

THE DISPENSATIONS

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Dispensationalism is necessitated by:

- A. Some Obvious Differences in the way God has worked among Men, through the Ages of History:
 - 1. Contrast Matthew 10:5-14, with 28:18-20, and Luke 22:35,36.
 - 2. The Place they were to preach (Matthew 10:5,6 with 28:19;
 - 3. The Message they were to preach (Matthew 10:7 with 28:19;
 - 4. The Provision they were to make (Matthew 10:10-14 with Luke 22:35,36.

- B. Some Observed Distinctions concerning the Return of Christ. Contrast Matthew 24, with Paul's Doctrine of Christ's Return:
 - 1. Signs (Matthew 24:3,30 with no signs in the Epistles).
 - 2. The Message Proclaimed (Matthew 24:14 with I Corinthians 14:3,4).
 - 3. Some left and some taken. But, to where? (Matthew 24:39-41, 13:41 with I Thessalonians 4:13-17)
 - 4. Who shall Witness the Event (24:27,30 with I John 3:2).

- C. Unretracted Promises Made to Israel
 - 1. Deuteronomy 30:1-10
 - 2. II Samuel 7:16
 - 3. Jeremiah 31:31-37; 33:24-26
 - 4. Ezekiel 37:21-28
 - 5. Romans 11:1, 2a, 25-29

Bowman's Basic Tenets of Dispensational Theology (Dr. Hoyle Bowman, Piedmont Bible College, Winston-Salem, NC, Theology Notes):

- 1. Literal Interpretation of Scripture.
- 2. Clear Distinction between the Church and Israel.
- 3. Israel's/Abraham's Covenant Promises to be fulfilled in the Millennium.
- 4. Pretribulational Rapture of the Church.

5. Futuristic fulfillment of Daniel's Seventieth Week.
6. Premillennial Return of Christ.

Ryrie's (DISPENSATIONALISM TODAY, Dr. Charles Ryrie, Moody Press, 1966, pp. 38-41):

1. Distinction Between Church and Israel.
2. Literal Interpretation of Scripture.
3. Primary Purpose of God is His Glory.

Revised (DISPENSATIONALISM, 1995, pp. 146-149):

1. Consistent Hermeneutical Principle
2. Fulfillment of OT Prophecies
3. Clear and Consistent Distinction between Israel and the Church
4. Pretribulation Rapture
5. Millennial Kingdom an integral part of the Dispensational Scheme

Progressive Dispensationalism (DISPENSATIONALISM, Ryrie, p.164):

1. The Kingdom of God is the unifying theme of biblical history.
2. Within biblical history there are four dispensational eras.
3. Christ has already inaugurated the Davidic reign in heaven...though he not yet reigns...on earth....
4. Likewise, the new covenant has already been inaugurated, though its blessings are not yet fully realized until the Millennium.
5. The concept of the church as completely distinct from Israel and as a mystery unrevealed in the Old Testament needs revising, making the ideal of two purposes and two peoples of God invalid.
6. A complementary hermeneutic must be used alongside a literal hermeneutic. This means that the New Testament makes complementary changes to Old Testament promises without jettisoning those original promises.
7. The one divine plan of holistic redemption encompasses all people and all areas of human life--personal, societal, cultural, and political.

DISPENSATION:

1. As Defined in Scripture (Luke 16:2-8).
 - a. Commitment (1).
 - b. Corruption (1).
 - c. Chastisement (2).

d. Correction (5-8).

2. As Defined by Statement:

A period of time in which God commits to man a distinctive stewardship, certain responsibilities, or rules by which to live), and calls man to judgment as to his faithfulness (obedience) to the stewardship (the rules set forth).

Dispensation, is:

"oikos" = house; "nomos" = law, hence, law of the house.

"oikonomos" = the manager of household affairs, the person (Luke 16:1).

"oikonomia" = the management thereof, the office entrusted by one to one who must give account (Luke 16:2). Cf. Luke. 12:42; I Corinthians 4:1,2; Galatians 4:2; Romans. 16:23; Titus. 1:7 and I Peter. 4:10.

Two Dispensations are named, some contend it is simply Paul's assertion of his own personal stewardship, after the fashion of I Corinthians. 9:17. But viewed as actual dispensations, they are:

A. Ephesians. 3:2, the Dispensation of Grace.

B. Ephesians. 1:10 the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times.

Two Dispensations must be recognized: Law and Grace (John 1:17 and Galatians. 3:23-25).

The Law had a beginning (Galatians. 3:19), so some Dispensation must have preceded it. This necessitates accepting three Dispensations.

Ephesians 1:21 clearly shows that another age will follow the present one, and both are named (see above). We can then insist on the acceptance of at least four Dispensations.

Three additional periods can be ascertained as based upon differing rules of order (i.e., Eden, Post-Eden, Post-Flood. These then total to seven Dispensations.

Since the call of Abram is a markedly different order from the Post-flood era (ending with the Tower of Babel), and obviously continues until the time of the Exodus, we can then recognize the limits and character of that period as the dispensation preceding The Law.

