

# DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

## Lesson 1

- I. Defined: a system of interpreting the Bible which explains how God is dealing with mankind differently in different periods of time.

There are a total of seven (7) dispensations:

1. Innocence
2. Conscience
3. Human Government
4. Promise
5. Law
6. Grace
7. Kingdom

Five have already passed, we live in the sixth and the seventh is yet to come.

- II. Examples of how God has dealt differently over various periods of time

- a. Dietary differences
  - i. Before the flood Genesis 1:29 & 30 PLANTS ONLY
  - ii. After the flood Genesis 9:2 & 3 ANIMALS & PLANTS
  - iii. After the Mosaic law Leviticus 11:2-7 NO RABBIT, NO PIG, MUST HAVE CLOVEN HOOF & CHEW THE CUD
  - iv. After Christ's ascension Acts 10:9-15 EAT WHAT YOU WANT
- b. Observing the sabbath
  - i. Under the law Exodus 20:8-10 KEEP IT (Saturday)
  - ii. Church age Colossians 2:16 & 17, Romans 14:5 & 6 DO WHAT YOU WANT
- c. Covenant of circumcision
  - i. Abraham Genesis 17:9 & 10 DO IT
  - ii. Paul to Galatia Galatians 5:1 & 3 DON'T DO IT

- III. Why we believe in dispensations

- a. Makes the Bible make sense; verses out of context of the dispensation lead to wrong thinking and actions
- b. Dispensations tell us three vital things
  - i. Where we came from
  - ii. Why we are here
  - iii. Where we are going
- c. Each of the seven dispensations has three common characteristics
  - i. The ruling factor; What God wants man to do—a test
  - ii. Man has a responsibility to obey the ruling factor; mankind fails
  - iii. Judgement follows; then a new divine revelation that shows God's new plan of ruling and man's responsibility

- d. This all leads to progressive revelation; more and more is known about God's full plan as each dispensation passes; i.e.
  - i. Genesis 3:15—after the fall a Savior was prophesied, all those that followed watched for Him; we now know it was Jesus
  - ii. Ephesians 3:2-6—The church wasn't expected; it was a new idea only revealed after Christ's return to heaven
- e. Dispensations give a literal view of the Bible; not allegorical or spiritual
  - i. Revelation 20:2 & 3 a literal 1000 year reign
  - ii. Exodus 20:11 a literal 7 days
  - iii. Isaiah 11:6-8 a peaceful earth
  - iv. Genesis 5:27 Methuselah was OLD
- f. Hyperbole, figure of speech , etc.; always clear by context of the passage
  - i. Matthew 5:29 If thy right eye offend thee...*Don't let your lust rule you*
  - ii. Mark 11:23 Say to the mountain be removed and cast into the sea...*Accomplish the impossible, the control of Judaism is apparent now but won't be for long*
- g. Dispensations show there are two distinct peoples of God—Israel and the Church; they are not the same
  - i. The church does not replace Israel (spiritually or otherwise)
  - ii. The Old Testament promises to Israel have not been transferred to the Church

## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

### Lesson 2

#### **INNOCENCE**

Genesis 1:26-3:24

#### Description of the Age of Innocence:

1. Man was unaware of evil, created innocent
  2. Man had an unbroken relationship with God
  3. Man had a harmonious relationship with others (spouse)
  4. Perfect world for man to rule over Genesis 1:26
  5. Adam & Eve were husband & wife Genesis 1:27 & 28
  6. Man was placed in a perfect Garden/Paradise Genesis 2:8
  7. Two specific trees in the garden
    - a. Tree of life—fruit that would let man live forever
    - b. Tree of knowledge of good & evil
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- I. Ruling Factor--Genesis 2:15-17
    - a. Cultivate and keep the Garden
    - b. Be fruitful and multiply 1:28
    - c. Don't eat from the Tree of Knowledge-or you will die v. 17
  - II. Man's Responsibility—Genesis 3:1-6
    - a. Satan's lie tempts them & they disobey God; both eat of the Tree of Knowledge
    - b. Man chooses self-rule over God's rule
  - III. Consequences
    - a. Perfect relationship with Adam & Eve was broken 3:7
    - b. They feel inadequate /experience shame (coverings & hiding)
    - c. Perfect relationship with God is broken 3:8-10
  - IV. Judgement
    - a. The woman will have pain in childbirth 3:16
    - b. The woman will want to control (desire) her husband/conflict in the relationship 4:7
    - c. Nature is cursed—thorns & thistles; work is hard 3:17-19
    - d. Banished from the Garden and the Tree of Life—thus Physical Death; 3:22-24 (Adam died 5:5 930 years old)
    - e. Adam dies spiritually and his sin/death spreads to all mankind Romans 5:12 & 18

