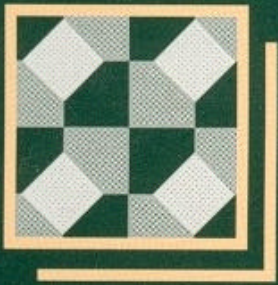
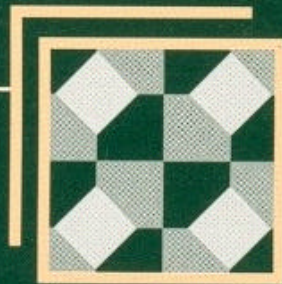

DISPENSATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS



Charles F. Baker



**STUDIES IN
DISPENSATIONAL
RELATIONSHIPS**

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by

Charles F. Baker

**Grace Publications, Inc.
Grand Rapids, MI 49509**

Studies in Dispensational Relationships
by Charles F. Baker

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FOREWORD

This series of lessons has been prepared to meet the need of the many Christians who find it impossible to attend such a school as Grace Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to further their education in the Word of God. The lessons are planned so that a person may study on his own or perhaps pursue the course in a local study group. Each lesson will be a complete unit of study with a *REVIEW* which may be used for summary purposes or for testing. A simple dispensational chart of the Bible accompanies the study (see *chart*) which will be helpful in visualizing the relationship of truth in the various divine administrations.

It is recommended that the student look up and read carefully all of the Scripture passages given, and that he come to his own conclusions whether or not each proposed truth is actually taught in the Word of God. By using these lessons merely as a guide, and by his own prayerful study, he will be able to make Bible truth his very own. He will not then be a mere peddler of secondhand truth.

The teacher's job is not merely to teach, but to so motivate the student to study that the teacher will be able to effectively communicate the truth to the student. The blessing and benefit which you derive from these lessons will depend largely upon how important you believe the subject to be. The more important you consider it, the more interested you will be; the more your interest, the more zealously you will study; the more you study, the greater will be your blessing. In view of these facts, our first lesson will seek to show you the need of such a study, how it can benefit you as a Christian, and perhaps it will help you to overcome prejudices which you may have picked up against this truth.

STUDY One

INTRODUCTION

In this study we want to:

- Define dispensationalism.
- Trace the word in the Bible.
- See the need for dispensationalism.
- Hear what other men of God have had to say about the importance of this truth.

Dispensationalism has been called a modern fad by some preachers. And some Christians have become prejudiced and have closed their minds without investigating the truth for themselves. Dispensationalism is not a FAD, but a FACT of Scripture. This is seen first of all by the reality that the Bible itself uses this word a number of times. Our English word **dispensation** - as used in the Bible in [I Corinthians 9:17](#); [Ephesians 1:10](#); [3:2](#); and [Colossians 1:25](#) - is a translation of the Greek word *oikonomia*. This is a compound word made up of two parts: *oikos* (house) and *nomos* (law). Thus the word means literally the law of a household, or the economic principles by which a home is governed. It will be easily seen that our word economy is a transliteration of this word *oikonomia*. Webster defines economy as "the management, regulation, and government of a household; especially, the management of the pecuniary concerns of a household; as, it is not good economy."

It is necessary to observe that this same root word in the Greek is translated by other English words. As a noun it is translated "steward" in Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10; "chamberlain" in Romans 16:23; and "governor" in Galatians 4:2. Another form of the noun is translated "stewardship" in Luke 16:2, 3, 4. The *Revised Version* shows that the word "dispensation" should be read in two other passages: Ephesians 3:9 ("fellowship") and I Timothy 1:4 ("edifying"). Thus the root word occurs some twenty times in the New Testament.

But why is this word so important as a principle in biblical interpretation? The answer will become evident as we begin to examine the epistles of Paul. By reading all of the above passages it will be seen that the word when used in the Gospel records refers primarily to the pecuniary or material concern of a literal household, but when used by Paul it is concerned with God's management of His spiritual household. God has had His household of faith from the beginning of time, but the important thing for us to grasp at this point is that God has changed His rules or laws for managing His household on numerous occasions. A brief glance at the chart will help to make this plain. For example, it will be seen that the Law of Moses was added in about 1500 B.C., or at least 2500 years after man had been placed on the earth. Romans 5:13, 14 point out this fact very plainly - there was no law from Adam to Moses. And Galatians

3:17 indicates the Law was added four hundred and thirty years after God made an unconditional promise to Abraham, and therefore the law which came later could not annul the earlier promise.

What makes dispensational truth so very important to us under God's present order will also clearly be seen from the **chart**. Paul calls the present order the dispensation of the Mystery (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:25). He calls it this because God's household and the laws governing His house for today were kept by God as a mystery (secret) from all past ages and generations. This truth was first made known to Paul. So while all of the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, and all is very necessary for us to know, only that which we find in Paul's writings is specifically for the church of this dispensation, which is called the Body of Christ.

It may appear to some that God would not have confused things by so placing through the Bible His instructions for a number of different dispensations. We may not be able to explain why God has done everything as He has, but we do know that God foresaw this danger and had Paul write down a very important principle for us. He tells us in 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." Rightly dividing means simply to observe distinctions like those we have been noting.

It might help us to observe that the principles of dispensationalism are common to much of our everyday life. The political economy of our government changes from time to time. Often a new administration brings in sweeping changes in government. This land was once ruled as an English colony. Then it became independent and has been under the control on and off of both major political parties. Some things which were lawful under the Hoover administration were illegal under that of Roosevelt. Business houses are departmentalized. No sales manager would think of telling his sales force to carry out a directive from the President of the company which was addressed to the bookkeeping department. Members of a household may share their letters with one another, but if a letter contains a promise or a bill, the reader is careful to observe whether or not the letter is addressed to him.

Miles Coverdale, the English Bible scholar who died in 1569 and who possesses the distinction of being the first one to translate the entire Bible into English, saw the necessity of applying this principle when studying the Bible. He wrote a most perceptive prescription for sincere Bible students:

*It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture
if thou mark not only what is spoken
or wrythen,
but of whom
and to whom,
with what words,
at what time,
where,*

*to what intent,
with what circumstances,
considering what goeth before
and what followeth after.*

It would be hard to improve on this 400-year-old advice!

Suppose you should ask, “Does God have any instructions for us on the kind of food He wants us to eat?” You scan through your Bible and come up with the following verses. Genesis 1:29 tells you God gave every herb and the fruit of every tree for man’s food. And Genesis 9:3 says, “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.” But then you come to Leviticus 11 and discover some animals are unclean and are strictly forbidden, and that certain tests must be applied to animals, fish, and birds to determine whether they are clean or not. Then you run across 1 Timothy 4:4, 5 and hear Paul saying: “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” Now which of these instructions would you follow? It is evident that you could not at one and the same time eat only vegetables, eat all kinds of animal meat without discrimination, and eat only the meat of clean animals.

These commands would appear to be contradictory, and apart from a dispensational division of the Bible we would just have to explain away everything except that which we took a fancy to follow. But when we understand the first command was to man in Eden before sin entered the world; that the second was to Noah after the Flood when climatic conditions were changed and man was spread abroad; that the third was under the Law of Moses to the people of Israel; and that the fourth was written by Paul to the Christian for today, all of difficulty disappears. Dr. C. I. Scofield states a very important dispensational fact in his footnote on page 1252 of his original edition *Reference Bible*:

In his [Paul’s] writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.

If we know this, it is not difficult to decide which of the above commands on food should apply to ourselves.

Since it is always reassuring to have our own convictions confirmed by other men of God, we want to conclude this study by quoting from a few outstanding teachers of the Word. We have already mentioned Miles Coverdale and Dr. C. I. Scofield. Here is what Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote in *Major Bible Themes*:

It is probable that the recognition of the dispensations sheds more light on the whole message of the Scriptures than any other aspect of Bible study. Often the first clear understanding of the dispensations and God’s revealed purposes in them results in the beginning of useful Bible knowledge and in the fostering of a

personal interest in the Bible itself. Man's relation to God is not the same in every age (p. 96).

Dr. A. C. Gaebelien in *The Gospel of Matthew* says:

It is safe to say that a person, no matter how learned or devoted, who does not hold the clearly revealed dispensational truths concerning the Jews, the Gentiles and the church of God, will fail to understand Matthew (p. 4).

Dr. I. M. Haldeman wrote in *How to Study the Bible*:

To confound these dispensations, to take the principle of action, to ignore the classes of persons and the peculiar aim of each dispensation is to produce confusion, contradiction, and lay the foundation for that disharmony which reigns all too manifestly today among Christian expositors. Dispensational classification can alone save truth from contradicting itself (pp. 19, 51).

To sum up our study we have seen:

- Dispensationalism is a fact of Scripture, not a fad.
- A dispensation is the divine ordering of man's conduct and responsibilities.
- During the ages past, as our **chart** indicates, God has on numerous occasions changed His spiritual economy.
- This same principle of dispensational change is seen about us in all walks of life, and therefore the idea itself is very common and basic. It is not too strange, therefore, to find the principle at work in the spiritual realm.
- This principle is especially important for Christians today, because the present dispensation was hitherto kept as a strict secret and was revealed only through Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

Many great teachers of the Bible have emphasized the importance of applying this principle in the study of the Word of God.

S T U D Y One - REVIEW

1. What is the most evident proof that the subject of the dispensations is not a fad but a fact of Scripture?
2. What is the meaning of the Bible word that is translated **dispensation**?
3. In what other ways is this word rendered in our English Bible?
4. What fact makes the dispensational principles so important for us today?
5. Study the **chart** and state what other dispensations are indicated besides that of Law and the Mystery.

6. In light of I Timothy 4:1-5, why do you suppose some Christian sects forbid the eating of pork?
7. Read Leviticus 11 and state what constituted a clean animal under the Law.
8. What part of Miles Coverdale's statement is especially fitted to dispensational principles?
9. According to 2 Timothy 2:15, what will characterize the workman who fails to rightly divide the word of truth?
10. Can you think of any reason why some churchmen would oppose dispensational teaching?
11. Would we not be better off if we eliminated from our Bibles everything except that which is addressed to the Body of Christ today? In other words, what good to us are those parts which refer to God's dealings with the Jews and others in past ages?
12. Can you think of some other illustrations from everyday life which show how we apply dispensational principles in our secular life?