The end of Dispensation number six is abruptly followed by the one prophesied in Ephesians. 1:10, as indicated by verse 21, so we find no room for one in between. Hence, are established seven Dispensations--no more, no less.

THE DISPENSATIONS:

I. INNOCENCE (Genesis 1:26 - 3:21).

A. Commitment (1:26-30; 2:15-17). Adam is given the responsibility of tending and guarding the garden, with the inclusion of one restriction.

B. Corruption (3:1-7). Eve succumbs to temptation. Adam willfully violates God's rule (I Timothy 2:14).

C. Chastisement (3:8-19). The curses are pronounced. Man is banished from his beautiful home and comes under the sentence of death.

D. Correction (3:21, 22). God provides for condemned man.

II. CONSCIENCE (Genesis 3:21 - 7:1).

A. Commitment (3:23) Society is allowed to continue (the commitment made in dispensation #1 continues on [3:20,23; 4:1]) without heavenly interference (3:14-19; the curses continue on).

B. Corruption (4:1-5). (Note: Genesis. 6:5,11,12).

1. Religiously--the way of Cain, (Jude 11).

2. Morally (society) 4:16-26).

3. Domestically (6:1-5; note 4:19).

C. Chastisement (6:6,7,13). The Flood.

D. Correction (6:8,14; 7:1). Noah and family spared.

III. HUMAN GOVERNMENT (Genesis. 9:6 - 12:1). (Genesis 8:21 itemizes first two dispensations.)

A. Commitment (9:1-19).

1. Moral Law: Thou shalt not kill.

2. Civil Law: Whosoever kills will be killed.

B. Corruption.

1. Morally (9:20-23).

2. Civilly (11:1-4).

C. Chastisement.

1. Morally (9:24,25).

2. Civilly (11:5-9).

D. Correction (12:1). God put the nations on ice (Dr. Stevens), sparing the race from the dangers they faced through their advanced knowledge without the controls of God and moral standards.

(The existence of these three Dispensations is clearly demonstrated in Genesis. 8:21,22; 9:1.)

IV. PROMISE (Genesis. 12:1 - Exodus 14).

A. Commitment (Genesis. 12-28; Exodus. 2:24).

He then called out the one through whom He would bring salvation to the nations and to the individual (Genesis. 12:1-3). Note I Kings 8:60,61 concerning the idea of "witness."

1. Conditionally Promised (12:1-3).

2. Covenanted without Conditions (13:14-18) Note Judges 2:1.
3. Cut (15:1-21).
4. Confirmed and Expanded (17:4-27).
5. Continued in Isaac (26:1-5,24).
6. Continued in Jacob (28:13-15).
7. Continuing Effective in Egypt (Exodus 2:24).

B. Corruption (Genesis. 11 - 46).

1. Abram (11:31-16:4):
 - a. Leaves Haran with Lot & Family (11:31; 12:15).
 - b. Leaves Land of Promise (12:10-29).
 - c. Leaves Egypt with Hagar (16:1).
 - d. Leaves God's will to please Sarai (16:1-4).
2. Lot (13:5-19:2) (While not a part of the promise, he nevertheless would have enjoyed the blessings thereof had he chosen to stay with Abram, providing God had allowed him to stay).
 - a. Loathes the Blessings of Abram (13:5-9).
 - b. Longs for the Plains of Jordan (13:10,11).
 - c. Lives in Wicked Sodom (13:12 with 19:2).
3. Isaac (26:1-27:45):
 - a. Leaves the Land (26:1-6).
 - b. Lies about His Wife (26:7-16).
 - c. Loses His Children (26:34,35; 27:43-45).
4. Jacob (28:10-46:4):
 - a. Flees to Haran (28:10).
 - b. Forced to Egypt (46:1-4).

C. Chastisement (Genesis 12:15 - 50:26; Exodus 1-11).

1. Abraham (Genesis. 12:15; 21:9).
 - a. Wife Taken from Him (12:15).
 - b. War between His Offspring (21:9).
2. Lot (13:14-19:24).

- a. Loses Blessing of Abram (13:14-18).
 - b. Loses Testimony (19:24).
 - c. Loses All He Chose (19:24).
 - d. Loses His Family (19:26-38).
- 3. Isaac (26-28) A sad, trouble filled family life.
 - a. Deterrent to God's Plan (25:23)
 - b. Disunity in His Marriage (25:28)
 - c. Devastated by Esau (26:34; 27:46; 28:8,9)
 - d. Deceived by Jacob (27:12,23)
- 4. Jacob (29-Exodus 11).
 - a. Bondage in Haran (29:18).
 - b. Bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1).
- D. Correction (Exodus. 12-14).
- V. Law (Exodus. 19:8-Matthew. 27).
 - A. Commitment (Exodus 19:1-8; 20:20).
 - B. Corruption (Jeremiah 31:32).
 - 1. Unbelief of Israel in the Wilderness (Exodus 32; Numbers 14:22)
 - 2. Disobedience of Israel in the Land (Judges 21:25; II Chronicles 36:15).
 - 3. Rejection of Israel in the Time of Christ (Matthew. 21:33-46; 27:22).
 - C. Chastisement.
 - 1. Death of that Generation (Numbers 14:26-34).
 - 2. Delivered unto their Enemies (Judges 2:14; II Chronicles 36:17-21).
 - 3. Desolation of their Homeland (Luke 21:20-24).
 - D. Correction.
 - 1. Reprieve for the Younger Generation (Numbers 14:31).
 - 2. Return from the Captivity (II Chronicles 36:22,23).
 - 3. Reestablishment Promised (Acts 3:17-26; Romans 11:25-27).