### What the first dispensation tells us:

1. Where we came from—God created us
2. Where sin came from; Adam & Eve listened to Satan rather than God and passed it down through Adam's seed to all mankind
3. Of Someone coming who will destroy Satan 3:15
4. What man's role and place is in creation 1:26-28
5. Shows the differences between then and now
  - a. Food 1:29 they were vegetarian; Acts 10: 9-15 we are not
  - b. Rain 2:5 & 6 a mist from the ground; post-flood it rains from above
6. Of man's greatest enemy—Satan

## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

### Lesson 3

#### CONSCIENCE

Genesis 4:1-8:19

Description: Covers the time from the fall of man to the universal flood of Noah's time. This was approximately 1600 years.

Man's condition:

1. No longer innocent
2. Man is now "in sin" and has a broken relationship with God Romans 5:12
3. Man now knows the difference between good and evil. He knows what is right and what is wrong. Genesis 3:5 & 22

#### I. Ruling Factor

- a. Let your *conscience* be your guide to make the right decision Romans 2:14 & 15
- b. Allow God's Spirit to influence you Genesis 6:3
- c. Blood sacrifice was required to approach God Genesis 4:2-7 Hebrews 11:4 & 9:22

#### II. Failure of Man

- a. Can started out refusing to change; even though God urged him to correct his ways. When Cain was with his brother Abel, he killed him. Genesis 4:6-10
- b. Cain's descendants were known for their wickedness Genesis 4:16-24
- c. Man as a whole became incredibly wicked and thought about doing evil all the time Genesis 6:5 Genesis 6:11 & 12
- d. Sons of God (fallen angels) at the time came to earth and had children through human women, creating Nephilim (to fall upon) who were "mighty men". Genesis 6:2-4; Peter 2:4 & 5; Jude 6

#### III. Judgement of God

- a. God decides to kill off mankind and animals Genesis 6:6 & 7;
- b. God decides to flood the entire earth Genesis 6:17; Genesis 7:11-12;

#### IV. Grace of God

- a. But God saw Noah and extended grace to him and his family. Creation, too, will survive Genesis 6:8 & 14-22
- b. God saw that Noah was righteous, in spite of his culture and circumstance Genesis 7:1

- c. After Noah and his family and all the animals were on the ark—GOD closed the door behind them. What great care and protection! Genesis 7:16

#### NOTES OF INTEREST IN THE AGE OF CONSCIENCE:

1. Two and a half chapters are dedicated to Noah, the ark and the flood. This shows importance. It was referenced twice by Christ, three times by Peter and once by the writer of Hebrews. Matthew 24:38 & 39; Luke 17:27; I Peter 3:20; II Peter 2:5 & 3:6; Hebrews 11:7
2. The incredible number of years that men lived Genesis 5:5—Adam was 930; Genesis 5:8—Seth was 912; Genesis 5:14—Kenan was 910; Genesis 5:20—Jared was 962; Genesis 5:27—Methuselah was 969
3. Enoch did not die—God took him; he lived 365 years Genesis 5:23 & 24; Enoch walked with God
4. God makes a covenant with man and animals to never flood the earth again. Genesis 9:8-16 Genesis 7:11 (floodgates of the sky=rain) The sign of the covenant is the rainbow. Prior to the flood there was no direct sunlight. No sun or moon mentioned (greater light and lesser light) until after the flood.
5. Climate change is not in control Genesis 8:21 & 22 God's promise

## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

### Lesson 4

#### HUMAN GOVERNMENT

Genesis 8:20-11:32

Description: Timeframe was from Noah's flood to Abraham's call/covenant;

Changes to the earth post-flood:

- Similar to what we know today; direct sunlight shining, seasons happen, rain falls from the sky, skies are blue Genesis 8:22
- Animals now fear man Genesis 9:2
- Animals can be used for food; meat is introduced to the diet Genesis 9:3
- Man's lifespan is changing, much shorter ( Noah 950 years—9:29; Shem 600 years—11: 10 & 11 Aprachshad 438 year—11:12 & 13) Just 5 generations from Noah, Peleg was 239 years; 10 generations after Noah, Abraham lived 175 years—775 years less than Noah; four more generations and Joseph lived 110 years

#### I. RULING FACTOR

- a. Blood sacrifice still required to approach God Genesis 8:20 & 21
- b. Let your conscience guide you
- c. Allow God's Spirit to influence you
- d. Be fruitful and multiply to FILL the earth Genesis 9:1 & 7
- e. Any animal or man that kills a man shall be put to death; capital punishment Genesis 9:5 & 6; Cain, the murderer, corrupted his generation & off spring—never again (CAPITAL PUNISHMENT REQUIRES GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION) people/society/government as a whole was to promote good behavior THROUGH punishment Romans 13:1-4 Government was to restrain evil