STUDY Two

THE EXTENT OF DISPENSATIONALISM

In our first study we learned the meaning of the dispensations and saw something of the need for recognizing dispensational truth in Bible study. We quoted from a number of Bible scholars who confirmed our assertion that the Bible becomes confusing and contradictory to those who do not apply the dispensational principle. Of course, all Christians recognize the dispensations to some extent. However, the *Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary* definition of the term states more truth on this subject than many theologies do:

One of the several systems or bodies of law in which at different periods God has revealed his mind and will to man, or the continued state of things resulting from the operation of one of these systems: as, the Mosaic dispensation. The period during which a particular revelation of God's mind and will has been directly operative on mankind; as, during the Christian dispensation.

We may safely say that practically all Christians recognize the two dispensations mentioned in the dictionary: the Mosaic and the Christian; the Old and the New; Law and Grace. To go no further than these two dispensations, however, leaves much of the Bible unaccounted for. Since the "Mosaic dispensation" began about 1500 B.C., we have about 2500 years of revealed history before that time to account for. And since there will be a millennial kingdom following the "Christian dispensation," we have another 1000 years to take into account. Recognizing but two dispensations results in a very inadequate and faulty system of interpretation.

The general run of dispensationalists recognizes seven dispensations. The view is fully developed in the *Scofield Reference Bible*. It will be seen that these seven dispensations appear on our **chart**. They are usually identified as Innocence or Edenic, Conscience, Human Government or Authority, Promise, Law, Grace or Mystery, and Kingdom.

However, it will be seen there are a number of defects in this commonly accepted system. In the first place the impression is left that Conscience operated only from the fall of man to the Flood, and that Human Government lasted only from the Flood to the call of Abram, or that Promise lasted only from the call of Abram to Moses. Our **chart** is designed in such a way as to show how these dispensational features *continue* throughout other dispensations. Conscience, Human Government, and Promise especially characterized the periods in which they are shown on the chart, but are not exclusive to these periods, just as Grace especially characterizes this present period, although the principle of Grace has been in operation in all dispensations since the Fall.

INNOCENCE

Let us briefly study the special characteristics of each of the dispensations and see to what extent, if any, principles carry over into the following dispensations. The first dispensation is called Innocence because man as yet had not sinned. It is sometimes called the Edenic dispensation because man was still in Eden. Since man had done no evil, his conscience had not yet emerged - at least in its complete manifestation. His actions could only be approved. Since we think of conscience mainly as that which condemns wrong acts, we can say that conscience was born when man committed sin.

CONSCIENCE

The second dispensation, following man's fall, we therefore call Conscience. It is evident the principle of Innocence does not carry over into the following periods. While we may speak of an infant as innocent, or of a man not guilty of a specific crime as innocent, the fact is the whole race sinned in Adam. This makes us all, regardless of our age, guilty of the race-sin. For this reason Christ's death is just as necessary for the salvation of infants as for hardened criminals. But while Conscience especially characterized the period until the Flood, our [chart](#) shows the principle of Conscience remains active and runs throughout the remaining dispensations. Man's responsibility in these subsequent periods is modified by the further revelations of God's Word. It is interesting to note that the word "conscience" does not appear once in the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. Conscience is a Greek word, and of course the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The idea, however, is expressed in the Old Testament by such an expression as "David's heart smote him" (I Samuel 24:5). We read more about conscience in Paul's writings than any other place in the New Testament. Out of the thirty-two times it occurs, Paul uses it twenty-nine times. Thus we see that Conscience is still a very important principle in this dispensation of Grace.

HUMAN GOVERNMENT

The dispensation following the Flood is called Human Government because God here first committed into man's hand the power of capital punishment. This authority is the basis of human government. Unless organized society has the power to limit the individual's freedom and punish him for wrongdoing, anarchy is the only alternative. Before this time God did not permit man to put a murderer to death ([Genesis 4:14, 15](#)). Now God commands that the shedder of blood be put to death ([Genesis 9:6](#)). This basic authority of human government has never been rescinded in Scripture, and so on our chart we can trace the line from the dispensation of Human Government across the top all the way to the Second Advent of Christ. He, of course, will bring perfection to human government during the millennial kingdom. Isaiah 9: 6, 7 states:

The government shall be upon His shoulder ... of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice from henceforth even for ever.

After the Flood, God also changed man's dietary laws. Apparently because of changed climatic conditions and the fact that man was to be scattered over the face of the earth, making it impossible for him to live on just fruits and vegetables, God told man: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" (Genesis 9:3). As we saw in our first study, this principle was modified for Israel under the Law, but in the present dispensation there are no restrictions whatsoever on diet as far as God is concerned ([1 Timothy 4:3-5](#)).

PROMISE

Let us next look at the dispensation of Promise on the chart. After the human race went into universal idolatry, God called out one man, Abram, and made a promise to him which, when fulfilled, would result in universal blessing for all nations. It is most important to see that this section is in two divisions on the [chart](#). The first concerns Abram in uncircumcision, and it will be seen that this section turns and runs across the bottom of the chart. The arrows show that Gentile blessing today, as well as in the millennial kingdom, is based upon the promise to Abraham's seed. There is, however, this great difference. Gentile blessing today is not the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, as will be the case in the Millennium. Paul's ministry concerned the mystery of the gospel. Paul shows in [Galatians 3:16](#) that Gentile blessing today is not through Abraham's multiplied seed (the nation of Israel), but through the one seed, which is Christ. The blessing of the nations under the Abrahamic covenant depends upon the prior blessing and establishment of the nation Israel. Therefore, by referring to the chart it will be seen that the second division concerns Abraham (his name was changed from Abram) in circumcision. This division continues across the top of the chart with the inscription, "I will make of thee a great nation." The name Abraham means the father of many nations. Under the covenant of circumcision, Abraham's nation - with the promise of the land of Canaan - comes into prominence ([Genesis 17:1-14](#)). As will be seen from the arrows on the chart, the promise had partial fulfillment in Old Testament times, and was offered to Israel at Pentecost and thereafter ([Acts 3:25, 26](#)). Israel rejected the offer then, but in the coming Millennium the promise will be fully realized.

THE LAW

The dispensation of the Law began with Moses as the Law-giver in Exodus 19. The Law consisted of three parts: (1) The Ten Commandments, (2) The Judgments, and (3) The Ordinances.

This God-given Law governed the moral, political-social, and religious life of the nation Israel.

When we talk about THE Law in the Bible, we mean the entire Law of Moses, not merely a part of it, like the Ten Commandments. Only the nation of Israel had the Law. Paul says the Gentiles (all other nations excluding Israel) have not the Law ([Romans 2:14](#)). There was a time before Moses when there was no Law. In fact, there were at

least 2500 years of recorded human history when there was no Law. This does not mean nations and tribes during that time made no rules for governing themselves, but that God had not by revelation codified a system of written laws. Paul says Christians today are not under the Law, but that does not mean we are not under the manmade laws of our government. It means we are not under the Law of Moses.

The dispensation of the Law occupies the greater portion of the Bible - from Exodus 20 to the end of the four Gospels. There is not a line of the Old Testament in the book of Genesis. Abraham lived under the dispensation of Promise. Then 430 years later "the Law was added because of transgressions," that is, to make sin a transgression of Law (Galatians 3:17-19). The Law was not given as a means of saving people, but of convincing them they were transgressors and needed to come to God and receive the salvation which He provides. Thus "the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15).

That the Law dispensation was temporary is seen in the fact that it "was added *until* the seed [Christ] should come" (Galatians 3:19). The Law did not end with the birth of Christ, for He was "made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). It was His death which completely fulfilled all the legal requirements of the Law which brought it to an end. Christ "abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15). He blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14).

Although the Law ended legally with the death of Christ, this fact was not revealed immediately to the apostles, for we find these Jewish followers of Jesus were still practicing the Law of Moses in the Temple all during the period of the Acts: "They are all zealous of the Law" (Acts 21:20). Although they were practicing the Law, they were not trusting in the Law as a means of salvation. They were preaching repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

It is important to understand the death of Christ not only brought the Law system to an end, but the shedding of His blood instituted the New Covenant or Testament. Thus the New Testament does not begin with the four Gospels, but rather with the end of those historic accounts.

GRACE

Historically, the dispensation of Grace began with the separation of the apostle Paul to the ministry for which God had called him, although doctrinally it is based upon the death and resurrection of Christ. But there was a historic period between the Cross and the separation of Paul when the gospel of the Kingdom was being preached to the Jews only. God had promised to send Jesus back to establish the Millennium if the

nation would repent of their murder of their Messiah. When it became evident Israel would not repent, God introduced His new, previously unrevealed dispensation of the Mystery. This new dispensation would place both Jews and Gentiles on the same footing.

This change of dispensation naturally presented a problem to the faithful Jewish believers in Jerusalem, for up to this point they had been living under the Law of Moses. They contended that Gentiles could not be saved without first being circumcised after the manner of Moses ([Acts 15:1-6](#); compare with [21:21](#)). A conference was finally held at Jerusalem to settle this problem. The Jerusalem church placed its approval upon Paul's Gentile ministry, but there was a period of transition during the latter half of Acts during which the spiritual program for believers became normalized. Then after the leaders of Israel tried to kill Paul, and thereafter Paul was taken to Rome as a prisoner, God pronounced blindness upon Israel ([Acts 28:25-28](#); compare [Romans 11:7-36](#)). In this latter passage Paul declares this blindness of Israel is not permanent, but will last only until "the fullness of the Gentiles be come in," that is, until the Body of Christ shall be completed. After that, "all Israel shall be saved."

KINGDOM

After the completion of the Body and its Rapture to heaven ([I Thessalonians 4:13-17](#)), God will bring Israel through its time of "great tribulation" ([Matthew 24:21](#)), and then Christ will return to earth to judge the nations (the Gentiles) and restore the Kingdom to Israel ([Acts 1:6](#)). This Kingdom will last for 1000 years ([Revelation 20:4-6](#)). After that will come the eternal stage of God's Kingdom ([I Corinthians 15:24-28](#)), which Paul calls the "dispensation of the fullness of times" ([Ephesians 1:10](#)), when God has gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in HIM.

