

THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

- I. THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT USES OF THE WORD “DISPENSATION” IN THE HOLY BIBLE:
 - A. The Word *Dispensation* Is sometimes Used to Indicate a Dispensing of (a giving out of) God’s Grace, as in Ephesians 3:2 (cf. 1 Cor 9:17; Col 1:25). This Grace Has Been in Effect since Adam’s Fall into Sin (Gen 3:21; 6:8).
 - B. The Word *Dispensation* Is also Defined as, and Is Used to Indicate, “a period of time in God’s dealings with man.” (Eph 1:10). These Dealings Change in each Dispensation, and several of Them Have a Period of Overlap with other Dispensations (see attached chart).
 - C. There Are Seven Dispensations (periods of time) and one Transitional Period (a period of change from one thing to another) in the Bible, but Be Careful to Notice that in each one of these Periods Salvation Is not always the Same.

- II. THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE:
 - A. This Dispensation Is Located in the Bible between Genesis 1:26 and 3:7, from the Creation of Adam to the spiritual Downfall of Adam.
 - B. In this Dispensation Adam and Eve Were Created Sinless (innocent), unlike Man in any other Dispensation (Rom 5:12; Psa 51:5). In order for Adam and Eve to Remain Sinless (to be saved from death, the penalty for disobedience), They only Had to Obey one Commandment, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.” (Gen 2:15-17).
 - C. During this Period, there Was no Grace or Faith Involved because Adam and Eve Walked and Talked with God **before** They Sinned (Gen 3:8-10; Rom 8:24-25; Heb 11:1, 6).
 - D. This Dispensation Ended in Apostasy (a falling away from God) because Adam and Eve Disobeyed the only Commandment of this Period (Gen 3:6) and Were no longer Innocent. It also Resulted in Judgment on the Serpent (Satan), Adam and Eve, the Animals, and the Earth (Gen 3:14-19, 23-24; Rom 8:19-22).

- E. During this Period, God Forgave Them and Provided a Covering for their Sin (Psa 85:2; Gen 3:21; Pro 27:26), but Sin's Penalty Was not Taken away (Heb 10:1-4, 6).
- F. During "the Dispensation of Innocence," there Was no Mention of Anyone being Baptized in Water, or keeping the Sabbath, or being spiritually Circumcised, or being Born Again, or being Regenerated, or being Adopted, or becoming a New Creature, or being Put into the Body of Jesus Christ, or having His Sins Taken away, or going to Heaven at Death, or the keeping of more than one Commandment.

III. THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE:

- A. This Dispensation Is Located in the Bible between Genesis 3:8 and 8:19, from the Fall of Adam to the End of the Noahic Flood (the worldwide flood).
- B. Salvation during this Period Was by Grace (Gen 6:8) through Faith in what God Said (Gen 6:13-14; 7:5; Heb 11:6-7) **and** by Works through the right Offerings (Gen 4:1-7).
- C. During this Dispensation, Sin Was Forgiven and Covered by Animal Sacrifices (Gen 4:3-7; Heb 11:4). However, Sin's Penalty could not Be Taken away by those Sacrifices (see Exo 34:5-7a; Heb 10:1-4, 6, 11 & cf. John 1:29; Heb 10:7-10).
- D. This Period Ended in Apostasy because of Man's wicked Deeds and evil Thoughts (Gen 6:5). It also Ended in Judgment by God Destroying both Man and Beast with a Flood (Gen 6:7).
- E. During "the Dispensation of Conscience," there Was no Mention of Anyone being Baptized in Water, or keeping the Sabbath, or being spiritually Circumcised, or being Born Again, or being Regenerated, or being Adopted, or becoming a New Creature, or being Put into the Body of Christ, or having His Sins Taken away, or going to Heaven at Death, or keeping the Commandments.

IV. THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT (the Patriarchal Age):

- A. This Dispensation Is Located in the Bible between Genesis 8:20 and Exodus 19:20, from the end of the Noahic Flood to the Giving of the Ten Commandments.