#### II. MAN'S FAILURE

- a. Barely out of the ark, Noah is drunk and Ham disgraces his father Genesis 9:20-22; God curses his descendants, even the righteous struggle
- b. Man fails to scatter and FILL the earth Genesis 11:1-4; the government part seems to be working well
  - i. "Let's" do something big
  - ii. "Let's" make a name for ourselves
  - iii. "Let's" stay together and not scatter to fill the earth

#### III. GOD'S JUDGEMENT

- a. Come, let us (trinity) go down and confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech Genesis 11:5-7
- b. The Lord scattered them over the face of the earth Genesis 11:8 & 9

## WHAT WE KNOW FROM THIS TIME:

1. Where we came from and how we got here
2. Everyone came from those that got off the ark; Shem, Ham, Japheth Genesis 9:18 & 19
3. Different languages led to scattering of people—  
Scattering led to different races—  
Different races led to different cultures—  
Different cultures led to different governments.



## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

### Lesson 5

#### **PROMISE**

#### Genesis 12-Exodus 18

Description: Lasting 430 years; includes the call of Abraham to the Law given at Mount Sinai; it is 10 generations from the flood; approx. 2090 BC;

- People are dispersed around the world—different languages and races;
  - If Chapter 10:25 means land or people were divided than that was 250-300 years before Abram.
  - Some people were godly i.e. Job (Job 42:16 He lived 140 years after, so his age was close to 200; Job 1:5 blood sacrifice required, Job 1:1 Good man)
  - Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High; what rules men...conscience, Holy Spirit & Human Government, they all approach God through blood sacrifice
- I. RULING FACTOR
- a. 1<sup>st</sup>...Approach God through blood sacrifice
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup>...Allow your conscience to guide you
  - c. 3<sup>rd</sup>...Allows God's Spirit to influence you
  - d. 4<sup>th</sup>...Concede that Human Government will govern you
  - e. 5<sup>th</sup>...God's promise of great things to come should motivate you

God is now going to focus on an individual—Abram—God is going to make a nation out of him. God makes a promise to Abraham. The promise is to make a difference in the way he and his descendants will live.

#### THE PROMISE

Genesis 12:1-4

- Go forth to a land I will show you
- I will make a great nation of you
- Dwell in Canaan
- In you all the families of the world shall be blessed

Genesis 13:14-16 Land & descendants

Genesis 15:3-6 A son of your own

Genesis 17:3-8 Nation and land

Hebrews 6:13-15 The promise was key to having Abraham follow God *because of who God was*. When it looked impossible, Abraham believed because God's promise was based on God's character.

The sign that God made with Abraham was circumcision. Genesis 17:10 & 11—Remember I promised!

## II. ABRAHAM'S RESPONSIBILITY & FAILURE

### a. Abraham's Responsibility

- i. Believe
- ii. Circumcise males
- iii. Dwell in Canaan

### b. Abraham's Failure

- i. Twice he lied about Sarah being his wife to save his own life (12:12 & 13)
- ii. He fathered a child through Hagar (father of Arabs—PROBLEMS!)

### c. Descendant's Failure

- i. Dwelt in Egypt Genesis 46:6 & 50:22 They should have gone home

## III. JUDGMENT & GRACE

### a. Slavery in Egypt—Exodus 1:8-14

### b. Grace of God—God sends Moses—Exodus 3:10

## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

### Lesson 6

#### **THE LAW**

Exodus 19:1 – Mathew 27:50 & 51

Description: Scripture calls it the old covenant. (2 Corinthians 3:14-16; Hebrews 8:13; ) Luke 22:20 Ended when the veil was torn in two and a new covenant was established, Luke 22:20. Romans 10:4 Christ is the end of the law to those that believe. The Passover had been installed just before the law was given. Lasted throughout the Old Testament and we see four things:

1. Israel is now a nation/tribe/group (no longer just 1 family)
2. God intervened to free Israel from the Egyptians
3. Passover initiated as a picture of what is to come. A lamb is slain, its blood is placed on the doorposts of your home. You and your family in the house are spared by the death angel. A clear picture of being in Jesus Christ, our sacrificial lamb. John 1:29 John calls Him the Lamb of God who “takes away” the sin of the world. Christ was crucified at the time of the Passover when the lambs were being killed in the temple according to the law.
4. Israel is in the wilderness (not the land of promise) with Moses

