

# *Prophetic Fall Feasts of The LORD*

March 20, 2019 Lesson #11 Rightly Dividing God's Word

II Tim. 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

At its most basic level, the study of prophecy centers upon God's self-professed plan to restore the broken and sin-wracked universe to a state of holiness, stability and purity. Ultimately, good will come out of evil. Out of Law and conviction, His grace will flourish. Under the stewardship of man, the world has repeatedly fallen prey to a variety of faulty utopian plans. Under the rule of man, the world will continually fall into one crisis after another, until God intervenes to restore some semblance of order and a new beginning. This pattern has been repeated over and over without any general recognition on man's part that he has been saved once again.

This is the core belief in a form of Scriptural understanding whose goal is to make sense of the enormous plan of redemption. Known as "dispensationalism," it simply means stewardship or management plan.

John Darby [1800-1882] >Father of Dispensationalism -is credited with bringing new life to a theology that had been buried since the 5<sup>th</sup> Century.

Darby wrote: "Isaiah 32 revealed a future dispensation in which Israel would inherit a literal, earthly kingdom. I saw there would be a reign of David. I saw an evident change of dispensation when the Spirit would be poured out on the Jewish nations and a king reign in righteousness."

Darby concluded God's ancient people, Israel, had a prophetic role independent of the Church role. He also placed the catching-away [rapture] of the church prior to Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century: A few began to proclaim their belief in the apostles' teaching regarding the future Millennial reign of Christ on David's throne.

C.I. Scofield: Developed a complete system of notes and outlines that was published in *Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth* [1890's]. He and Dwight L. Moody joined forces in leading the powerful Bible Conference Movement. Scofield's Bible, issued in 1909, taught the premillennial and dispensational methods. This was the dominant view in America.

Critics of Dispensationalism say it is a new idea promoted by Darby. However, evidence clearly reveals that the early church believed in the principles of dispensationalism can be found in the 2nd Century writings of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. Justin Martyr saw 4 distinct periods (dispensations) and gave them the names of the principle players, Adam to Abraham; Abraham to Moses; Moses to Christ; and Christ to Eternity.

Irenaeus also saw 4 periods, from the Creation to the Flood, from the Flood to the Law, from the Law to the Gospel, and from the Gospel to Eternity.

A dispensationalist believes that God has dealt with humanity in different ways at different times—revealing to us His character and His plan for mankind.

These different periods of time are called dispensations.

Example: While salvation has always been by faith, the way to salvation through much of the Old Testament for Israel required faith and obedience to the Law as well. That is not the case during the Church Age. Neither was the Holy Spirit sealed within Old Testament believers as is the case with believers in the Church [Ephes. 1:13-14].

Therefore, the way God dealt with Israel in the Old Testament took place during a different dispensation or age than His dealings with the Church in the New Testament.

Dispensationalism is the system of theology that provides the best, most literal hermeneutic (method of Bible interpretation). The Greek word from which we get dispensation appears 7 times in the New Testament. It is translated "dispensation" in 4 of the 7 and in Paul's writings. [I Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25]

Other meanings of dispensation are stewardship, administration and economy.

Consider: Scripture studied this way yields:

- a. It gives a correct view of the distinct differences between Israel and the Church.
- b. It gives a clear view of God's elect, His redeemed, and His plan - past, present and future.
- c. A watchful attitude in a believer's life

The Scriptures divide time (the entire period from the creation of Adam to the "new heaven and a new earth" of Rev. 21: 1) into seven unequal periods, called dispensations (Eph. 3:2).

DISPENSATION = A moral or probationary period in the world's history

1. In the history of humanity, there is a pattern. Darby observed:

- a. God begins by establishing His creation in a favorable position.
- b. He then leaves man to his own inevitable failure.
- c. God brings judgment.
- d. God in His mercy intervenes and places man in a new position of blessing.

Each dispensation may be regarded as a new test of man, and each ends in judgment, marking his utter failure in every dispensation. Four of these dispensations have been fulfilled.

Dispensation #5 has completed 483 years out of 490 years.

We are living in the sixth. Then dispensation #5 will complete its last 7 years.

We have still before us the seventh, and last: the millennium.

The classic seven dispensations are Innocence, Conscience, Government, Promise, Law, Grace [Church Age], and Millennial Kingdom. In each, there is a recognizable, six-fold pattern of how God worked with those living in the dispensation. God gives a responsibility to people, they fail to meet God's requirements, their failure is judged, and God extends grace and hope for the future.

There are 2 Ante-Diluvian Dispensations [before the Flood]: Innocence & Conscience

I. Dispensation of Innocence [Gen. 1:26-30 and 2:15-17 = Responsibility; Gen. 3:1-6 = Failure]

- God created man to live in perfect harmony with Himself. They were created in the image of God and innocent of sin. [Gen. 1:27]. They were ignorant of good and evil.