- B. Salvation during this Period Was by Grace through Faith (Gen 15:1-6), by Works through the Offering of Sacrifices (Gen 8:20; Job 1:1-5; Jas 2:21-22) and by Living Right (Eze 14:20).
- C. During this Dispensation, Sin Was Forgiven by the Offering of Sacrifices but Sin's Penalty Was not Taken away (see Heb 10:1-4, 6, 11 & cf. John 1:29; Heb 10:7-10).
- D. There Was also a Responsibility to Conscience during this Period (Gen 20:1-6; Rom 2:14-15).
- E. Capital Punishment Was Instituted (started) in this Dispensation and Continues into the Present Church Age (Gen 9:1-6; Acts 25:10-11).
- F. When Abraham Was Called out in Genesis 12:1-4, He Was never Told to Be Baptized in Water to Become Righteous (see Jas 2:23 & contr. Rom 4:1-3) or to Be Justified (see Jas 2:21 & contr. Rom 5:1, 9).
- G. This Period Overlapped with the Dispensation of Law (see attached chart). Even though the Twelve Tribes of Israel (the Jews) Were Baptized **unto** Moses, before the Law and without getting wet (Exo 14:21-22; 1 Cor 10:1-2), there Is no Mention that Anyone Received the Gift of the Holy Ghost during this Time.
- H. This Dispensation Went into Apostasy early, Resulting in the Tower of Babel, and Brought Judgment by God, Who Confounded Man's Language and Scattered Them on the Earth (Gen 11:1-9).
- I. During "the Dispensation of Human Government," there Was no Mention of Anyone being Baptized in Water, or keeping the Sabbath, or being spiritually Circumcised, or being Born Again, or being Regenerated, or being Adopted, or becoming a New Creature, or being Put into the Body of Christ, or having His Sins Taken away, or going to Heaven at Death, or keeping the Commandments.

V. THE DISPENSATION OF LAW:

- A. This Dispensation Is Located in the Bible between Exodus 19:20 and Matthew 3:1-3, from the Giving of the Ten Commandments to the Appearance of John the Baptist (Luke 16:16).
- B. Salvation for the Jews during this Period Was by Grace through Faith **and** by Keeping the Law; which included Obeying the Commandments, the Rules, the Regulations and the Statutes (see Deu 10:12-13; Heb 3:15 to 4:2; Psa 119:1-9, 91 & cf. Heb 4:2, 6).

- C. During this Dispensation, Sins Were Forgiven by Sacrifices (Lev 4:13-31; 5:1-10; 6:1-7) but Sin's Penalty Could not Be Taken away (Exo 34:5-7a; Heb 10:1-4, 6, 11).
- D. Salvation for the Gentiles during this Period Was **either** by Faith and Works **or** by Faith and Conscience (Rom 1:19-20; 2:14-16).
- E. This Dispensation Overlapped with the Dispensation of Human Government and the Dispensation of the Kingdom Age Offered (see attached chart).
- F. This Period Ended in Apostasy by the Jews Falling into Idolatry (2 Kgs 17:7-12). It also Ended in Judgment by God Scattering the Jews among the Nations (2 Kgs 17:18-20).
- G. During "the Dispensation of Law," there Was no Mention of Anyone being Baptized in Water, or being spiritually Circumcised, or being Born Again, or being Regenerated, or being Adopted, or becoming a New Creature, or being Put into the Body of Christ, or having His Sins Taken away, or going to Heaven at Death.

VI. THE DISPENSATION OF THE KINGDOM AGE, OFFERED:

- A. The Offering of the Kingdom of Heaven Is Located in the Bible between Matthew 3:1-2 and 27:50, from the start of John the Baptist's Ministry to the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the King of the Kingdom (Luke 16:16; Heb 9:16-17).
- B. The Kingdom Age Was at Hand (nearby; close) and first *Offered* by John the Baptist (Mat 3:1-2) and then by Its King (Jesus Christ) (Mat 4:17; Mark 1:14-15), and finally by the King's Servants (His disciples – Mat 10:5-7).
- C. When the King of the Kingdom Was Rejected in John 19:12-15, the Kingdom Age Was Suspended until the Second Coming of Christ, the King of Kings (Jude vs.14-15; Rev 19:11-16).
- D. Salvation during this Time Was by Grace through Faith, Believing on the Messiah-King (John 2:11; 8:24; 14:6), and by Keeping the Law of Moses (Luke 10:25-28; Mat 8:1-4; 5:17-19).
- E. During the Offering of the Kingdom, Water Baptism Was both an outward Sign of (a proof of) an inward Repentance (Mat 3:7-8, 11) **and** a Revelation of the Jewish Messiah to the Nation of Israel (John 1:29-31). There Was no Mention of Believers being Baptized in Anyone's Name during this Time.