#### I. RULING FACTOR

- a. Approach God through blood
- b. Let your conscience guide you
- c. Let God’s Spirit influence you
- d. Let government restrain you
- e. Let promise motivate you
- f. THE LAW dictate to you 613 specific do’s and don’ts; Exodus 19:3-8 conditional, verse 5 “IF” ; Deuteronomy 28:1-7; Deuteronomy 28: 15 & 15 & 64

#### II. MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY & FAILURE

- a. Their responsibility is to KEEP THEM ALL Exodus 24:6-8
- b. Set up a Temple system according to God’s instructions Exodus 25 – 31 Notice during the Law the temple system is front and center. Hebrews 10:1-4 & 11
- c. To Observe the sabbath Exodus 31:14 & 15
- d. To circumcise the males as a sign of their agreement with the covenant

e. Two fold failure

- i. To obey 2 Kings 17:7 & 8 & 12 & 15; Jeremiah 31:31 & 32
- ii. To accept their King Matthew 11:23 & 24; John 19:12-16

III. JUDGEMENT & GRACE

- a. Dispersed to Assyria
- b. Dispersed to Babylon
- c. Dispersed to Persia
- d. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed AD 70 Luke 21:20-24; Matthew 24:1-2
- e. The Savior comes Galatians 4:4-5

## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

### Lesson 7

#### GRACE

Description: Begins with the death and resurrection of Christ, it will end with the rapture of the church. During this dispensation, the church will start, the Holy Spirit will come to indwell believers. The gospel spreads slowly from Jerusalem and Jews to transition to anyone including Gentiles.

The main focus is that all the old ruling factors are fulfilled in Jesus. The initial ruling factor was to approach God through blood, Jesus met that requirement.

I John 4:10...satisfactory payment for sin

Hebrews 10:9-14...Jesus blood is sufficient forever, for all

Hebrews 10:19 & 20...Now we can come to God through Jesus blood

Luke 22:19 & 20...the New Covenant, His blood

Hebrews 9:12...through his own blood He...obtained eternal redemption

The ruling factor of righteous living was fulfilled in Jesus:

Matthew 5:17...I came to fulfill the law

Hebrews 4:15...tempted...yet without sin

I Peter 2:21 & 22...who committed no sin

I Peter 1:18 & 19...a lamb unblemished and spotless

II Corinthians 5:21...Him, who knew no sin

I John 3:5...in Him there is no sin

John 8:29...I always do the things that are pleasing to Him

Things have changed. Romans 10:4—Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes. Galatians 3:13—Christ has redeemed us from the law.

#### I. RULING FACTOR--GRACE

- a. John 1:17 Law through Moses; Grace & truth through Jesus
- b. Romans 6:14...Not under law, but under grace
- c. Titus 2:11 & 12 Grace of God has appeared instructing us

#### II. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY & FAILURE—to believe; the result of belief is righteousness

- a. John 3:16 whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life

- b. Romans 10:10 & 11 with the heart man believes resulting in salvation
- c. Romans 1:16 Power of God for salvation to everyone who believes
- d. I Timothy 1:15 & 16 For those who would believe in Him have eternal life
- e. Ephesians 1:13 having believed we are sealed
- f. Romans 3:28 We maintain that a man is JUSTIFIED BY FAITH apart from works of the law
- g. II Corinthians 5:21 that we might become the righteousness of God in Him
- h. Romans 10:10 believes, resulting in righteousness
- i. John 3:18 He who does not believe is condemned already
- j. II Timothy 3:1-7 & Romans 1:18-23 consequences of unbelief

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
“Full atonement!” can it be?  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Phillip Bliss 1875

### III. RELATIONSHIP RESTORED WITH GOD

- a. Galatians 4:4 & 5 Adopted as sons
- b. Romans 8:6 Children of God
- c. Hebrews 2:11 Christ calls us his brothers
- d. I Corinthians 6:19 The Holy Spirit lives inside us (God’s temple)

IV. JUDGEMENT—Tribulation Revelation 6:15-17

- a. Daniel's 70 week prophesy (Daniel 9:24-26) the church age, the dispensation of grace, is between the 69<sup>th</sup> & 70<sup>th</sup> week
- b. Messiah is cut off—killed; rejected as King of the Jews
- c. 70<sup>th</sup> week is the 7 year tribulation from Revelations
- d. I Thessalonians 4:13-18 the rapture of the church begins the tribulation
- e. The Second Coming of Christ is at the end of the 7 year tribulation

So what about good works? We do **not** do good works to obtain position, we are given that, but because of our position we serve our purpose by doing good works.

