



MAJOR BIBLE THEMES  
THE DISPENSATIONS

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HOMEWORK: READ CHAP 21



MAJOR BIBLE THEMES  
THE DISPENSATIONS

OUTLINE

1. WHAT IS A DISPENSATION ?
2. WHAT ARE THE DISPENSATIONS ?
3. WHICH MODEL IS PREFERABLE ?
4. WHY THE IMPORTANCE OF DISPENSATIONS ?
5. WHAT OCCURS IF DISPENSATIONALISM IS OMITTED ?



MAJOR BIBLE THEMES

1. WHAT IS A DISPENSATION ?

USAGE:

- THE GREEK WORD FOR "DISPENSATION" IS USED 20 TIMES IN THE NT
- IT IS TRANSLATED "DISPENSATION" IN ONLY 4 PLACES (KJV) :  
1 COR 9:17; EPH 1:10; 3:2; COL 1:25

DEFINITION: (SEE NOTES - PAGE 4)

SUMMARY:

- "A DISPENSATION IS A DISTINGUISHABLE ECONOMY (GOD'S GOVERNMENT AND ACTIVITY) IN THE OUTWORKING OF GOD'S PURPOSE" - DR. CHARLES RYRIE
- DISPENSATIONALISM VIEWS THE WORLD OF MANKIND AS A HOUSEHOLD RUN ACCORDING TO GOD'S PURPOSE WHERE MAN IS A STEWARD -  
1 COR 4:1-4; TITUS 1:7



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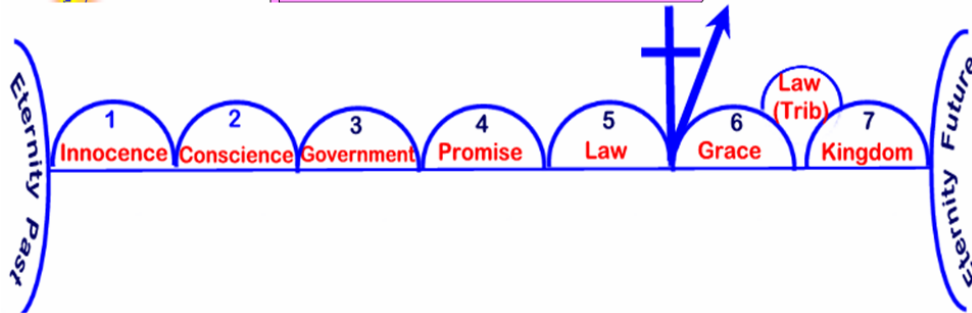
DEFINITION:

- "Dispensation" = "oikonomia" (feminine noun)
  - From: "oikos" (house or household) & "nomos" (law or principle)
  - Lit: "The principle of a household"
- 2 main meanings in Greek:
  - (1) Administration - The management of a household'
  - (2) The Office - The administrator or steward (stewardship)
- There are 2 parties involved in a dispensation:
  - (1) The one who defines the purpose & principles (Administration)
  - (2) The one who carries them out (steward)
- "Dispensation" does not denote time - therefore a dispensation will have a beginning but may have no end



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2. WHAT ARE THE DISPENSATIONS ?

THE 7 DISPENSATION MODEL



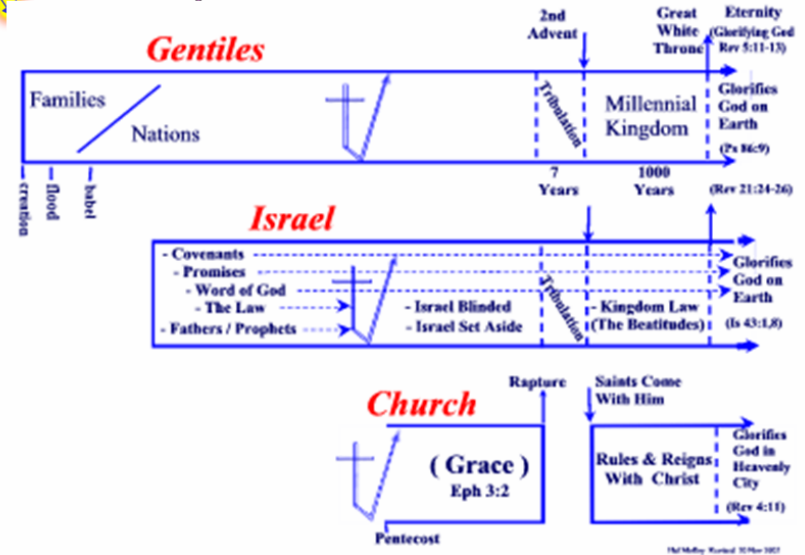
BASIC CHARACTERISTICS :