- F. During this Time, Sins Were Forgiven (Exo 34:5-7a) but Sin's Penalty Was not Taken away (Heb 10:1-4, 6, 11) until after the Death of the Testator (the Lord Jesus Christ) (Mat 27:50; Heb 10:1-14; John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21).
- G. This Period of Offering Overlapped with both the Dispensation of Law and the Transition Period (see attached chart).
- H. The Kingdom Age Was Suspended because of Apostasy when the Jews Rejected Their Messiah-King (Mat 27:22-25; John 19:13-15). It also Resulted in Judgment by the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Scattering of the Jews (Mat 24:1-2; Jas 1:1). The Kingdom Will finally Be Set up after the Great Tribulation Period (see X. below).
- I. During the Time that the Kingdom Age Was Offered, there Was no Mention of Anyone being Regenerated, or being Adopted, or becoming a New Creature, or being Put into the Body of Christ, or having His Sins Taken away or going to Heaven at Death (Luke 16:22; 23:39-43; Mat 12:40).

VII. THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

- A. This "Transition Period" (a time of changing from one thing to another) Is Located in the Bible between Matthew 27:50 and Acts 7:56, from the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ to the second Rejection of the Messiah-King.
- B. This Transition Began in the Offered Kingdom Age, after the King Was Rejected, and Ended in the beginning of the present Church Age (Acts 10:1-16; Eph 2:11-16).
- C. During this Period, after the Crucifixion and Intercession of the King (Luke 23:34; John 11:21-22, 41-42), the King and the Kingdom Were once again Offered to and Rejected by the Leaders of Israel (Acts 6:12; 7:1-2, 51-58).
- D. Following the second Rejection of the King and the Kingdom (see C. above), there began a Transition from that of God Dealing mainly with the Nation of Israel (Mat 10:5-7; 15:24; Acts 11:19) to that of God Dealing mainly with the Gentile Nations (Mat 28:19-20; Acts 11:1-18).
- E. During this Period, there Was a definite Segregation between the Jewish Believers and the Gentile Believers (Eph 2:11-13; Gal 2:11-13) that Continued into the Early Church Age (Acts 21:17-26; 1 Cor 7:17-20, 24).
- F. This Transition Overlapped with both the Offered Kingdom Age and the Early Church Age (see attached chart).

- G. During this overlapping Period, there Were at Least five Ways of being Saved. These Ways Are Seen throughout the Book of Acts.
1. In Acts 2:36-38 the House of Israel, the Jews (Mat 10:5-6), had to repent of crucifying their Messiah (Jesus Christ) and had to be baptized in His name **for** (because of – Luke 5:12-14) the remission of (the forgiveness of) their sins in order to be saved and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 2. In Acts 8:12-18 the Samaritans, half-Jews (John 4:7-12), believed on Jesus Christ and were baptized in his name, but they did not receive the Holy Ghost until **after** the Apostles laid hands on them.
 3. In Acts 10:34-48 the Gentiles believed in Jesus Christ, had remission of their sins and received the gift of the Holy Ghost **before** they were baptized in water in the name of the Lord, and there was no mention of hands being laid on them.
 4. In Acts 15:1-11 **both** the Jews and the Gentiles were saved by faith (v.9), through grace (v.11), and given the Holy Ghost (v.8). There was no mention of the Gentiles being baptized in the name of Jesus or of the laying on of hands.
 5. In Acts 19:1-6 the Jews believed on Jesus Christ and were baptized with John the Baptist's water baptism of repentance, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit until **after** they were baptized in the name of Jesus **and** the Apostle Paul laid hands on them.
- H. Salvation (receiving the Holy Spirit) **for the Jews** after this Transition Was by Grace (John 1:17), through Their Faith (Hab 2:4), by Works of keeping the Law (Acts 10:1-14), **and** by Water Baptism in the Name of Jesus (Acts 2:36-38).
- I. Salvation (receiving the Holy Spirit) **for the Jews** after this Period Was by Grace through Faith alone, without Works, without keeping the Law, but with Water Baptism in the Name of Jesus being required (Acts 15:5-11; 19:1-7).
- J. Salvation (receiving the Holy Spirit) **for the Gentiles** after this Transitional Period Was by Grace through Faith (Acts 8:26-38; 15:9, 11; Eph 2:8-9), **before** being Baptized in Water (Acts 10:44-47; 16:30-31).

VIII. THE DISPENSATION OF THE CHURCH AGE:

- A. This present Dispensation Is Located in the Bible between Acts 2:1 and Revelation 4:2, from the Day of Pentecost to the Catching away of the Apostle John to Heaven, a Type of the "Rapture" of the New Testament Church, that Is Described in 1st Thessalonians 4:13-17.
- B. The beginning of this Period Overlapped with the Transitional Period (see attached chart & cf. Acts 15:1-21; Gal chap's 1 to 6).