- They had an eternal soul, a free will and the ability to procreate.
- They walked and worked with God, who interacted with His creation. [Gen. 2:15]

*Stewards:* Adam and Eve

*The Period:* From the creation of man to The Fall & Expulsion

*Responsibility:* To obey God (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-17); Do Not Eat Of 1 Tree

*Commands:* Replenish the earth, Subdue the earth, Have dominion over the animals, Care for the garden - God warned of the punishment for disobedience.

*Failure:* Disobedience (Genesis 3:1-6)

*Judgment:* Curse and death (Genesis 3:7-19); God drove out the man.

*Grace:* A new chance and the promise of a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15)

*God's mercy:* He killed an innocent animal and provided skins to cover over or atone for their sin. The slaughter of the animals introduced the Biblical principle:

"Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin". [Heb. 9:22]

## II. Dispensation of Conscience—Genesis 3:23 to 9:29

- Demonstrates what mankind will do if left to his own will and conscience which has been tainted by the inherited sin nature. Man has a knowledge of good and evil.
- Man's conscience will be the basis for right moral judgment.

Major aspects:

- ❖ Curse on the serpent and on nature
- ❖ Change in womanhood and childbearing
- ❖ Imposing of difficult work on mankind to produce food
- ❖ Promise of Christ as the seed who will bruise the serpent's, Satan's, head.

*Stewards:* Cain and Seth and their families

*The Period:* Expulsion from the Garden of Eden until the Flood, about 1,656 years

*Responsibility:* To do good and offer blood sacrifices (Genesis 3:7, 22; 4:4)

*Failure:* Wickedness (Genesis 6:5-6, 11, 12)

"All flesh had corrupted his way on the earth. The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

[Gen. 3:7, 22; Gen. 6:5, 11-12; Gen. 7:11-12, 23]

*Judgment:* The worldwide Flood (Genesis 6:7, 13; 7:11-14)

*Grace:* Noah and his family are saved (Genesis 6:8-9; 7:1; 8:1)

A remnant to continue His sovereign plan for mankind.

Dispensation #3 God works in a new way with His creation via Human Government. ~429 yrs  
[Gen. 8:15 to 11:9]

*Stewards:* Noah [1<sup>st</sup> Civil Leader] and his descendants

*The Period:* From the Flood to the confusion of tongues at Babel, about 429 years

*Responsibility:* Obey God; To scatter and multiply (Gen. 9)

*Failure:* Refusal to scatter and the building of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-4)

Judgment: Confusion of languages (Gen. 11:5-9); Forced command to fill the earth  
Grace: Abraham is chosen—the start of the Jewish race (Gen. 12:1-3)

It is clear God does not always work exactly the same way in each dispensation.  
What God required of Adam > Don't Eat Of The Tree > He did not require of Moses.  
What He required of Noah > Belief; Build the Ark > He did not require of David.  
What He required of Moses & David > Keep The Law > He doesn't require of us today.

God tested perfect man in innocence. Man failed and was judged when he was cast out of Eden.  
God tested fallen man's conscience. Man failed and was judged by the Great Flood.  
God tested man under human government. Man failed and was judged at Babel.  
God then tested man under Divine Promise by calling out Abram, who would become Abraham.

Dispensation #4 God calls Abram and the dispensation of Promise commences

Stewards: Abraham and the Patriarchs

God promised Abraham a homeland for his descendants [Genesis 17:8] and a son for him and Sarah [Genesis 17:15-16]. They grew tired of waiting and produced a son in their own way, who they named Ishmael [Genesis 16:1-2.15]. When God's promised son Isaac was born, Ishmael was sent away [Genesis 21:8-13] causing enmity between the Jews (descendants of Isaac) and Arabs (descendants of Ishmael) that continues to this day.

Note: Some promises were gracious and unconditional. These will be fulfilled in the future. Other promises were conditional upon the faithfulness and obedience of the Israelites. Every one of these were violated.

Period: From Abram's call until Moses Receives The Law At Mt. Sinai  
Gen. 12:1-Ex. 19:1-8 - Period of 430 Years

Responsibility: Dwell in Canaan - Gen. 12:1-7

Failure: Dwelt in Egypt - Gen. 12:10, Gen. 46:6

Judgment: Egyptian Bondage - Ex. 1:8-14

Grace: Moses The Deliverer is sent- Ex. 3:6-10

God's Unfolding Plan of Redemption Begins To Unfold

Note: Genesis opens with, "In the beginning God created," and it closes with "A coffin in Egypt."

God's grace came to the aid of helpless man and redeemed the chosen people out of the hand of the oppressor.

