

# Biblical Dispensation

*Introduction*

# What is dispensation?

The dictionary meaning of the word dispensation is,

- an act or instance of dispensing; distribution.
- something that is distributed or given out.
- the act of dispensing or dealing out; distribution; often used of the distribution of good and evil by God to man, or more generically, of the acts and modes of his administration

# What is dispensational theology?

Dispensational theology organizes history and theology around a series of dispensations, which are each different "economies" or arrangements decreed by God. Each dispensation begins with an offer of blessing by God, and ends with failure by man to meet God's conditions and a resulting period of Divine judgement.

# What is dispensational theology?

"A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.

Three important concepts are implied in this definition:

- (1) a deposit of divine revelation concerning God's will, embodying what God requires of man as to his conduct
- (2) man's stewardship of this divine revelation, in which he is responsible to obey it
- (3) a time-period, often called an 'age,' during which this divine revelation is dominant in the testing of man's obedience to God.

# Greek root of dispensation

The word which is translated dispensation in the New Testament is oikonomia, from which the English word economy is derived.

It is from the Greek word "oikonomia" which comes from "oikos," a house" and "nomos," a law," and its basic meaning was therefore "the law of the house."

However, its derived meaning is seen in its usage where it is translated "stewardship" The word "oikonomos" is translated by such words as "governor" and "steward."

# What is Biblical dispensation?

We find the word dispensation in four different passages in the Bible.

In these verses stewardship or dispensation refers to a responsible office or ministry entrusted to.

- 1 Corinthians 9:17 (King James Version) <sup>17</sup>For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.
- Ephesians 3:2 (King James Version) <sup>2</sup>If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
- Colossians 1:25 (King James Version) <sup>25</sup>Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God;

Here it refers to the particular way God will administer His rule over the world in the future Millennium

- Ephesians 1:10 (King James Version) <sup>10</sup>That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

# Why study of dispensation is important?

- God Himself never changes, but the way in which God deals with mankind changes.
- He works in different ways at different times.
- God administers His affairs with man during a particular era as a dispensation in a particular way.
- For example, when Cain killed his brother Abel, God set a mark on him, so that anyone finding him would not put him to death (Gen. 4: 1 5), Yet after the Flood God instituted capital punishment, decreeing that "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. 9:6).

Why the difference? Because there had been a change in dispensations.

# Why study of dispensation is important?

- Another example. In Psalm 137:8, 9 the writer calls down severe judgment on Babylon: (read)

Yet later the Lord taught His people:

Matthew 5:44 love your enemies...(read)

- study of dispensation is important to understand the behavior of God over a period of time
- it is also important to understand what the expectation of God from mankind is during each dispensation
- It recognizes that God has made different demands on different people at different times throughout history.
- to understand the heart of God