Christ gives us POSITION and then we have PURPOSE

Ephesians 2:8 – 10 Created in Christ Jesus for good works...walk in them

Ephesians 5:7 & 8 Formerly darkness, now you are light in the Lord, walk as children of light

## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

### Lesson 8

#### **THE 1,000 YEAR KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST**

Or

#### **THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL**

Or

#### **THE MILLENNIUM**

Description: It will last for 1,000 years and Jesus Christ will reign on the earth from Jerusalem over the entire world. Jesus will sit on David's throne. Revelation 20:1-4; Luke 1:31-33; II Samuel 7:16

It begins at the second coming of Christ Revelation 19:11-20:6 Satan will be bound

It ends when Satan is released Revelation 20:7

#### I. RULING FACTOR

- a. Respond in obedience to the righteous rule of Jesus Christ Isaiah 11:3-5; Isaiah 29:19-21  
Zechariah 14:16-19
- b. The kingdom will be characterized by righteousness and judgement of evil
- c. Conditions on the earth at that time Isaiah 11:6-9; Isaiah 65:20 & 24; Zechariah 14:9-11;  
Jeremiah 31:10-13; Isaiah 35:5 & 6

#### II. MAN'S FAILURE: Man will rebel Revelation 20:7-10

#### III. GOD'S JUDGEMENT

- a. Satan is doomed Revelation 20:10
- b. Sinners are judged Revelation 20:11-15

#### IV. GOD'S GRACE

- a. Eternity is ushered in Revelation 20:1-7; Revelation 22:1-5

#### **Miscellaneous Kingdom Passages:**

Acts 1:6 & 7 The kingdom of Israel is yet future

Daniel 7:13 & 14 The kingdom will be established

Matthew 24:29-31 Christ Quoted Daniel 7:13; referring to himself and His kingdom



### **Rapture and Second Coming Passages:**

I Thessalonians 4:13-18 We who are alive...shall be caught up

I Thessalonians 1:10 & 5:9 Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come

Revelation 3:10 Who will keep us from the hour of testing

Revelation 6:16 & 17 The wrath of the Lamb

We are never given instructions about how to survive the great tribulation.

II Thessalonians 2:1 & 2 We should not worry about it

I Corinthians 15:51-57 Mortal will become immortal

A trumpet will sound I Corinthians 15:52; I Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 4:1

Revelation chapters 2 & 3 are the letters to the churches. Revelation 4:1 tells John to “come up here”, after this the tribulation begins on the earth.

John 14:1-3 The rapture is about Jesus gathering believers to Himself. The second coming is about Jesus Christ waging war and judging the ungodly.

Revelation 19:11-21 Death comes when Christ comes

II Thessalonians 1:7-9 Dealing out retribution

We believe the seven years of tribulation take place between the rapture and the second coming.

7 Years = Day of the Lord

I Thessalonians 5:2 & 3

Psalms 110:5

Ezekiel 7:12 & 19

Joel 2:31

Jeremiah 30:7 & 8

Isaiah 24:21 & 22

Isaiah 13:9-11

Jeremiah 46:10

Ezekiel 30:3-4

Malachi 4: 1 & 2

Rapture

Comes for his own

Comes in the air

Saints are resurrected

No judgement

No prophecies need fulfilled

2<sup>nd</sup> Coming

Comes with his own

Comes to the earth

No resurrection

Great judgement

Many prophecies need fulfilled

## Additional Information

Matthew 24:40 & 41 sounds like the rapture....

Matthew 24:29-31 also, sounds like the rapture...

But...the context suggests otherwise.

It is after the tribulation—not before—all tribes of the earth will mourn, judgement is near

Angels will gather the elect, God's people, Jews from the four winds of the earth

Deuteronomy 30:4 "will gather" bring you back, because they had been scattered to the four winds

Isaiah 11:22 & 12

Ezekiel 5:10 & 12 and 17:21

Isaiah 43:5-7

The trumpet denotes action is about to take place Isaiah 27:13

A parallel passage is Luke 17:26-37 taken & left (remember the flood mentioned in Matthew 24:39, that the lost were taken away and only Noah & family remained)

Where are the lost "taken"? To where the vultures are

## Differences Between Dispensational & Reformed (Covenant) Theology

Dispensationalist:

Literal Interpretation

Israel means Israel

Church was born at Pentecost

The Kingdom of God is real & future

The Church & Israel are separate

Whosoever will gospel

Covenant:

Literal AND Figurative

Israel means Israel or Spiritual Israel (the church)

Church existed in Old Testament times

The Kingdom of God is figurative & now

The Church & Israel are the same

Predetermined by election