OTHER DEFECTS OF STANDARD DISPENSATIONALISM

We have thus seen the interrelationship of a few dispensational principles. More of these will become evident in future studies. But before concluding this study we want to look at some other defects of the generally accepted dispensational scheme. Very few charts or studies take into account the transitional character of the period covered by the book of Acts. This is actually the most important part of dispensational study as it concerns us today. It is the skimming over of these differences and distinctions, and beginning a new dispensation with a sharp break off at Pentecost, that has caused so much confusion in the church today. In the commonly held seven dispensations scheme, Law is shown as ending either at the Cross or at Pentecost, and the new dispensation of Grace beginning at Pentecost. As we shall see in a future study, this is a serious error, one which has been called the great blunder of the church. It confuses the Kingdom and the Body of Christ. It negates the whole idea of "the mystery" which was revealed by God through Paul. It opens the gates for the flood of Pentecostal fanaticism which has overflowed the church and has left the church without a scriptural

answer. By studying the chart from Pentecost onward it will be seen that in this chart the scriptural distinctions have been made which are necessary for the right division of the Word.

Another shortcoming of customary dispensationalism is the omission of one of the most important dispensations. Most charts end with the dispensation of the Kingdom and never even refer to "the dispensation of the fullness of times" which is clearly labeled in Ephesians 1:10. This is shown on our chart as the eighth and last of the dispensations of God. The number eight is significant in this respect, as it speaks of a new beginning after a complete cycle, just as Sunday, the first day of the week, is actually the eighth day, following the complete cycle of seven days. In the dispensation of the Fullness of Times, God will head up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth. This will be the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. As far as Scripture reveals, it will be the final state of all the redeemed of all ages.

ACTS 28 ULTRA-DISPENSATIONALISM

In concluding this study on the extent of dispensationalism, we must mention what is generally called ultra-dispensationalism. This view does not necessarily create a greater number of dispensations, but it holds that the present dispensation of the Mystery which concerns the Body of Christ did not begin until after Acts 28. It makes Paul to share with the twelve apostles all during the Acts period the ministry of the messianic Kingdom message. It divorces believers today entirely from any of the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant, and therefore rules out the practice of the Lord's Supper. It denies that we today are children of Abraham in the sense Paul speaks of this in [Galatians 3:29](#). It denies that we today have any relationship with Christ as a great High Priest and Advocate at the right hand of God. It teaches that Paul's pre-prison epistles (Romans, I & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, I & 2 Thessalonians, Titus, and I Timothy) are not addressed to members of the Body of Christ. We believe this teaching is a more serious error than the one we alluded to above as the great blunder of the church.

The important thing is not the names by which the dispensations are called or the number which may be shown on a chart. It is rather to make all of the distinctions which the Scriptures make. To refuse to go as far as the Scriptures do results in a sub-dispensationalism. To go beyond what the Scriptures teach results in ultra- or hyper-dispensationalism. Our desire is to have a scriptural dispensationalism.

S T U D Y Two - REVIEW

1. What two dispensations do all Christians recognize?
2. Which dispensations preceded what is generally called the "old" dispensation?
3. According to the chart, what dispensations will follow after the present one?

4. List all of the defects of the standard seven dispensations scheme which are pointed out in this study.
5. Is an infant innocent in the same sense that Adam was before he sinned?
6. Look up Hebrews 9:9 and 10:2 and compare these with 9:14 and 10:22. What was the difference between the conscience of one under Law and another under Grace?
7. Show how the principles of Conscience and Human Government extend beyond the dispensations which bear these names.
8. What other change of dispensation did God make in Noah's day, besides giving man the authority to rule over his fellow man?
9. Read Romans 4:9-12 and state why it is important to recognize the dispensational distinctions between Abram before Genesis 17 and Abraham after that time.
10. Would it be proper to say that God today is fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant in blessing the Gentiles? What must happen to Israel before this covenant can be fulfilled upon the Gentiles?
11. Compare Acts 3:24 with Ephesians 3:1-9 and state why it is a mistake to begin the dispensation of the Mystery at Pentecost.
12. What is the name of the final dispensation, and what will take place at that time?
13. What is the distinguishing teaching of ultra-dispensationalism?
14. If the present dispensation did not begin with Peter at Pentecost, nor after Acts 28, where do you feel it did begin? A careful study of the chart will help to answer this question.

STUDY Three

SUBJECTS SPECIALLY RELATED TO DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

There is a great deal of truth in the Bible which is not dispensational in character. This type of truth may be called **DOCTRINAL TRUTH** in order to distinguish it from **DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH**. The unchanging attributes of God, the nature and character of God, and the principles of morality are of this nature. However, the word "doctrinal" is not the best word to use in this connection. Doctrine means teaching, and since we have teaching concerning the dispensations, we can and do speak of the doctrine of the dispensations. Probably one of the best distinctions between these two types of truth is that used by Cornelius R. Stam in his *Things That Differ*. He speaks of dispensational truth which differs from one dispensation to another as:

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TRUTH

Truth remaining the same through all dispensations is:

HORIZONTAL TRUTH

The metaphor of a vertical line indicates that a new truth has been injected into the course of events, whereas a horizontal line indicates truth which runs through all dispensations.

A careful examination of the chart accompanying these studies will show that a further qualification must be made. Some dispensational truths take on more or less of a horizontal character. In other words, they may run through several dispensations. The subjects of human government, conscience, promise, and grace are of this character. In fact, it is almost impossible to strictly separate and classify all of the teachings of the Bible into these two distinct categories. Almost any doctrine we might consider has some dispensational relationships. That is why we cannot rightly understand any subject in the Bible apart from dispensational truth. Take even the doctrine of the Godhead; if there is any unchanging truth, this is surely it. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And yet, the incarnation of the Son of God surely brought about a change. Before His human birth He did not possess a human

body and a human nature. After His death and resurrection He had a glorified body which was different from the natural body in which He lived on earth. In His divine nature He did not change; in His human nature He did. In His manifestation, ministry, and message He has surely changed. Unless these changes are taken into account, we will never understand the doctrine of Christology in the Bible.

It will be our plan to devote several studies to subjects which are specially dispensational in character. The following will be dealt with in order: The Ages, Prophecy, The Times of the Gentiles, The Resurrections, The Judgments, The Gospels, Law and Grace, Israel and the Body of Christ, Ordinances, and Sign Gifts.

THE AGES

An age is a period of time, usually of considerable duration. Ages and dispensations are not synonymous. Dispensations are sometimes erroneously defined as periods of time. There is no time element actually present in the word, although it is true that dispensations cover periods of time, just the same as everything that takes place in this universe involves a period of time.

The Bible speaks of ages in the plural, and of specific ages. There may be several distinct dispensations in one age. For example, when Paul speaks of "this present evil age" in Galatians 1:4, we cannot limit his words to this present dispensation, for evil has characterized time since sin came into the world.

The truth concerning the ages has been obscured somewhat by the translations found in our King James Version. Very often the original word for age has been translated by the word "world," as it is in the passage just referred to. There are three different Greek words translated world. One means the inhabited part of the earth, another means the order or system of the world, and the third, the world in its duration. This is the word "age" or *aion*, usually spelled eon in English. The following is a list of passages where the word "world" should be rendered age:

[Matthew 12:32; 13:22, 39,40,49; 24:3; 28:20; Mark 4:19; 10:30; Luke 16:8; 18:30; 20:34, 35; Romans 12:2; I Corinthians 1:20; 2:6-8; 3:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; 1 Timothy 6:17; 2 Timothy 4:10; Titus 2:12; Hebrews 1:2; 6:5; 9:26; 11:3.](#)

There are a number of passages where the translators have rightly translated this word as age or ages. Ephesians 2:7: "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Also in Ephesians 3:5 Paul refers to the Mystery "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." The same fact is stated about the Mystery in Colossians 1:26: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to his saints."

Let us now look at a passage or two where the meaning has been obscured by a

faulty translation. Matthew 13:39, 40 states:

The enemy that sowed them [the tares] is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Most people unconsciously suppose the word "world" here means the earth, or life upon the earth. To them the end of the world might be an atomic chain reaction which would annihilate life from this planet or atomize the planet itself. When it is understood our Lord actually was speaking of the end of the age, His meaning becomes clear. Following the end of the present age there is to be another age upon the earth, which we call the Kingdom or millennial age. [Hebrews 6:5](#) refers to this as "the age to come," but the King James Version obscures the meaning by calling it "the *world* to come."

The Bible nowhere states explicitly how many ages there are. It makes plain, however, that the ages or time did have a beginning. It speaks of God's plans and purposes before the ages began ([1 Corinthians 2:7](#)). God is a timeless Being. Time is part of the creation of God. The present age is an evil one ([Galatians 1:4](#)). Satan is called the god of this age ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)). This present age will end after the Rapture of the Body of Christ and after the subsequent period of Tribulation. The Second Coming of Christ as King will end this age and begin the age to come. It will endure 1000 years ([Revelation 20:4](#)). This will be followed by the final judgment and the age of the new heavens and the new earth ([2 Peter 3:13](#)). As far as the Bible reveals, this will be the final age.

THE FOUNDATION AND THE END OF THE WORLD

These two interesting statements occur in [Hebrews 9:26](#):

For then must he often have suffered since *the foundation of the world*: but now once in *the end of the world* hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

The apostle used two different words for "world" in this passage. More literally, the first statement is - from the casting down of the cosmos. The second is - upon the consummation of the ages.

The cosmos is the ordered world or universe. The Scripture seems to indicate that when sin entered the universe through Satan, God cast down the world in judgment and plunged it into the chaotic condition of [Genesis 1:2](#). Since a foundation is something which is cast down before the building is erected, others think the apostle means the foundation of the cosmos. However, since the cosmos is not simply the physical earth, it is doubtful just what the foundation of the cosmos means. The casting down or the overthrow of the original order of creation is much more intelligible.