- C. Salvation (receiving the Holy Spirit) (Gal 3:14; Eph 1:12-13; Gal 3:2) in this present Dispensation for both the Jews and the Gentiles Is by Grace through Faith in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8-9; 1 Cor 15:1-4; Acts 15:7-11).
1. Salvation is received by faith (belief) alone (Eph 2:8; 1 Cor 15:1-4; Rom 10:9-10).
 2. Salvation is received without doing any works (Tit 3:5; Rom 3:19-27; 4:4-5).
 3. Salvation is received without keeping the Law (Heb 7:18-19; Eph 2:15; Gal 2:16).
 4. Salvation is received without being baptized in water (1 Cor 1:14-17; 12:12-13).
- D. Salvation Cannot Be Lost during this Period because:
1. A believer is sealed by God the Holy Spirit until Christ returns at the *rapture* (2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13; 4:30; Rom 8:23).
 2. A believer already *has* eternal life, and is neither working for it nor holding out to the end to receive it (John 5:24a; 1 John 5:9-13).
 3. A believer's salvation is kept by God's power and not by his own power or works (1 Pet 1:3-5; Jude vs.1, 24-25).
 4. A believer has the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21).
 5. A believer is secure in God's love (Rom 8:34-39; 1 Cor 3:21-23).
 6. A believer is part of the Body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; Phil 1:1).
- E. This Dispensation Will End in Apostasy by Believers Falling into deep Sin (2 Tim 3:1-8; 2 Pet 2:1-3). It Will also End in Judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ (see Rom 14:10 & cf. 1 Cor 3:9-15).
- F. During "the Dispensation of the Church Age," Believers Are Baptized into Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13), Are Baptized in Water (1 Cor 1:14-16), Are Spiritually Circumcised (Col 2:11-13), Are Born Again (John 3:3-6; 1 Peter 1:23), Are Regenerated (Tit 3:5; Rev 1:5), Are Adopted (Rom 8:14-17; Eph 1:5), Are Put into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 2:12-14, 27), Have Their Sins Taken away (John 1:29; Heb 10:1-14), become new Creatures (2 Cor 5:17), and Go directly to Heaven at Death (2 Cor 5:1-5; Phil 1:21-24).

IX. THE DISPENSATION OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD:

- A. This Dispensation Is Located in the Bible between Revelation 4:2 and 19:21, from the Catching away of the Apostle John to the Second Coming of Christ, and will only Be seven Years in Duration (Dan 9:20-27; Mat 24:21-22).
- B. This Period Is also Known as "the Time of Jacob's Trouble" in Jeremiah 30:4-7, "Daniel's Seventieth Week" from Daniel 9:24-27, and "the Great Tribulation" from Matthew 24:21 and Revelation 7:14.

- C. Salvation during this Dispensation Will Be by Grace through Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ **and** by Works, Maintaining One's Faith in Christ and Keeping the Commandments of God (see Rev 12:17; 14:12 & cf. Rev 22:14).
 - D. The Gospel during this Period Will be **the Everlasting Gospel** of Revelation 14:6-7 and not **the Gospel of the Grace of God** (the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ) (Acts 20:24; 1 Cor 15:1-4; Gal 1:8-9).
 - E. Salvation May Be Lost during this Dispensation by Worshipping the Beast, or Worshipping His Image, or Taking His Name, or Taking His Number, or Taking His Mark (Rev 13:11-17; 14:9-11; 20:4).
 - F. This Period Will End in Apostasy by Rejecting God's two Witnesses and Worshiping the Beast (Rev 11:3-10; 13:1-8). This Dispensation Will also End in Judgment, both during this Period and at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 14:9-11; 19:11-21).
 - G. During "the Dispensation of the Great Tribulation Period," there Is no Mention of Anyone being Baptized in Water, or being spiritually Circumcised, or being Born Again, or being Regenerated, or being Adopted, or becoming a new Creature, or being Put into the Body of Christ.
- X. THE DISPENSATION OF THE KINGDOM AGE, SET UP (See VI. Above).
- A. This Dispensation Is Located in the Bible in Revelation 20:1-15, from the Second Coming of Christ, at the end of the Great Tribulation Period, to the Great White Throne Judgment.
 - B. This Period Is also Called "the Age of Divine Government," "the Regeneration" in Matthew 19:28, "the Times of Refreshing" in Acts 3:19, "the *Millennium*" from Revelation 20:1-7, "the World to Come" in Matthew 12:32, etc.
 - C. This Kingdom Age Will Last for a thousand Years on the Earth (Rev 20:1-7) with Jerusalem as Its Capital and the Lord Jesus Christ as Its King (Isa 2:1-4; 9:6; Luke 1:30-32; Isa 24:23; Jer 23:5-8; Zec 9:9; Mat 21:1-11).
 - D. Salvation in this Dispensation Is **only** by Works, just as It Was in the Dispensation of Innocence (see II. above).
 - 1. Jesus Christ (the Lord of Hosts; the Holy One – Isa 47:4; Mark 1:23-24; and the Redeemer – Isa 47:4; Tit 2:13-14) will once again be seen, heard and worshipped (Zec 14:16-19).

