

The Dispensational Principle

a. Definition — A dispensation is a period of time during which God deals in a particular way with man in respect to sin and man's responsibility.

The word "dispensation" means "administration" and is first found in (1Cor.9:17).

b. Divisions.

Periods of Time.

* 1 The Dispensation of Innocence.

(a) From creation of man to the fall of man. (Gen. 1:26-2:23).

Period of years not known.

(1) This is the innocent or unfallen state when the subjects knew good nor evil, being neither holy nor sinful, but being free to choose when good were placed before them.

Adam wasn't righteous because he hadn't chosen sin.

Adam wasn't sinful because he hadn't chosen good.

(2) Man was on probation.

(b) Man's responsibility — (Gen. 2:8, 9, 16, 17.). Man must choose whether he will believe God's Word or statement of Satan.

(c) Failure of man — (Gen. 3:6)

Man chose to believe Satan rather than God. Satan said, "You shall be as gods — ye shall not surely die." His purpose was to people the earth with fallen creation. These same lies of Satan are the foundation of present day-apostasy.

Many of the "isms" of the present day can be traced back to the verse which we quoted, (Gen. 3:4).

(d) Consequences of man's failure — (Gen. 3:14-19)

(1) Judgement of Satan.

(2) Judgement of the woman.

(3) Judgement on the earth.

(4) Judgement on man.

(5) Promise of the seed to deliver — (Gen. 3:15).

(e) Moral condition — one of perfection until sin came in.

(f) Divine mercy — (Gen. 3:15) — a promise of victory.

* 2 The Dispensation of Conscience — "with knowledge."

(a) From fall of man to flood — 1656 years —(Gen. 3-7).

(1) Begin with man in a fallen condition — having knowledge and guided by his conscience.

(2) Man is now outside the garden. A flaming sword is placed at the east of the garden to keep him away.;

(3) This dispensation show what happens when man is guided only by conscience.

(b) Man's responsibility (Gen.4:7).

He is to choose between doing good and doing evil. He insist on evil.

(Gen.4:7). "If thou doesn't well shalt thou not be accepted ? And if thou doesn't not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

(c) Failure of man — (Gen. 6:5, 11, 12).

(d) Consequences of man's failure — (Gen.).

(e) Moral condition — became worse and worse.

(1) Begins with the birth of Cain, made in Adam's likeness, and fallen.

All men at the beginning of the dispensation are fallen.

(2) Refusal of Cain to make his sacrifice as God commanded (that is, through the shedding of the blood) marks the beginning of rebellion toward God.

(3) This is followed by refusal of man to accept the will of God.

(4) The decline of the race follows.

(5) The moral condition becomes pitiful.

(6) Destruction of man seems the only way to remedy the condition.

(f) Divine mercy — (Gen. 7:1).

* 3. The Dispensation of Human Government.

(a) From the flood to the confusion of tongues — (Gen.8:1-11: 9,) 427yrs.

Noah was a righteous man, the only good man God could find who believed Him. (Gen.8:20); (Heb. 11:7). Noah was saved with 7 others.

(b) Man's responsibility — (Gen. 9:1).

Noah was given the same position which Adam occupied in the first dispensation; he was to govern for God. As a responsibility, it has never ended, and it will not end until Christ takes over the government. Noah was given the power of capital punishment — (Gen. 9:6),

(c) Failure of man. (Gen.11:1-4).

(1) Unless man can govern himself, he cannot govern others.

Noah's down fall _ (Gen. 9:20-23). - [intoxicated]

(2) Building of Tower of Babel.

(a) An organized political and religious rebellion against God.

(1) Idolatry and apostasy

(2) Failure comes always from disobeying God.

(3) Unification here, is shown to become blasphemous. Unity may be All right but God was left out of the picture completely. True only worthwhile unity looks to God.

(4) Man exalts himself. We read "make us a tower."

(d) Consequences of man failure — (Gen. 11: 5-9).

Confusion of tongues and the dispensation of the people.

(e) Moral condition.

Could not have been worse. It angered God that He destroyed their plan, through the confusion of tongues.

(f) Divine mercy

God was merciful to them in their Idolatry and sought another man who would follow Him.

* 4. Dispensation of Promise.

(a) From the call of Abraham to (Exodus) — 430 years. (Gen. 11: 10-15:21).

(1) Abram's condition — probably was in idolatry, but he listened to God. His faith began when he left Ur. He became righteous when he believed God's promise concerning his son.

(b) Man's responsibility — (Gen. 26: 2,3).

(1) To stay in the land which God gave him, and not go down into Egypt which was a type of the world.

(2) Abram doubt God's word, and when famine comes, he goes to Egypt for food. Abram could not have died in spite of the famine, because the promises of God had not been fulfilled.

(c) Man's failure — (Gen. 47: 1).

All of Jacob's house went down into the land of Egypt.

(d) Consequences of man's failure (Ex. 1:8-14).

Slavery in Egypt — sin and idolatry.

(e) Moral condition.

They turned to gods of the Egyptians and became Idolatrous -
(Ezek.20:7-9).

(f) Divine mercy.

Deliverance and preservation of Israel.

* 5. Dispensation of Law.