It is very interesting to note whereas God's revelation of His purpose to establish a kingdom upon this earth is often referred to as being prepared or predicted from the casting down of the cosmos ([Matthew 25:34](#); [Acts 3:21](#)), His purpose with the Body of Christ in this dispensation of the Mystery is said to be from "*before* the casting down of the cosmos" ([Ephesians 1:4](#); [Romans 16:25](#); [2 Timothy 1:9](#)). Simply stated, this means the Kingdom is the subject of prophecy, whereas the Mystery is not.

The statement that Christ appeared once in the consummation of the ages to put away sin seems to say Christ's first coming put an end to the ages. This, of course, is not true, for this same epistle speaks of the age yet to come. What this Scripture means is that Christ's work upon the cross consummated everything that had been predicted in the past ages regarding the provision of salvation from sin. In other words, His death fulfilled all of the types and shadows which had been given in previous ages. The Cross was a great consummation. All blessings of the past, present, and future find their basis in that great provision.

THE AGES AND ETERNITY

In studying the doctrine of the ages, one must be careful not to fall into the subtle error which has been used as a basis for the belief in universal reconciliation. The Bible expressions "for ever" and "for ever and ever" are usually the translations of the phrases "for the ages" and "for the ages of the ages." It is argued that just as the ages had a beginning, so they will have an end. And since the punishment of the wicked is only for the duration of the ages, their punishment must also needs come to an end. This would mean all of the unsaved would then be reconciled to God after the ages have ended.

It is true that time had a beginning, but it is not taught in Scripture that time will have an end. God's creation consists of space, matter, and time. The Scriptures teach that God is going to preserve His creation indefinitely. As long as He does, there will be time. Therefore the ages cannot end in the sense that time will cease, unless God wipes out creation entirely, and that would mean mankind would be annihilated. The final age of the new heavens and the new earth appears to be an age which will continue indefinitely into the future. The only way the human mind can grasp the idea of eternity is to think of it as time extended indefinitely. Hence it is that the Bible uses the word "age," which means "time," to describe eternity or everlasting existence.

The Bible teaches that the saved will live for the ages of the ages, and it uses exactly the same terminology to describe the duration of the punishment of the unsaved. It may be the fond hope of humanity that all will finally be saved, regardless of how they have lived or of what they have done with Christ, but the Scriptures just do not hold out any such hope. If the child of God has eternal life, then the unsaved must have everlasting punishment.

S T U D Y Three - Review

1. What does the word "doctrine" mean? In what way does doctrine differ from dispensational truth, and in what way are the two similar?
2. How does C. R. Stam distinguish between dispensational truth and the truth which is basic to all dispensations? What Modification must we make in classifying some truth which is definitely dispensational and yet also basic to a number of dispensations?
3. What fact about Bible truth makes dispensationalism important to a proper understanding of almost every subject of doctrine?
4. How would you distinguish between a dispensation and an age?
5. The study stated there are three words in the New Testament translated "world." The Greek word for the inhabited world, *oikoumene*, was not mentioned in the study. Which two were mentioned and what do they mean?
6. Find some Scripture statements from the study which prove there has been more than one age in the past and that there will be more than one age in the future.
7. What is meant by the end of the world? When will it occur? What will follow this event?
8. Will there ever be a time when time or the ages will cease? Look up Revelation 10:6 and state what this means, "there should be time no longer." See the *Revised Version* or some other translation or Bible commentary.
9. How is it that a word which means a period of time can also be used to describe eternity, or that which will never end?
10. Study the dispensational chart and indicate the point at which the present age ends and the age to come begins. What events will happen before the end of the age, and what events will transpire after this event?

STUDY Four

SUBJECTS RELATED TO DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, Cont.

PROPHECY

To some people the study of prophecy is synonymous with dispensationalism. Actually, it is just a small part of dispensational truth. The main reason why unfulfilled prophecy is dispensational is that it has to do largely with the coming time of the Great Tribulation and the millennial kingdom. As a matter of fact, one of the very important dispensational distinctions is between prophecy and the Mystery, between that which had been foretold by all the prophets since the world began, and that which was kept secret from before the foundation of the world. The first concerns the millennial kingdom and the latter the Body of Christ.

TWO MOUNTAIN PEAKS OF PROPHECY

The two main subjects of prophecy are the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow ([1 Peter 1:11](#)). Christ reminded the disciples of this fact after His resurrection ([Luke 24:26, 27, 44](#)). Peter made this fact the basis of his great sermon in Solomon's porch ([Acts 3:17-26](#)). It is evident from this passage and from Acts 2:16 that Peter was preaching prophecy in the early chapters of Acts, and not the Mystery. Since the Mystery concerns the Body of Christ, it is also evident that Peter was preaching the Kingdom message and not the truth about the Body. It is important to remember there is a prophesied church ([Acts 2:47; Hebrews 2:12](#)), as well as the church of the Mystery. Peter was here ministering to the church of prophecy.

Peter's message to Israel in early Acts was that all of the prophecies concerning the sufferings of Christ had been fulfilled, so all that now remained was the coming back of Jesus Christ to restore all things in the millennial kingdom. He told Israel if they would repent and be converted, God would send Christ back ([Acts 3:19-21](#)). However, we know the nation did not repent. God sent judicial blindness upon the nation and then called out a new apostle for a new dispensation. In ushering in this new dispensation of the Grace of God, He temporarily set aside the prophetic kingdom program, or as some like to put it, He stopped the clock of prophecy. God's present day program is not part of the prophesied truth contained in the Old Testament and the Gospels, but is unprophesied and is contained in the special revelation which Christ gave to Paul.

FULFILLING OF PROPHECY

Knowledge of the simple facts just mentioned should guard Christians against two modern errors. The first is the idea that Bible prophecy is being fulfilled today. The other is that the Body of Christ is going to go through the Tribulation. If the clock of

prophecy stopped when God set aside Israel and began this unforetold dispensation, it should be evident that the clock will not start running again until God is through with this dispensation and until He takes up His dealings again with Israel. There has been a great deal of worthless speculation about so called signs of the times and the supposed fulfillment of prophecy. This has served only to confuse people. The predictions of modern "prophets" have not come to pass. The next prophecies to be fulfilled will be during the Tribulation which has not yet begun, and we hope to show that it will not begin as long as the Body of Christ is here on earth.

There is no doubt that momentous events are taking place in the earth today. We see many things which indicate the consummation may be very near at hand. But we believe Jesus Christ, according to the Word of God, cannot come back to earth until first the Rapture of the church has taken place and until the seven years of Tribulation have run their course. We may feel the Rapture is very near, and we believe it could take place at any time, humanly speaking, but no one can know the exact time for certain. If it is very near, no doubt the political scenes are now being set for the Great Tribulation and the fulfillment of all of the prophecies connected with that event and with the Second Advent of Christ as King of kings.

Since the Tribulation is one of the most prophesied biblical events, and the Body of Christ is not prophesied at all, it would appear very unreasonable to suppose the Body will go through the Tribulation period. The Body of Christ is not at all concerned with the events of the Tribulation. It is not that Christians are promised immunity from persecution; they are plainly told they will suffer persecution if they live godly in Christ Jesus. But such suffering as Christians have endured all during this present age is an entirely different thing from the distinct period of seven years which is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" ([Jeremiah 30:7](#)). The Tribulation is a unique period during which the nation of Israel will be more severely persecuted than at any previous time.

There are in Paul's epistles what might be called prophecies concerning the Body of Christ. He tells us about the Rapture at Christ's coming for the Body and he gives us some of the characteristics of the last days of the Body here on earth ([1 Timothy 4:1-6](#); [2 Timothy 3:1-13](#)). This fact should not be confused with what we have been talking about previously. We have distinguished between prophecy and the Mystery. In the revelation of the mystery there are certain predictions about the Body of Christ which are all a part of the Mystery.

One other point needs to be mentioned, and that is what is called the gift of prophecy ([1 Corinthians 12:10, 28](#); [14:1-40](#)). Before the church had a written New Testament Scripture, God gave to several men in each assembly the gift of prophecy. These men prophesied in the sense that they spoke forth God's message. They did not foretell the future. This gift was of a temporary nature and was to pass away along with the other sign gifts ([1 Corinthians 13:8-10](#)). This subject will be considered more in detail under the subject of the sign gifts.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Another main subject related to dispensational truth is that period which our Lord called "the times of the Gentiles" ([Luke 21:24](#)). This should be carefully distinguished from what is called "the fullness of the Gentiles" ([Romans 11:25](#)). Paul evidently speaks about the filling up of the number of Gentiles which are going to be saved in this present dispensation before Jesus Christ comes back and saves all of Israel. Christ, on the other hand, was speaking of the time during which the Gentiles are exercising political power over Israel - "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

God's plan for the government of this earth was to make Jerusalem the center of authority and to have all nations to be ruled over by Israel ([Zechariah 8:20-23](#); [Isaiah 62:7](#)). It is the only city God ever chose in which to put His name ([2 Chronicles 6:5, 6](#)). Because of the abominations of Israel, God forsook that city in the days of Ezekiel - see [chapter 11:23](#). Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and from his day until the present Jerusalem has been in some way under Gentile domination. The times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian captivity. These times are typified by the colossus which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, which represented the great Gentile world powers which would reign until God finally destroys them and restores Israel ([Daniel 2:31-45](#)).

When Christ came to earth it was still the times of the Gentiles. Even though Jerusalem had been restored to some degree, it was in that day under the domination of the Roman garrison. But Israel of that day rejected the very One who had the power to make Jerusalem the praise of all the earth, and Christ wept over that great city ([Matthew 23:37-39](#)). He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem again ([Luke 21:20](#)), and we know this came to pass in 70 A.D. [Zechariah 14:2](#) predicts yet another future desolation of Jerusalem. This is all most interesting in the light of the present Jewish-Arab crisis over Jerusalem. Apparently Israel will not get permanent control of their ancient capital until Christ comes back again. He will come as the Smiting Stone of [Daniel 2:44, 45](#) to break in pieces and to consume all of these Gentile kingdoms. That Stone then will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth (verse 35). Thus will come to an end the times of the Gentiles, which will be followed by the times of the millennial kingdom.