### Bird's Eye View of the Bible

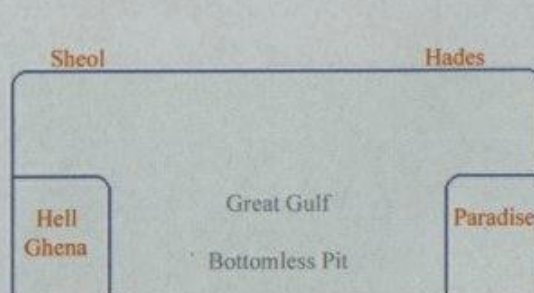
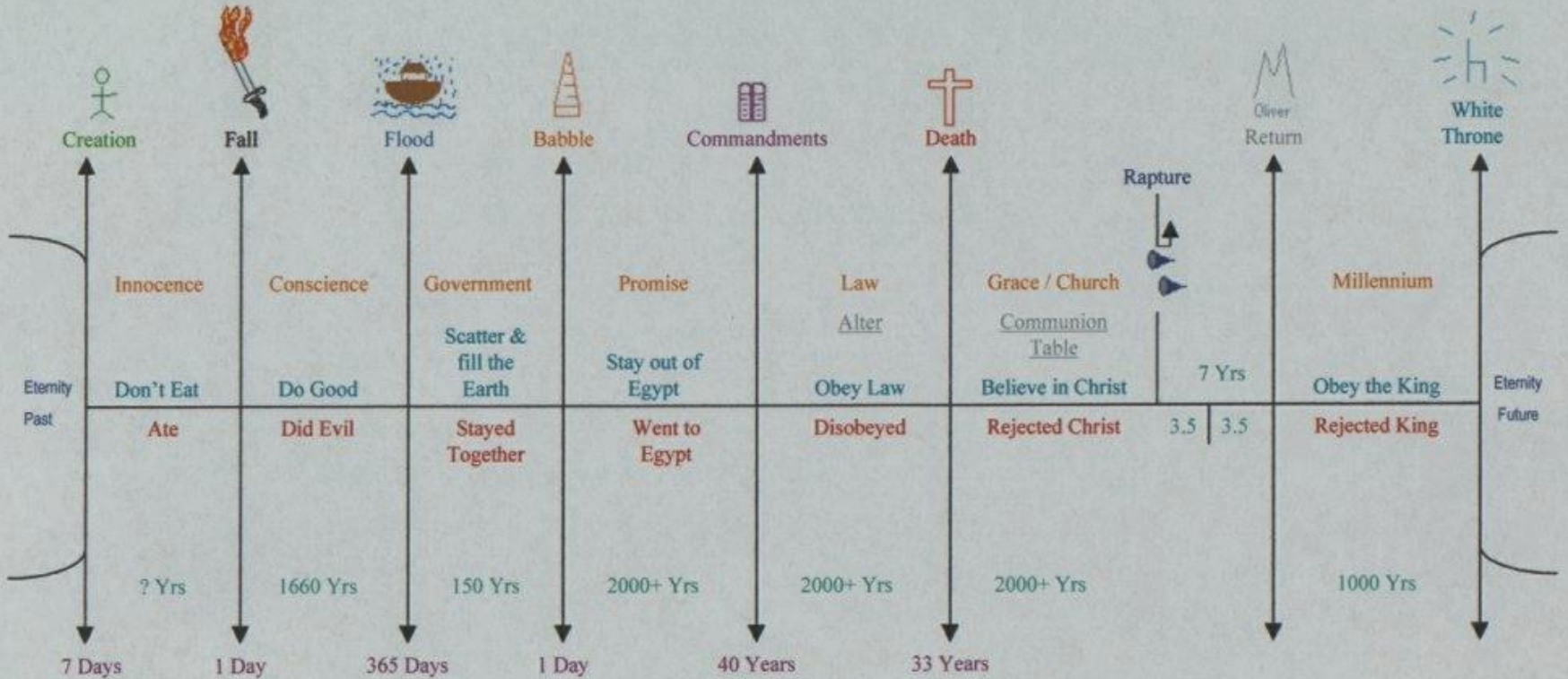
1 Cor. 9:8

Dispensations

Eph. 1:15, 3:2

Ages

Col. 1:25



# The Biblical Dispensations

## 1. Innocence: Age of Liberty

The first dispensation is Innocence, of which God created all living creatures upon the earth. (Genesis 2:8-17,25). Begins with the creation of man (Gen 1:26-27) and ends at Genesis 3:6.

# The Biblical Dispensations

## 2. Conscience: Age of Human Determination

The second dispensation is Conscience, wherein Adam and (Eve) fell into sin and all the earth received the curse and penalty of sin (Genesis 3:10-18, Romans 2:11-15).

Begin with Adam's and Eve's eyes being opened and they knew they were naked (Gen 3:7) and continues until Gen 8:14-16.