1. Each dispensation or economy has a different governing relationship into which God enters with man called God's "administration"
2. Man's resulting responsibility is called his "stewardship"
3. In each dispensation there is :
  - A TEST : God tests man's volitional response to his God given responsibility
  - A FAILURE : Man fails to fulfill his responsibility or stewardship in every dispensation
  - A JUDGMENT : In each dispensation God disburses a judgment(s) for man's failure



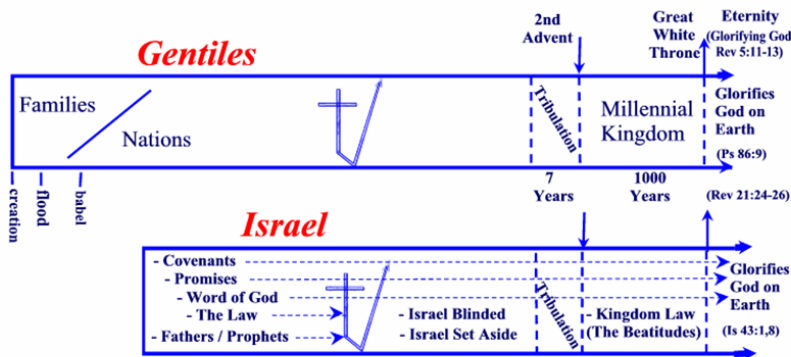
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2. WHAT ARE THE DISPENSATIONS ?

THE 3 DISPENSATION MODEL



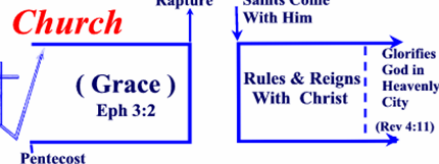
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2. WHAT ARE THE DISPENSATIONS

THE 3 DISPENSATION MODEL



The 3 Dispensation Model- Basis of:

1. Dispensation of the Church - Col 1:24,25
  - "Grace of God" - Eph 3:2
  - "Preaching of Gospel" - 1 Cor 9:16,17
  - "Fullness of Times" - Eph 1:10,22,23
2. Prior Dispensations - Gentiles & Israel
  - Col 1:24-26
  - 1 Cor 10:32; 12:13



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3. WHICH DISPENSATION MODEL IS PREFERABLE ?

SCRIPTURAL OBSERVATIONS : (SEE DETAILED OBSERVATIONS - PAGE 11 & 12)

- THE WORD "DISPENSATION" IS NEVER USED WITH 6 OF THE 7 DISPENSATIONS
- PAUL ONLY REFERS TO THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE (THE CHURCH)
- PAUL'S TEACHING IS FOCUSED ON 3 GROUPS OF PEOPLE :
  - THE GENTILES
  - THE JEWS (ISRAEL)
  - THE CHURCH
- A DISPENSATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY DENOTE TIME
- EACH DISPENSATION MUST FULFILL GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE:
  - TO DECLARE GOD'S GLORY
  - TO SHARE GOD'S GLORY
  - TO REVEAL GOD'S GLORY
  - TO BE GLORIFIED

CONCLUSION:

- THE 3 DISPENSATION MODEL BEST FITS THE SCRIPTURAL OBSERVATIONS

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### 4. WHY ARE DISPENSATIONS IMPORTANT ?