A further distinction is sometimes made to the effect that the times of the Gentiles politically began with Nebuchadnezzar, but Israel was permitted to keep her place religiously. Israel still had that place during the days of Christ's earthly ministry and those of the apostles. The temple, which was the symbol of that power, still stood. But during the book of Acts God raised up an apostle of the Gentiles, and on his last visit to Jerusalem he was seized in the temple by the Jews who dragged him out of the temple to kill him. Before this, when the same people had killed Paul's Lord, the veil in the temple had been divinely ripped in two, and now as they dragged Paul out we read, "and forthwith the doors were shut" ([Acts 21:30](#)). This shutting up of the temple may be typical of God's taking away the religious or spiritual power from Israel - for since the

days of Paul, spiritual authority, as well as political authority, has been in the hands of the Gentiles.

Today there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, but the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved ([Romans 10:12, 13](#)).

S T U D Y Four - REVIEW

1. What great body of truth in the Bible is contrasted with prophecy?
2. While many incidental things are prophesied in the Bible, what are the two main events predicted in prophecy?
3. How much of the first of these subjects of prophecy had been fulfilled up to Acts 3:19?
4. Upon what did Peter condition the fulfillment of the other of these two subjects?
5. What happened to the prophetic program when God set Israel aside and started a new dispensation?
6. How do we know that we are not seeing prophecies concerning the Kingdom fulfilled today?
7. What is the difference between a Christian suffering tribulation and the Great Tribulation? Why will members of the Body of Christ not go through the Great Tribulation?
8. State when the times of the Gentiles began politically and also spiritually.
9. Describe how "the times of the Gentiles" will end.
10. Read Romans 11:12-15 and state what is the opposite of Israel's diminishing. What effect will the receiving of Israel back again after the times of the Gentiles have upon the world at large?

STUDY Five

SUBJECTS RELATED TO DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, Cont.

THE RESURRECTIONS

Certain subjects in the Bible lend themselves to the dispensational type of study more than others. We have been considering some of these in our past studies and will continue now with the subject of the resurrections. Theologians as a whole do not treat this subject dispensationally. They know only of what they call a "general resurrection." Even so great a scholar as Dr. Charles Hodge states in his three-volume *Systematic Theology*:

The events which according to the common doctrine of the church are to attend the second coming of Christ are first, the general resurrection of the dead; second, the final judgment; third, the end of the world; and fourth, the consummation of the kingdom of Christ.

In our third study we discovered the so-called "end of the world" is not at all what Dr. Hodge makes it to be; neither does it come after the final judgment. It is the end of the age, the present evil age, and it precedes the establishment of the millennial kingdom of Christ. Dr. Hodge, agreeing with the commonly held doctrine of the church, supposes there will be a general resurrection when all of the dead, saved and unsaved will be raised up. This, as we shall presently see from our study, is not at all the teaching of the Scripture.

The Scripture teaches there will be several future resurrections instead of the one general resurrection of traditional Christianity. An undispensational approach to the Scripture must lump all of these resurrections into one, with the result that the whole truth of the millennial kingdom of Christ is denied. Those who teach just one general resurrection are forced to deny the plain scriptural truth that Christ is coming back to establish His kingdom, for there is a resurrection both before and after that kingdom. By bringing the resurrections together and making them one, they squeeze Christ's kingdom out of existence. There just isn't any place left for it.

There are actually three future resurrections. One takes place at the Rapture of the church at the end of this dispensation of the Mystery; the next occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation and ushers in the millennial kingdom; and the last occurs at the end of the Kingdom age.

RESURRECTION AT THE RAPTURE

The next resurrection after Christ's will be that of the members of the Body of

Christ at the time of the Rapture. This occurs prior to what is called "the first resurrection" in Revelation 20:5. But it may be asked, how could there be a resurrection before the first one? This question has caused many premillenarians to adopt a posttribulation view of the Rapture. It is very evident that those who are killed for the testimony of Jesus during the Great Tribulation for refusing to worship the beast are included in "the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:4). If this first resurrection is the next event on the program, it is evident the church must go through the Tribulation.

But it is not at all necessary to place this meaning upon the word "first." There are two resurrections in prophecy, that of the just and that of the unjust ([Daniel 12:2](#); [John 5:29](#)). There is no exact revelation of the interval between these resurrections until we come to [Revelation 20:4, 5](#) where we learn they will be separated by 1000 years. The book of Revelation deals only with these resurrections of prophecy; it does not even mention the Body of Christ or its Rapture. The whole truth about the Body of Christ was a mystery never before revealed to men in ages and generations before Paul. If the fact that there would even be such a thing as the Body of Christ was unknown to the prophets, it is not very likely they would have described the resurrection and Rapture of that Body. Since this present dispensation has been injected into and has interrupted the course of Kingdom prophecy, it is both logical and scriptural to believe God will consummate His purpose with members of the Body before He resumes His dealing with Israel during the Tribulation. Therefore the first resurrection of Revelation is simply the first of the two resurrections mentioned in that book. Paul was given a special revelation about the resurrection and Rapture of the Body of Christ, which is in addition to the first resurrection of prophecy.

Dr. C. I. Scofield in his *Reference Bible*, original edition, page 1228, taught there are two phases to the first resurrection: one before the Tribulation, which would include the saved of all the past ages; and then another at the end of the Tribulation just for those saints who are to be killed during that terrible time. While it is true these two resurrections are close together in time, we feel Dr. Scofield is mistaken in placing the resurrection of the Old Testament saints before the Tribulation, for the prophets plainly state the opposite, and in fact so does Dr. Scofield himself in his notes on Daniel 12:1, 2. He has as a heading over verse 1 "The Great Tribulation," which describes that time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. Verse 2 follows after this Tribulation, describing the resurrection. Paul refers to the resurrection of members of the Body as a secret or mystery, and we believe many difficulties and seeming contradictions are cleared up when Paul's statement is taken at its face value.

The resurrection of the dead members and the Rapture of the living members of the Body to meet the Lord in the air is an imminent hope. This means there is no revealed contingency standing in the way of its occurrence. There were, however, probably some temporary contingencies during the lifetime of Paul, such as when Christ told Paul in Acts 23:11 that he must bear witness in Rome. Paul knew that the Lord would not come until after he reached Rome. But, of course, there are no such contingencies today. We may expect the Lord to come for us at any moment, and when that event occurs the resurrection of the dead in Christ will precede the translation of the

living ([1 Thessalonians 4:15](#)).

The Scriptures which refer especially to this hope of the Body of Christ are [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#); [1 Corinthians 15:51-54](#); [Philippians 3:20, 21](#); and [Titus 2:13](#). There are, of course, many other allusions to this event in Paul's writings, but these passages give the major details.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION OF PROPHECY

Of necessity we have already said quite a bit about this resurrection in trying to distinguish it from the Rapture of the Body of Christ. This is what is called "the resurrection of the just." It is predicted through the Old Testament prophets and spoken of by Christ in the Gospels. It is described in Revelation 20:4-6:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Since all of the members of the Body of Christ will have been raised several years prior to this resurrection, and since it includes all of the saved dead of past ages, it is apparent only the unsaved dead will be left in the graves. Both the members of the Body and the saints of the Old Testament will reign with Christ during the thousand years, but there will be a difference in relationship. The latter will be connected with the earth and will be living upon the earth, even as Christ revealed in Matthew 8:11: "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Members of the Body will be associated with Christ in His heavenly sphere of reign.

THE FINAL RESURRECTION

This is the resurrection of the unjust. It occurs after the thousand years are finished. It is the general resurrection of the unsaved: it apparently includes no saints. It appears only unsaved people will die after the first resurrection takes place. All of these unsaved people, as well as the unsaved of past ages, will be raised for their final judgment. Their bodies will not be incorruptible and immortal, as those of the saints, but they will be capable of the second death. Being cast into the "lake of fire" is called the second death in Revelations 20:14,15. This death is not annihilation, for it is expressly stated that they shall be tormented there for ever and ever ([Revelation 20:10; 14:10, 11](#)).

THE JUDGMENTS

Very closely connected with the subject of the resurrections is that of the judgments, for there is a judgment connected with each of the resurrections. The judgment in connection with the Rapture of the church is called the judgment seat of Christ. The purpose of this judgment is not to discover who is saved and who is lost, nor is it to inflict punishment upon any one. The only ones who will stand before this judgment seat will be saved members of the Body of Christ. The Greek word for judgment seat is *Bema* ([Romans 14:10](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). As Paul uses this word and as he describes this place of rewards in I Corinthians 3:10-15, it is evident the believer is not going to enter into judgment for his sins, but rather his works are going to be put to the test. If his works endure the testing fire he will receive a reward; if they do not stand the test he shall suffer loss of reward, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. Paul illustrates this truth with the runners in a race either winning and receiving a prize or of losing or being disqualified ([I Corinthians 9:24-27](#)). Every Christian should fervently desire to have much fruit that will remain in that day and that will abound to the glory of God through eternity. God will reward every work done for the glory of Christ. Salvation is not a reward, but a free gift. Therefore our works have nothing to do with our salvation.

JUDGMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

At the first resurrection Christ will judge and reward these Kingdom saints. Revelation 11:18 states:

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth.

THE JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

The judgment of these two groups has no reference to the resurrection but to those living upon the earth when Christ returns in power and great glory as King. The judgment of Israel is described very graphically in [Ezekiel 20:33-44](#). The classic passage on the judgment of the living nations is [Matthew 25:31-46](#). The purpose of this judgment is to determine who shall be permitted to enter the millennial kingdom. The rebels will be purged out of Israel and the "goat" nations will be destroyed. Only the "sheep" nations will be permitted to continue in the Millennium.

THE JUDGMENT OF SATAN AND HIS ANGELS

The Beast and the False Prophet will be judged and cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of the Millennium ([Revelations 19:20](#)). Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven during the Great Tribulation ([Revelation 12:7-12](#)), and then confined in the

abyss during the Millennium. They are judged and cast into the lake of fire which was originally prepared for the Devil and his angels ([Matthew 25:41](#); [Revelation 20:10](#)). Paul states that we are going to have a part in judging the angels ([1 Corinthians 6:3](#)). Some of the angels have been confined in a place called "hell" but more literally *Tartarus*, the lowest prison ([2 Peter 2:4](#)) awaiting judgment.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

This is the final judgment of the unsaved dead of all ages. This judgment will not be for the purpose of determining who is saved or lost, but rather for the purpose of reviewing all of the deeds of the unsaved in order to mete out punishment and to completely justify all of God's dealings with lost mankind. No one will be able to accuse God in that day of injustice or lack of love. Every mouth will be stopped and everyone will have to confess he is getting his just reward.