(a) From Sinai to Calvary — the exodus to the cross — 1491 years. Man's condition at the beginning of this dispensation—Ex.19:1-8). Trusting in his own strength instead of depending on God— "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

(b) Man's responsibility (Exod. 19:5).

To Keep the Law; includes 10 commandments and all laws, social, and civil.

These were given to the people of Israel only — (Rom. 2:12; 9:4)./

(c) Man's failure —(II Kings 17: 7-17,19; Acts 2:22-23).

They fail to keep the law, and the only One who did keep it was crucified, by them.

(d) Consequences of man's failure —(II Kings 17:1-6, 20) - (25:1-11)

(e) Moral condition — Fallen.

(f) Divine mercy.

Shown in the fact that judgement upon Jerusalem and on the nation of Israel was withheld for 40 years after the crucifixion.

* 6 The Dispensation of Grace.

(a) From the descent of the Holy Spirit to the descent of Christ —

(Acts and Epistles)

(1) Man's states at the beginning — a lost condition— (Rom. 3:9-20)

(Eph.2:2) there are two classes of people in the world — saved sinners and lost sinners.

(b) Man's responsibility.

(1) To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, (John 3:36) (Acts 16:31)

(John 1:11-13) (Rom: 3:5 : 5:1,2). (Eph. 2:8,9) Man is not saved by works, but by faith alone.

(c) Man's failure.

(1) Become lovers of themselves, of money, and of pleasure more than lovers of God —(II Tim.3:1-7).

(2) Having a form of godliness but without power.

(3) Would make God a liar through unbelief, which is true most colossal failure of the dispensation –
(I John 5:7).

(d) Consequences of man's failure.

God will give them up to their unbelief — (1 Tim. 4:1-3) (II Tim. 4:3-4).

(e) Moral condition.

Fallen and sinful.

(f) Divine mercy.

God has provided salvation for the whole human race.

* 7. The Dispensation of Judgement or Tribulation.

(a) From the rapture of the church to the millennium — (Rev. 6-19;
Dan. 12:2; Jer. 30:7).

(1) State of man's beginning — (I Thess. 4:16-18).

(a) the Church taken away, which means there is a race on earth that does not have in it "salt" to

prevent corruption — (II Thess.2:10-12).

(b) The Holy Spirit, omnipresent, will still be here to deal with sinners; but since the church is gone, He will no longer be active in connection to the church.

(b) Man's responsibility.

To recognize God and worship God — (Rev. 16:6).

(c) Man's failure.

The men who are evil will not repent — (Rev.9:20-21) (Rev. 18:21-24).

(d) Consequences of man's failure.

Utter destruction — (Ps. 2:1-6) (Rev. 14:20) (Zech. 14:4) (Rev. 19:17-21).

(e) Moral condition.

A godless group of people from whom all restraint has been taken by removal of the church.

(f) Divine mercy.

Shown by the saved Gentiles and sealed Israelites.

* 8. The Kingdom dispensation.

(a) From the descent of Christ to the Great White Throne Judgement — 1000 years — (Ps.2 and 11).

(1) Man's state at the beginning.

(a) Under the personal reign and rule of Christ — (Acts 15:14-17);

(Ps. 2:6); (Matt.24:29, 30) (Isa. 24:23).

(b) Man's responsibility.

Obedience and submission to the King, and also to worship Him— (Ps. 2:12; Isa. 65:20; Ps. 67:4; 86:9; Zech. 14:17).

(c) Man's failure.

Feigned obedience. Man will follow Satan — (Ps.66:3; Rev. 20:7-9).

(d) Consequences of man's failure.

Destruction caused by fire coming down from God out of heaven — (Rev.20:9).

(e) Moral condition.

Fallen and unrepentant.

(f) Divine mercy.

God provides a new heaven and a new earth.

* 9. Summary of Dispensations.

In each dispensation the trend of man is away from God. The responsibility of man in each dispensation is to believe the Word of God and to obey Him.

At the end of each dispensation, God gives man up to his own way.

Each dispensation shows that evil is headed up in a person or persons.

1st Dispensation — Satan and the fallen woman.

2nd Dispensation — Sinful Angels.

3rd Dispensation — Nimrod.

4th Dispensation — Pharaoh.

5th Dispensation — Judas, Scribes, and Pharisees.

6th Dispensation — Modernist.

7th Dispensation — Anti-Christ.

8th Dispensation — Satan.

Each dispensation ends in world crisis.

1st Dispensation — Expulsion of man from the garden.

2nd Dispensation — The flood.

3rd Dispensation — Confusion of tongues.

- 4th Dispensation — Bondage of the chosen race,
- 5th Dispensation — The cross of Christ.
- 6th Dispensation — The rapture of the church.
- 7th Dispensation — The wrath of God and the binding of Satan.
- 8th Dispensation — Fire from heaven.

In each dispensation God comes down.

- 1st Dispensation — God came down to the garden.
- 2nd Dispensation — God talked to Noah.
- 3rd Dispensation — God said, "Let Us go down."
- 4th Dispensation — "I AM come down" (burning bush).
- 5th Dispensation — Incarnation of Christ.
- 6th Dispensation — The Lord shall descend.
- 7th Dispensation — Coming to earth.
- 8th Dispensation — Still upon the earth.