditionality (the response of participants) are two aspects of the same covenant. The promises and grace always precede the requirements of the participants, thus providing a way of preserving the love-relationship with God who

saved His people. It is foreign for the biblical writers to separate pure law from the Decalogue, to see the Sermon on the Mount as primarily applicable to the millennial kingdom, or to assume an antithetical relationship between law and grace. Chap. 7 presents a synthesis of the results of this descriptive, critical investigation.