There are, of course, many phases of spiritual truth connected with the resurrections and the judgments which are beyond the scope of this study. We have dealt mainly with the dispensational distinctions. The students must pursue these subjects further for the application of these truths to his own life and experience.

S T U D Y Five - REVIEW

1. The common doctrine of the church holds that there will be how many resurrections in the future?
2. Actually, how many resurrections are there according to Scripture?
3. At what event will the next resurrection occur and who will be included?
4. Explain how the above resurrection can take place before what is called in Revelation 20:5 the first resurrection.
5. When will the resurrection of members of the Body of Christ take place, before or after the Tribulation? When will the first resurrection occur?
6. Explain how the believer, who will never come into judgment, must yet stand before the judgment seat of Christ. What is the purpose of this judgment seat?
7. According to 2 Timothy 4:1 Christ will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and kingdom. At which of the judgments will He judge just the living? just the dead? and at which will He judge both living and dead?
8. When will the judgment of the nations occur and what is its purpose?
9. What kind of people will stand before the Great White Throne judgment? Do you think they will all suffer the identical punishment? Does the Scripture teach the second

death will ever end or that it is a state of unconsciousness?

STUDY Six

SUBJECTS RELATED TO DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, Cont.

THE GOSPELS

Most of us know the word "gospel" means good news. This Anglo-Saxon word originally meant just exactly what the Greek New Testament word *euangellion* means. The word was originally spelled godspell. Since all good comes from God, this meant a story of good news. Surely there could be no better news than the fact God has made a perfect and eternal provision for undeserving and hopeless sinners through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is possibly because God Himself has done all of the work necessary for man's salvation, leaving nothing for man to do but to accept it by faith as a free gift, that some people get the impression the gospel is simple. Others seem to be unaware of the fact the Bible contains several distinct gospel messages, and by combining them they confuse the gospel of pure grace which God has announced for this dispensation. Still others are altogether ignorant of what the gospel is. They suppose it is the Sermon on the Mount, or simply calling on men to repent. Perhaps some get the impression since the four books which tell of the earthly life of Jesus are called the Gospels, the gospel is simply that story.

In our study of the gospel we will first notice some general facts, then try to show the distinctions between the various gospels announced in the Bible, and finally state what the gospel for today is.

The Greek word for gospel is used seventy-seven times in the New Testament—twelve times in the so-called Gospels, twice in Acts, sixty-one times in Paul's epistles, once in I Peter, and once in Revelation. The verb, to preach the gospel or to evangelize, is used fifty-six times - eleven times in the Gospels, fifteen times in Acts, twenty-five times in Paul's epistles, three times in I Peter, and twice in Revelation. Taking the noun and verb together Paul speaks of the gospel eighty-six out of the 133 times these words are used; the Gospel writers use the words twenty-three times; Luke uses them seventeen times; Peter four times; and John in Revelation three times.

Any piece of good news is gospel. For example, in the Septuagint version (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) this word *euangellion* is used in 2 Samuel 4:10 by David: "When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought me good tidings..." It was good news to the Philistines when they killed King Saul, and so we read in I Samuel 31: 9, "And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people."

In every dispensation God has had good news for people, but that news has not

always been the same kind of news. It was probably good news for Cain when God told him that He would not allow anyone to kill him. It was good news when God promised to save Noah and his family alive. God told some good news to Abraham about a great nation that would spring from him and about the land God would give them. It was good news for the Israelites when they were being destroyed by fiery serpents that they could be healed of their snakebites by looking upon the brazen serpent which Moses had made. God told David some good news about an everlasting throne and kingdom which he was going to him through his greater Son. None of these gospel messages are for us today, of course, but many suppose wherever we read about gospel in the New Testament, that is for us.

In Luke 1:19 Zacharias had the glad tidings or gospel announced to him that his wife was going to bear him a son who would be the forerunner of Messiah. At the birth of John, Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied concerning the salvation God was now ready to bring to Israel:

That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore unto our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear.

This was indeed good news to the people of Israel, but it should be evident to all that this is not the gospel which God would have us preach today. God has not promised to deliver us, members of the Body of Christ, from our enemies and all that hate us. This promise will be fulfilled only in the millennial kingdom. Therefore this announcement of good news at the birth of Christ's forerunner introduces us to the first gospel which we find in our New Testament.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Observe first that this gospel is based upon the promises and covenants which God made with His ancient people Israel ([Luke 1:70-73](#)). Next, it was announced by all the holy prophets since the world began. Third, it concerned not only forgiveness of sins ([Luke 1:77](#)) but also physical deliverance of Israel from her enemies. It is evident that this gospel also included deliverance from physical infirmities and afflictions, for wherever Jesus went or wherever He sent His apostles preaching this gospel of the Kingdom the healing of diseases was uppermost in the ministry. Finally, notice this message is specifically called "the gospel of the kingdom" ([Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14](#)).

Many of the provisions of the gospel of the Kingdom are in direct contrast to those of the gospel for today. Although in the mind of God the death of Christ was necessary for the final establishment of the Millennium, we see it was possible while Christ was on earth to be a preacher of that gospel without knowing or understanding the first thing about His death. In Luke 9:1-6 we read that Jesus sent His twelve disciples to preach the kingdom of God and gave them power over all devils and to cure

diseases - "And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where." Some two years later Jesus began to tell these same disciples about His impending death and resurrection, and we read in Luke 18:34: "And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

No one could preach the gospel for today who was ignorant of the death and resurrection of Christ, for Paul states that that is the gospel ([I Corinthians 15:1-3](#)). It is the gospel because His death was *for* our sins, and His resurrection was *for* our justification ([Romans 4:25](#)). The gospel for today is not the gospel of the Kingdom, because it does not have in view the establishment of the Kingdom, but the formation of the church which is Christ's Body. The gospel for today is not based upon the covenants made with the nation of Israel, as is the Kingdom gospel. It is rather the gospel of the Grace of God, for it is God's gracious provision for a hopeless world of people who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise ([Ephesians 2:12](#)). The gospel of the Kingdom promised the national deliverance of Israel from her enemies, but the gospel for today has no promise whatsoever of political or material salvation. A prominent feature of the gospel of the Kingdom was the healing of the body, for in the Millennium there will be health and longevity ([Isaiah 65:18-25](#)). Many sign gifts accompanied the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom ([Mark 16:15-18](#)), for the Jews require a sign ([I Corinthians 1:22; 14:22](#)). The gospel for today has no promise of long life or of freedom from sickness or of miraculous outward signs ([Romans 8:23; 1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:20](#)).

The gospel of the Kingdom goes back basically to the great Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7, where God unconditionally promised David a house, a throne, a kingdom, and a King from his seed who should reign forever. That is the reason the gospel of Matthew, which is especially the Kingdom gospel, begins with the words, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David." This Kingdom gospel was proclaimed while Christ was on earth. This is the gospel which Peter and the others proclaimed at Pentecost and for some time thereafter. That is why Peter spoke so much about David on that occasion and stated that David "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him ... according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ [from the dead] to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30).

The gospel of the Kingdom was rejected by the nation of Israel, and in casting Israel aside temporarily God raised up a new apostle and revealed to him the gospel for today. After this dispensation of Grace has ended, the gospel of the Kingdom will again be proclaimed in all the world for a witness, then the end of the age will come, according to Matthew 24:14.

THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION

Paul calls the gospel which the twelve apostles preached "the gospel of the circumcision" to distinguish it from the one he preached to the Gentiles, which he called "the gospel of the uncircumcision" (Galatians 2:7-9). Actually there is very little

difference, if any, between the gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the Kingdom. It is more a difference of emphasis. Just as the Kingdom gospel goes back to David, the gospel of the circumcision goes back to circumcised Abraham. Matthew's opening verse, partially quoted before, states not only that Jesus Christ is the son of David, but also the son of Abraham. This gospel is based upon the Abrahamic covenant of circumcision of Genesis 17. This covenant guarantees that Abraham will be the father of many nations, and that all of the land of Canaan shall be given to Abraham's seed for an everlasting possession.

It is doubtless correct to say that both the gospel of the Kingdom and the gospel of the circumcision were being proclaimed by the Twelve to Israel at one and the same time at Pentecost and thereafter. Just how long were these gospel messages in order? It would seem that with the salvation of Paul and with his being separated unto his new, secret ministry to the Gentiles (that is, by Acts 13, at least), it is abundantly evident that the Kingdom and circumcision gospels have been rejected by Israel nationally, and that their messages have been set aside with the setting aside of Israel. At least by Acts 15, God sent Paul up to Jerusalem by special revelation to communicate the new gospel for this present dispensation to the twelve apostles, so that they would know what God's message for the world really was. However, it seemed good to the Holy Spirit to permit Israelitish believers to continue in the Mosaic practices as long as Jerusalem and its temple stood ([Acts 15:19-28](#)). It seems evident from Galatians 2:16 and Acts 15:11 that after Paul's visit Peter knew and understood and believed Paul's message of justification by faith apart from the works of the Law.

Circumcision in itself did not save, but there could be no covenant blessing apart from it ([Genesis 17:13, 14](#)). Likewise under the gospel of the circumcision, water baptism was a requisite, although in itself it did not save. In giving the commission for this gospel Christ declared, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Peter's message at Pentecost was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). In striking contrast to this, Paul's message was the gospel of the uncircumcision, which was just as much without water baptism as it was without circumcision ([I Corinthians 1:17](#)).

THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

Quite a bit has already been said about the gospel which was given to Paul. It goes back for its basis, not to circumcised Abraham, but to uncircumcised Abram. It is based on Genesis 15:6 - "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." This is Paul's message of justification by faith. It should be remembered that Abram lived in a world which had given up God and one which God had given up ([Romans 1:21-28](#)), just as Paul lived in a world in which both Israel and the Gentiles had rejected and crucified the Lord of Glory. Abram was justified apart from the Law and apart from works. Abram was saved in uncircumcision. Likewise Paul was given a gospel fitted to the needs of the uncircumcised people, the Gentiles, who were strangers and aliens. This gospel fitted the needs of Israel too, for they had

forfeited their covenant blessings by having rejected their Messiah. Under this gospel God concluded both Jews and Gentiles under sin, so that He might show mercy and grace to all alike.