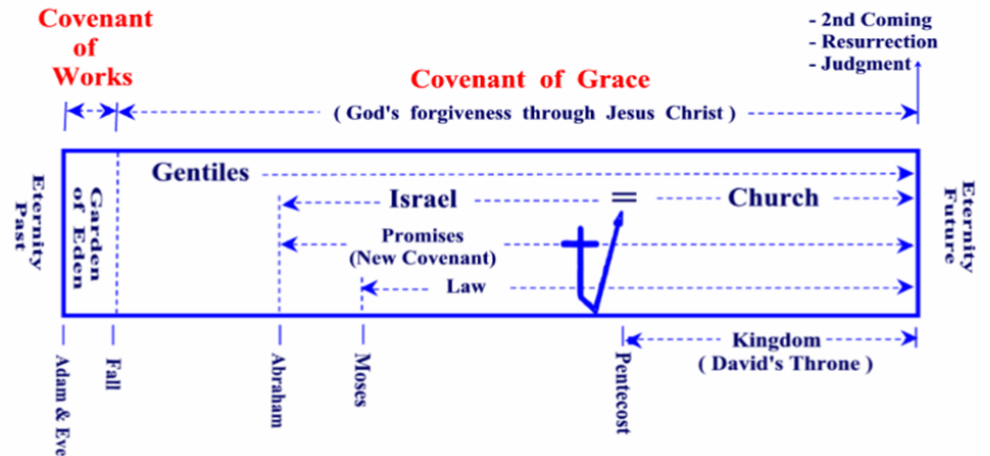
- DISPENSATIONS GIVE THE CLEAR REVEALED PURPOSE & PLAN OF GOD
- DISPENSATIONS RECOGNIZE THE DISTINCTIONS IN THE BIBLE
  - GOD'S ADMINISTRATION TO ISRAEL IS DIFFERENT THAN TO THE CHURCH
  - INSTRUCTIONS OF LAW & SACRIFICES TO ISRAEL DON'T APPLY TO THE CHURCH
- DISPENSATIONS ARE CRITICAL IN OUR INTERPRETING THE BIBLE
- DISPENSATIONS PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY
  - ALL OF HISTORY FOCUSES ON GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE & PLAN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

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### 5. WHAT OCCURS IF DISPENSATIONALISM IS OMITTED ?

## Covenant Theology: Overview



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### Some Scriptural Observations On Dispensations

- The word "dispensation" is never used with "Innocence", "Conscience", "Government", "Promise", "Law", or "Kingdom"
- Neither does the apostle Paul ever refer to these as dispensations
- The apostle Paul seems to reveal dispensations related to groups of people (e.g. "The Church") - Col 1:24,25
- Paul consistently refers to 3 distinct groups of people - 1 Cor 10:32
  - The Gentiles
  - The Jew (Israel)
  - The Church
- The word "dispensation" does not denote "time" - therefore a dispensation will have a beginning but may not have an end
- A critical consideration in defining a scriptural model is to account for God's eternal purpose, which is:
  - To declare His Glory
  - To share His Glory
  - To reveal His Glory
  - To be Glorified

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### Some Scriptural Observations On Dispensations - cont'd

- God's purpose is to share the very glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (as a man) with every believer now and through all eternity - Jn 17:20-23; Rom 6:1-4; 1 Jn 3:1,2
- The redemption & salvation of man is only the prerequisite of God sharing His Glory with man
- Since God's purpose is eternal then every defined dispensation should be eternal - it should have a beginning but no end
- Also each dispensation should result in all of mankind glorifying God forever- for example:
  1. Scripture defines both Gentiles & Jews (Israel) as an earthly people and those who believe (outside of the church age) will spend eternity on earth glorifying God - 1 Cor 15:47-50; Rev 21:24-27
  2. The Church (the bride of Christ) is a heavenly people whose citizenship is now in heaven and will spend eternity in heaven (The New Jerusalem) glorifying God - Jn 14:1-3; 1 Cor 15:47-50; Phil 3:20; Rev 21:9 - 22:5
- Conclusion:
  - The 3 dispensation model is the preferred interpretation because it fulfills all of the scriptural observations above
  - Where the 7 dispensation model does not.