# The Biblical Dispensations

## 3. Human Government: Covenant with Noah

The third dispensation is Human Government, which was instituted subsequent to the Antediluvians Age (period before the Flood), which culminated with the destruction of all who were living upon the earth, with the exception of Noah and his family. This dispensation was the first wherein God established civil rule (Genesis 9:6 Romans 13:1).

This dispensation covers the period from Genesis 8:15-17 to Genesis 11:9.

# The Biblical Dispensations

## 4. Promise: Covenant with Abraham

The fourth dispensation is Promise, wherein God called and separated one man Abraham and he ultimately created from Abraham one sanctified nation Israel, to be his elect or his people (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:17-18).

This dispensation begins in Genesis 11:10 and extends through Exodus 19:2.

# The Biblical Dispensations

## 5. Law: The Mosaic Covenant

The fifth dispensation is Law, wherein God gave his Law and rule of Law, his ordinances exclusively to his people (Exodus 20:1-26; Galatians 3:19).

The dispensation of law begins in Exodus 19:3 and extends to the Cross

# The Biblical Dispensations

## 6. Grace: Age of the Church

The sixth dispensation is Grace, which is the present dispensation from which the body of Christ, the Church is revealed and manifested. Also, God's elect for this economy is comprised of all mankind (both Jew and Gentile) (Romans 5:20-21 Ephesians 3:1-9).

The dispensation of grace begins with the day of Pentecost and continues until the rapture of the Church (Rev 4:1).

# The Biblical Dispensations

## 7. Kingdom: The Theocratic Reign of The Messiah

The seventh dispensation is Kingdom, which shall be administered during the Millennium (one thousand years) subsequent to Jesus Christ's return to the earth to set on the throne of David and rule this earth in perfect peace for one thousand years (Isaiah 9:6-7:11:1-9).



<b>DISPENSATION</b>	<b>REFERENCE of DISPENSATION</b>	<b>COVENANT for DISPENSATION</b>	<b>TYPE of COVENANT</b>	<b>ELECT of the DISPENSATION and FEDERAL HEADSHIP</b>
INNOCENCE	GEN 1:3-2:25	EDENIC	BILATERAL	ADAM AND EVE <i>ADAM is federal head</i>
CONSCIENCE	GEN 3:6	ADAMIC	BILATERAL	ADAM AND EVE / OTHERS <i>ADAM is federal head</i>
HUMAN GOVERNMENT	GEN 9:5 thru GEN. Ch. 12	NOAHIC	UNILATERAL	NOAH AND HIS FAMILY & OTHERS <i>NOAH is federal head</i>
PROMISE	GEN 12:1-3 thru EXODUS 19:13	ABRAHAMIC	UNILATERAL	ABRAHAM - ISRAEL <i>ABRAHAM is federal head</i>
LAW	EXODUS Ch. 20-31- ACTS	MOSIAC	BILATERAL	ISRAEL <i>MOSES is federal head</i>
GRACE	EPISTLES OF PAUL	MYSTERY, GRACE ,TRUTH	UNILATERAL	BODY OF CHRIST ISREAL AND GENTILES <i>PAUL is federal head</i>
KINGDOM	REV Ch 21	DAVIDIC, PALESTINIAN NEW COVENANT	UNILATERAL	ISRAEL FIRST-GENTILES BLESSED thru ISRAEL <i>JESUS is federal head</i>

COVENANT: A pledge, alliance, contract or agreement between two or more parties. There are 2 types of covenants between GOD and man.

1. Unilateral or unconditional meaning all obligations are the responsibility of GOD, no responsibility placed upon mankind to effectuate the covenant.
2. Bilateral or conditional meaning mankind is required to do certain things in order to effectuate the covenant.

# Outline of our study

1. The definition of the name of the dispensation
2. The length of the dispensation
3. The favorable beginning of man in each age
4. The test for man in each period
5. The purpose of God in each test for man
6. The means of God in accomplishing His purpose
7. The failure of man to meet the test
8. The judgment of God upon man because of his failure
9. God's provision of redemption for man at the end of each age