Paul actually had only one gospel committed to his trust, although he called it by different names and related it to the revelation of the mystery. He called it *the gospel of the grace of God* in Acts 20:24. He also often called it *the gospel of God* and *the gospel of Christ* (Romans 1:1,16). Several times he called it *the gospel of the glory* (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Timothy 1:11). He called it *my gospel* (Romans 16:25; 2 Timothy 2:8), because it was a special trust first committed to him by direct revelation. He spoke of *the mystery of the gospel* in Ephesians 6:19. And in Romans 16:25 he connected his gospel with *the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery*.

The historical facts concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which formed the basis of Paul's gospel were according to the Scripture ([1 Corinthians 15:3, 4](#)). As such this gospel of God had been promised afore by the prophets in the holy Scriptures ([Romans 1:1, 2](#)). But there was given to Paul also the mystery or the secret of the gospel, which is the key to the understanding of all of God's dealings in man's salvation in all dispensations. The crucifixion of Messiah was predicted in Psalm 22, but none of the prophets proclaimed what Paul calls *the preaching of the cross*. Peter preached the bad news of the crucifixion to Israel at Pentecost; Paul proclaimed the good news of the Cross, how that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ([2 Corinthians 5:19](#)).

Paul's gospel, as the message of reconciliation, goes all the way back to Adam ([Romans 5:10-21](#)). With Israel cast aside, Paul lived in a world alienated from God, a world which stood in need of reconciliation. Paul saw the whole world by nature in Adam, condemned and doomed to death. His gospel took men out of Adam and placed them in Christ.

In conclusion let us notice the following differences between Paul's gospel and the gospel proclaimed by Peter:

- Paul's gospel is separate and distinct from Israel's covenants.
- It is based on the predicted crucifixion of Israel's Messiah, but its message is a secret not revealed to the prophets.
- It goes back before David and circumcised Abraham to uncircumcised Abram, declaring men to be justified by faith alone, apart from the world of Law, religion, or flesh.
- It goes back to Adam, the head of the old and ruined creation, and places that believing sinner of any nationality in Christ, the Head of the new creation.
- It goes back before the foundation of the world, and gives us the secret of God's will in His mighty program of redemption.
- Its message is preached with a view to forming the Body of Christ, and not to the establishing of the Messianic kingdom upon earth.

S T U D Y Six - REVIEW

1. What does our English word "gospel" actually mean?
2. Paul's use of the word "gospel" in both noun and verb forms makes up what percentage of the total use of these words in the New Testament?
3. Is anything besides the salvation of the soul called gospel in the Bible? if so, what?
4. How many things can you find which were distinctive parts of the gospel of the Kingdom? Make a note of those things which are not a part of the gospel of Grace for today.
5. During all of the time the Twelve were preaching the gospel of the Kingdom while Christ was still with them, of what significant fact were they ignorant?
6. Upon what great covenant is the gospel of the Kingdom based?
7. Upon what great covenant is the gospel of the circumcision based?
8. How long was the preaching of these above two gospels in order? What message superseded them?
9. How many gospels were committed to Paul's trust?
10. Did circumcision in itself every save anyone? Was its practice mandatory at one time for God's blessing? Compare this with water baptism.
11. What was the difference between Peter's preaching at Pentecost about the death of Christ and Paul's preaching of the same event according to his gospel?
12. What is the difference between the gospel of God which had been promised afore by the prophets in the holy Scriptures (Romans 1:1, 2) and the preaching of Paul's gospel according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25)?

STUDY Seven

SUBJECTS RELATED TO DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, Cont.

LAW AND GRACE

Law and grace are perhaps the two most contrasting dispensational terms in the New Testament. With the exception of John 1:17, all of the teaching on this subject is to be found in the writings of Paul. It was especially given to him to set forth the dispensational distinctions between these two great systems of truth. It might be well at the outset to notice some other words which Paul associates with these two terms. He very often speaks of works and the flesh in connection with Law, and faith and spirit in relationship with grace. Let us first notice some of Paul's contrasts:

- Therefore by the deeds of the *law* there shall no flesh be justified ... Being justified freely by his *grace* (Romans 3:20, 24).
- Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? *of works*? Nay: but by the law *of faith* (Romans 3:27).
- For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the *law*, but through the righteousness of *faith* ... Therefore it is of *faith*, that it might be by *grace* (Romans 4:13, 16).
- Moreover the *law* entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, *grace* did much more abound (Romans 5:20).
- For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the *law*, but under *grace* (Romans 6:14).
- But now we are delivered from the *law*, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of *spirit* (Romans 7:6).
- I do not frustrate the *grace* of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).
- And if by *grace*, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace (Romans 11:6).
- And the *law* is not of *faith* (Galatians 3:12).
- Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the *law*; ye are fallen from *grace* (Galatians 5:4).
- But if ye be led of the *spirit*, ye are not under the *law* (Galatians 5:18).
- For by *grace* are ye saved through *faith* ... not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Many other references of Paul's could be noted, but let us consider for a moment this statement of another apostle:

For the *law* was given by Moses, but *grace* and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

It is important in our thinking that we get John's perspective. While God has always been gracious, and while the Lord Jesus showed much grace in dealing with people while He was on earth, it must be remembered that all during that time the dispensation of *law* was still in effect. The Word says He was "made of a woman, made under the *law*" (Galatians 4:4). Therefore Christ did not bring *grace* in contrast to *law* during the Gospel records, but rather through His death and the subsequent revelation of that truth which was given especially to Paul. John's gospel, written much later than the other Gospels and in light of the Pauline revelation, begins with the fact that *grace* and *truth* had already come through the death and resurrection of Christ. It is this fact that makes John's gospel so different from the others.

LAW AND GRACE AS PRINCIPLES

The word "law" is used in several different senses in Scripture, just as we speak of the law of gravity, or the law of supply and demand, or the law of the land. It would appear the main idea behind law as a principle is just this: a certain cause produces a certain effect. Laws cannot really be broken; they may be disobeyed. When one obeys a law there is a certain result; when that same law is disobeyed there is another result. The law is working in either case. One law may annul or overcome another law, just as the principle of life in a tree causes it to overcome the law of gravity and to lift itself into the air. Just so in Scripture we are taught the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death ([Romans 8:2](#)).

The dispensational principle of the Law, however, is limited to its connection with the Law of Moses. When Paul speaks about not being under the Law, of not being justified by the Law, he is referring to the Mosaic Law as a meritorious system. He is saying sinful man, who merits only the wrath of God, can never save himself or make himself pleasing to God by his own works. Paul does not in any way belittle the Law; he defends and upholds it. He shows there is nothing at all wrong with the Law ([Romans 7:12](#)). Rather, the trouble is with man. The Law states:

Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them ([Galatians 3:10](#)).

Therefore it is impossible for the Law to help the sinner; it can only condemn him.

Grace as a principle is just the opposite of Law. It does not operate on the basis of merit. It provides and gives freely to the undeserving the good he needs but cannot generate of himself. The contrast between the principles of Law and grace are perhaps most clearly defined in [Romans 4:4, 5](#):

Now to him that worketh [that is, who approaches God on the Law principle] is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not [that is, who approaches God on the principle of grace], but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

It should be understood that whenever God shows grace, He never does so at the expense of His righteousness. The death of Christ so completely satisfies every claim of God's holy Law that God can be just and at the same time the justifier of him who believes in Jesus ([Romans 3:26](#)).

LAW AND GRACE AS SYSTEMS

There are many Christians who seem to understand the difference between the principle of Law and grace in salvation who fail to see the distinctions between them as systems. They fall into the same error as the Galatians did. They begin in the Spirit (that is, by grace) and then try to perfect themselves by the flesh (that is, by placing themselves under the Law) - [Galatians 3:3](#). Paul calls such people foolish. Simply as principles, we see both Law and grace manifested throughout the Bible. It is only as we come to Paul's epistles that we see the two great systems or dispensations of Law and Grace set over against one another.

If we are careful to observe, we will see both Christ and His apostles, while manifesting the principle of grace, were yet under the Law of Moses as a system ([Matthew 23:2, 3](#)). It is also very evident the Jewish believers in Jerusalem at Pentecost and all during the book of Acts were still under the Mosaic system. As late as [Acts 21:20](#) the many thousands of Jewish believers in Jerusalem were all zealous of the Law. Some, through the knowledge of the later revelation of truth which was given to Paul, suppose these Jewish disciples were disobedient in not giving up the Law. How else can we explain the action of these Jewish disciples?

If we recognize the uniqueness of the revelation which was given to Paul, we will understand that there was not opportunity for these Jewish disciples to even know anything about the passing of the Mosaic Law until at least Acts 15 when Paul went up by revelation to communicate this truth unto them ([Galatians 2:2](#)). And even on this occasion it seems evident that the understanding was that this truth was specifically for the Gentile believers and did not apply to the Jews who believed. Paul did not go to Jerusalem to settle the question of what the Jews were to practice, but what was necessary for the Gentiles ([Acts 15:1-6, 19](#)).

From Acts 15:21 it seems evident the Jerusalem apostles understood that the Jewish believers were still under the Mosaic system. James' statement in Acts 21:25, "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing," further substantiates this fact, for the clear inference is that the Gentile believers were to observe no such thing (the Mosaic customs) as did the Jewish believers. At least we know from Acts 15:28 this was not a mistaken idea of James or the apostles, but this is what "seemed good to the Holy Ghost."

We might well ask, then, what was the difference then between Jewish believers and Jewish unbelievers in Jerusalem during the Acts period, if both were observing the Mosaic Law? The unbelievers, of course, were rejecting Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

That was the big difference. They were also trusting in their Law observance as a means of justification.