VI. GRACE.

A. Commitment (Based on the three-fold classification of I Corinthians 10:32):

1. Jews commanded to Repent (Acts 2:38). He is CHRIST, Messiah.
2. Gentiles commanded to Confess (Romans 10:9,10). He is JESUS, Savior.
3. Church commanded to Go (Matthew. 28:19,20). He is LORD, Our Head.

Note: It must also be considered that the Church, as the "pillar and ground of the Truth" (I Timothy 3:15b), has a commitment concerning doctrine, and that much apostasy has arisen (Acts 20:29,30; II Timothy 4:3,4; etc.). The commitment to the Church must involve Doctrine, as well as Godliness, Holy Living and Discipling (evangelism and missions). But the basic COMMITMENT is to witness Christ to the world. However, it will not be done unless all these other elements are properly in place. So, the ultimate includes all that goes with it. These considerations carry over to the remaining applicable parts of the outline.

B. Corruption.

1. Jews Continue to Rebel (Acts 28:27). Note Acts 3:19-26; Romans 10:1-3.
2. Gentiles Callused toward the Gospel (II Thessalonians 1:8). Note Acts 16,17; II Thessalonians 2; and, Jude, verses 14-16.
3. Church is Careless concerning Her Mission (I Corinthians 15:34).

C. Chastisement.

1. Jews, in The Tribulation Period (Matthew. 24:15-22). Note Jeremiah 30:7,11; Dan. 7,8 and 12:1.
2. Gentiles, at The Return of Christ (Joel 3:9-16; II Thessalonians 1:6-10). Note II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:11,12.
3. The Church, in the:
 - a. Present Chastisement of this Age (Hebrews 12:6). Note I Corinthians 3:17; 5:5; 6:18; 9:27; 11:30; and Hebrews 12:6.
 - b. Future Loss of Rewards at the Bema Seat (I Corinthians 3:15). Note II John. 8; Revelation 3:11.

(Also, John unveils God's judgment on the apostate religious system that today masquerades as Christianity, and which through the ecumenical movement shall develop into the Scarlet Beast of Revelation 17, to be destroyed by Anti-Christ.)

D. Correction.

1. Jewish Remnant is Spared (Isaiah. 10:20-22). Note Isaiah 37:32; Ezekiel 37:34-38.

2. Gentile Multitude Saved during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:9).
3. Church is Raptured, Rewarded and Married to Christ (I Corinthians 3:14; Revelation 19:7,8).

VII. KINGDOM.

A. Commitment.

In the Millennium, Israel will reign as the Head of the Nations. She will be (as set forth by Dr. Dwight Pentecost):

- a. Converted and restored to the land (Jeremiah 32:37-41).
 - b. Reunited as a nation (Jeremiah. 3:18; Ezekiel 37:15-22).
 - c. Related to Jehovah by marriage (Hosea 2:2, 17-20).
 - d. Exalted above the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 28:13) Note Isaiah 2:2; 40,41.
 - e. Made righteous (Ezekiel. 36:25-27). Note Isaiah 60:3; 62:2.
 - f. God's witness (Isaiah. 44:8; Isaiah. 2:3). Note Isaiah 43:13,21; Ezekiel. 34:30; 36:36; Psalms 79:9-13.
 - g. Glory of Jehovah (Isaiah 62:1-3).
2. Gentiles shall find peace under the reign of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (cp. Joel 3:10 with Isaiah 2:2-4). Note Zechariah 9:9,10.
 3. Church Reigns with Christ (Revelation 20:6). Note II Timothy 2:12.

B. Corruption (Revelation. 20:7-9a).

1. THERE, FINALLY, IS NO CORRUPTION WITHIN ISRAEL!
Read Deuteronomy. 30:1-10. They will fulfill the "If" of verse 10. Why? See Jeremiah. 31:33,34 with Ezekiel 36:16-38.
2. Gentiles in natural bodies will bear children. They shall rise in rebellion (Isaiah 65:20b; Revelation 20:7-9a).
3. No Corruption in the Bride of Christ (Revelation 19:8; 20:6).

C. Chastisement (Revelation. 20:9b-15; Isaiah 66:24).

D. Correction (Revelation. 21,22).

The dispensations were so ordered that men could live under every practical kind of rule and condition. From rigid law, to blessed peacefulness in both Eden and the millennium, man failed. He is without excuse. The dispensations affirm that the corrupt nature of man is not able to please God, regardless of his environment. There must be a change of nature through the new birth. Man will have no excuse before God. He cannot say that he would have done better than Adam.