2. There will be no need for faith because Jesus Christ (God manifest in the flesh – 1 Tim 3:16) will be present physically (Zec 14:16; Jer 31:31-33), just as God Was in the Dispensation of Innocence (see II. C. above).
 3. Those saved will be the ones who did not lose their salvation during the Tribulation Period (Rev 20:4) and those who will be born during the *Millennium* (Isa 65:20).
- E. Salvation Can Be Lost during this Period.
1. It can be lost by prophesying (Zec 13:1-5), unlike prophesying in the present Church Age (1 Cor 14:1-5).
 2. It can be lost by committing “the unpardonable sin” (Mat 12:32; Mark 3:22-30; Rev 20:7-10).
 3. It can also be lost by calling someone a fool (Mat 5:22).
- F. This Dispensation Will End in Apostasy when Satan Is Released and after He Deceives the Nations into Rebelling against Jesus Christ, the King of the Kingdom (Rev 20:7-10). It Will also End in Judgment at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15).
- G. During “the Dispensation of the Kingdom Age, Set up,” there Is no Mention of Anyone being Baptized in Water, or being Spiritually Circumcised, or being Born Again, or being Regenerated, or being Adopted, or becoming a New Creature, or being Put into the Body of Christ, or going to Heaven at Death.

XI. TIMELESS ETERNITY (Eternity Future) BEGINS:

- A. This Event Is Located in the Bible between Revelation 21:1 and 22:5, from the end of the Great White Throne Judgment to “Eternity Future” (see attached chart).
- B. In *Eternity Future* God Will Deal with three distinct (different or separate) Groups of People (1 Cor 10:32):
1. The Church of God (all members of the Body of Christ, Christians).
 2. The Jews (all people of the Nation of Israel).
 3. The Gentiles (all people of the nations, other than the Nation of Israel and Christians).
- C. In Eternity Future there Will Be three New Places for these three Groups of People to Live:
1. There will be New Jerusalem for **the Christians** (Rev 21:1-27).
 2. There will be a new earth for **the Jews** (Rom 4:12-13; Rev 7:1-4; 22:1-5).

3. There will be a new heaven (the stars and planets) for **the Gentiles** (Rev 21:1; Deu 4:19).

D. Eternity Future Is Called “the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times” in Ephesians 1:10 because It Has no end.

E. During this *Timeless Eternity*, there Will Be no need for Anyone to Be Saved because no One Will Be able to Sin and Be Lost.

1. The Devil (Rev 20:2), the tempter (1 The 3:5; 1 Cor 7:5), will no longer be able to tempt anyone to sin because he will be in the lake of fire being tormented forever (Rev 20:10).
2. There will be no more death (1 Cor 15:26; Rev 20:14; 21:4), therefore, there will be no more sin (Rom 5:12; 6:23a; Jas 1:15b).
3. There will be no more glorified bodies given out and people will once again need to eat of the Tree of Life to live forever (Rev 22:1-3), like Adam and Eve had to do before they sinned (Gen 2:8-9; 3:22-24).

XII. THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE DOCTRINE OF “THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS.”

A. After Salvation, this Doctrine Is one of the most important Bible Teachings for a Believer.

B. Understanding Dispensations Enables the Believer to “rightly divide” the Holy Bible (2 Tim 2:15) and to properly Apply any Portion of It (a word, a phrase, a verse, a passage, a chapter, or a Book) to Himself (2 Tim 3:15-17):

1. For salvation (v.15).
2. For inspiration (v.16).
3. For indoctrination (v.16).
4. For reproof (admonition) (v.16).
5. For correction (v.16).
6. For instruction (v.16).
7. For preparation (v.17).