Dispensation #5 God Gives His Law & Establishes a Covenant With Israel

God gave Moses the 10 Commandments and promised the Jews a life of peace and plenty in a Kingdom of their own if they obeyed [Ex. 19:5, Ex. 20:1-17]. Positions them for His purpose

Stewards: Moses & Nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai

Period: From Mt. Sinai until Christ fulfilled the Law with His Death - ~1500 years  
Ex. 19:1-8 - John 19:30 - It Is Finished!

Responsibility: Obedience; Keep God's Law & Covenant - Ex. 19:3-8

Ex. 19:3-6 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

<sup>6</sup> And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Note: When Israel was standing before Mt. Sinai and God wanted them to draw near, He wanted to draw them to His transforming fire so He could meld them into a Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation. They would be His treasured possession. He wanted to purify them to be His servants and vessels of His holy presence.

Failure: Broke God's Law & Rejected Jesus Christ - II Kings 17:17-20; Matt. 27  
And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.<sup>18</sup> Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.<sup>19</sup> Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

<sup>20</sup> And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

Judgment: World Wide Dispersion - Deut. 28:63-66; Luke 21:20-24

A remnant returned under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah and in due time, Jesus was born.

Grace: The Promised Savior was sent. Isaiah 9:6-7; Galatians 4:4-5

This dispensation was interrupted when the Jews rejected Jesus and His Kingdom in the NT. The last 7 years will be completed with the Tribulation Period.

Grace: They will recognize Jesus Christ as Their Messiah;  
He will pour out His Spirit of Grace upon them.

Dispensation #6 of Grace or Church Age: Acts 2 - Rev. 3:22

No longer requiring righteousness through works, God granted a righteousness by grace through faith in the completed work of Christ to all who accept, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 3:21-24).

Jesus is building His church during this time. Matt. 16:18

Stewards: The Church

Period: From The Day of Pentecost, Acts 2, to the Rapture, I Thess. 4:13-18  
~2000 years

Responsibility: Believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, His finished work on the cross  
To be brought to maturity by the process of sanctification;  
exhibit ever-increasing godliness I Thess. 4:3; II John 1:5

Failure: Lack of maturity; worldliness, many churches falling into apostasy  
Gal. 5:4; II Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 3:15-16

Judgment: Blindness of apostasy and false doctrine; II Thess. 2:3; II Tim. 4:3

Grace: Forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus I John 1:3-7; John 14:20

With the Holy Spirit indwelling His Church, we are able to walk with the Lord and live as He intends [Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 2:10; 5:17-18; Philippians 1:6; 4:13; Romans 8:14]. The closing of this dispensation will be the descent of Jesus Christ when believers since Pentecost will be caught up to meet Him in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Note: It's important to realize that Grace didn't replace Law, it just interrupted it. The Church Age is a period between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks of Daniel's prophecy. Law has another 7 years to run, called Daniel's 70th Week (Daniel 9:24-27), which fills the time between the Rapture and the 2nd Coming. During this time all the nations to which Israel has been scattered will be completely destroyed and Israel will be disciplined in preparation for receiving the Kingdom (Jeremiah 30:4-11).

Last 7 years of Law and Israel: Obedience; Keep God's Law & Covenant; Temple & Sacrifices

### Dispensation #7: The Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ

The seventh and final dispensation brings about the culmination of life on Earth and the closest thing yet to how God really wanted to live with us on this planet.

This time Israel will accept the Kingdom offer (Zechariah 12:10, Zechariah 14:8-9).

This Kingdom will fulfill the prophecy to the Jewish nation that Christ will return and be their King. He will dwell among them. He will be their God; they will be His people.

Satan is bound in the abyss for 1000 years.

Stewards: Believers who survived the 7 year tribulation period & their offspring.  
NO unsaved enter the Kingdom when it is established.

Period: From 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus Christ until the final rebellion ~1000 years

Responsibility: Be obedient, remain undefiled and worship the Lord Jesus. [Isa. 11:3-5; Zech. 14:9]

Failure: After Satan is loosed from the Abyss, sinful man rebels one more time.  
Rev. 20:7-9

Judgment: Fire from God; the Great White Throne Judgment - Rev. 9-15

Grace: Eternity with the New Heaven & New Earth

Purpose of 7 Dispensations: Demonstrate there are no conditions under which natural man can behave in a manner acceptable to God. Each Dispensation emphasizes that the believer of any Dispensation must first and foremost be obedient to God. Disobedience always leads to disaster. Each Dispensation is a test from God to man to emphasize God knows best.

The Dispensations also emphasize the fact God is faithful though we are often faithless.

From the very beginning God emphasized the Coming Redeemer, the Blood Atonement and all because of God's Amazing Grace.