The Jewish believers, while remaining obedient to the Mosaic commandments, which were an integral part of their religious, political, and social life, knew there was salvation only in the name of Jesus Christ ([Acts 4:12](#)). The new covenant, which Christ had made in His blood, provided that the Law should be written upon the tables of their heart and not merely upon external tables of stone. Of course, the new was to take the place of the old, but the change was not to be instantaneous. The book of Hebrews was the first revelation given to the Jews as such concerning the passing of the old covenant, and chapter 8:13 clearly implies the gradual passing away of the old:

By using the words, "a new covenant," He has made the first one obsolete. But whatever is decaying and showing sign of old age is not far from disappearing altogether (Weymouth).

The Law dispensation was committed to Moses and the Grace dispensation was committed to Paul ([Ephesians 3:2](#)). These are two separate dispensations which are complete in themselves. God never intended the two should be mixed or confused. The grace of God is always frustrated when Christians mix Law and grace. One of the erroneous systems of our day guilty of this mixture is Seventh Day Adventism, which is propagated on a very wide scale through the radio program, "Voice of Prophecy." The Adventists contend only the ceremonial Law was done away through Christ and that the Ten Commandments, along with the seventh day Sabbath, are still as binding as ever upon God's people. These people, along with many other so-called Christians, argue that we must be antinomian (lawless) if we are not under the Ten Commandments. They ask, what other motive is there to be good? Seemingly they have never come to understand either the fact that the Law was never given to make men good or the fact that only the love of Christ can constrain men to be good ([2 Corinthians 5:14, 15](#)).

The fact that Paul means the whole Mosaic Law system has been done away, including the Ten Commandments, is plain from 2 Corinthians 3:6-13. Paul here calls the Law "the letter that killeth..... the ministration of death," "the ministration of condemnation," and "the old testament." It is evident that he is speaking of the Ten Commandments, for he expressly speaks of that "which was written and engraven in stones (verse 3), and anyone with knowledge of the Old Testament knows that this can only refer to the Ten Commandments. And he says concerning this whole system of the old covenant that it is "done away" and "abolished" (verses 11, 13).

It is most important to understand how the Law was abolished. It was not abolished by any disregard for it or by merely bypassing its claims. The Law was completely satisfied by the death of Jesus Christ. All of its claims were exhausted upon Him. He thus became the end of the Law for righteousness ([Romans 10:4](#)). Furthermore, the Law has dominion over people only as long as they live ([Romans 7:1](#)). After the Law has put a person to death it has no more dominion. Thus Paul teaches we have become dead to the Law through the (physical death of the) body of Christ

(Romans 7:4). But Paul doesn't leave us in a state of death. He also says we have been raised from the dead with Christ to be married to Him.

Now let us ask, if a wife obeys her husband and lives pleasing to him, is it because the husband has set up a system of laws for her to keep, or is it because there is mutual love? The Law demanded that man love God with all of his heart, but love cannot be legislated. Since the flesh is enmity against God, it is impossible for those in the flesh to be subject to the Law of God ([Romans 8:7, 8](#)). As a new creation, the believer is no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. Being born of the Spirit he has become a partaker of the divine nature. It is his nature now to love. He does not need the Ten Commandments to force obedience to God any more than Jesus Christ Himself needs such a Law. Thus Paul teaches that the believer, freed from the condemnation of the Law through the death of Christ and now alive through the resurrection of Christ and living under the reign of grace, actually fulfills all of the righteous requirements of the Law ([Romans 8:4](#)). Paul's gospel did not make void the Law, but rather fulfilled it ([Romans 3:31](#)).

S T U D Y Seven – REVIEW

1. What four important words are often used in connection with Law and grace?
2. Complete: "I do not _____ the grace of God; for if _____ come by the Law, then Christ is dead _____."
3. Was Christ gracious while He was on earth? In what sense does John apparently mean grace came by Jesus Christ ([John 1:17](#))?
4. Did grace and Law ever co-exist? Read [Romans 4:6-8](#) and state whether David lived under the Law and whether he experienced God's grace.
5. In what sense do you think the word "law" is used in the following passages: [Romans 7:7](#); [Romans 8:2](#); [Galatians 6:2](#); [Romans 7:21](#); [2 Timothy 2:5](#)?
6. What usage of the word "law" is especially related to dispensational truth?
7. List as many distinctions as you can between Law and grace.
8. Quote a verse to prove Paul did not belittle the Law, but rather upheld it as holy and good.
9. What was the error of the Galatians? (See especially [3:3](#); [4:9,21](#); [5:4](#).)
10. Show from Scripture that Christ and His apostles lived under the Mosaic Law.
11. Explain why the Jewish believers at Jerusalem continued to observe the Law of

Moses even as late as Acts 21.

12. How did these Jewish apostles learn about the gospel of the Grace of God? (See [Galatians 2:2](#).)

13. State in what sense the true Jewish believers at Jerusalem were observing the Law.

14. How much of the Law has been done away in Christ? State how the Law was abolished.

15. If the believer today is not under the Ten Commandments, what restraints and motivations do they have for proper behavior?

STUDY Eight

SUBJECTS RELATED TO DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, Cont.

In this study we shall consider several more of the biblical subjects which are related to dispensational truth. Thus far we have considered such subjects as The Ages, Prophecy, The Times of the Gentiles, The Resurrections, The Gospel, and Law and Grace. We have seen that all of these subjects must be studied dispensationally if they are to be rightly understood. Let us look now at the doctrine of the church.

THE CHURCH

Practically all dispensationalists make a clear distinction between Israel and the church. Traditional, undispensational interpretation sees no distinction between these two groups. To them, Israel is the church and the church is Israel. As always, every erroneous system has some element of truth in it. What element of truth is in this traditional view may be seen from the following quotation from the *Scofield Reference Bible*, original edition, page 1021:

Israel was a true "church," but not in any sense the N.T. church-the only point of similarity being that both, were "called out" and by the same God. All else is contrast.

If Israel was a true church but not the New Testament church, then it is not sufficient to merely state that Israel is not the church; we must qualify the word "church." Dr. Scofield does this by saying Israel is not the New Testament church. Here we believe a clearer distinction needs to be made. We prefer to say Israel is not the church which is the Body of Christ. This brings us to the question of what difference, if any, there is between the New Testament church and the Body of Christ. To Dr. Scofield, apparently there is no difference. But when we consider that the New Testament or New Covenant was promised to and made with the house of Israel ([Jeremiah 31:31](#); [Hebrews 8:8](#)), and further realize that Israel is a true church, it should be evident that Israel is a New Covenant (Testament) church. Israel was in the past an Old Covenant (Testament) church. God promises that in the future she will be a New Covenant (Testament) church.

The confusion in the use of the expression "New Testament" arises from the dual usage of this expression. The New Testament technically and specifically means the compact or contract which God promised in Jeremiah 31:31. Most people have lost sight of this specific usage and now employ this term to mean the twenty-seven books from Matthew to Revelation.

The New Testament church to such people would mean the church mentioned in

these books called the New Testament. There would be no particular objection to this usage if there were only *one* church presented in these twenty-seven books. But as a matter of fact, some of these books of the so-called New Testament deal with Israel as a church, and some deal with the Body of Christ as the church. The church in [Matthew 16:18, 19](#) is definitely the New Testament church of Israel as it will be constituted in the kingdom of heaven. This is the church Psalm 22:22 predicted (see [Hebrews 2:12](#)). We believe this church had its real inception on the day of Pentecost, although it existed in germ form during the earthly ministry of Christ.

All dispensationalists who make a distinction between Israel as a church in the Old Testament (and the Scripture itself does just that in Acts 7:38) and the Body of Christ of this dispensation must find a place where Israel ceased being a church and where the Body of Christ came into being. Actually, most of the differences between dispensationalists arise at just this point. Some suppose the new church of this dispensation came into being at Matthew 1:1; others think it began with John the Baptist; Dr. Scofield, and perhaps a majority of fundamentalists, hold that it began at Pentecost in Acts 2; others, like ourselves, believe it began with Paul's ministry; and still others contend it did not begin until after the history covered in the book of Acts.

We base our convictions on two plain facts. First, Scripture plainly states the church, the Body of Christ was a secret never revealed before it was made known to Paul. Corroborating this point is the fact that Scripture also indicated the church at Pentecost was not a secret but was according to the Predictions of all of the prophets from the beginning of the world ([Acts 3:21](#)). The second fact is the obvious truth that the Body of Christ is plainly set forth in the early epistles of Paul ([I Corinthians 12:13, 27](#); [Romans 12:5](#)). Since the dispensation of the Body of Christ was committed to Paul, and since he wrote about this truth in his earlier ministry, it is only logical and scriptural to hold that this new church, the Body of Christ, had its historical inception with Paul's ministry in the Acts.

It is important to know the boundary line between Israel as a church and the Body of Christ as a church. It is also important to know some of the differences between these two outcallings. Let us list a few:

- Israel is a nation, the Body of Christ is not. Therefore many of God's dealings are on a national basis with Israel, whereas they are predominantly individualistic with the Body of Christ.
- Israel is a covenant people. Both the Old and New Covenants belong to that nation. The Body of Christ is not in covenant relationship to God, although its members partake of all of the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant which was made in Christ's blood.
- Israel has an earthly calling. God has promised this nation a definite territory upon this earth as an unending inheritance. The Body of Christ has no such earthly promises. Its blessings and inheritance are heavenly.
- The hopes of these two groups are different, although here we must be careful in our distinctions. Paul refers to the hope of Israel several times

in Acts, which the context limits to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is essentially our hope too. But if we refer to the coming again of Christ as the hope, we see a big distinction. Israel's hope will be realized when Jesus Christ returns to earth in power and great glory as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then Israel's enemies will be judged and Israel will enter into the millennial blessings. Some years before this event occurs the Body of Christ will realize its hope in the event we call the Rapture. Christ will come in the air and catch up all the living and dead members of the Body to ever be with Him.

- The spiritual programs for Israel and the Body of Christ are different in certain respects. Community of possessions, miraculous outward signs, water baptism for remission of sins, and other like things which we find in the so-called Great Commission, and which we observe happening in the early chapters of Acts, give us some idea of Israel's program. Some of these things carry on through the transition period of the latter half of the Acts until they are completely set aside and the permanent order of this dispensation is established.
- Israel is especially connected with prophecy. The prophetic program provides for salvation first for Israel, and then for the Gentiles through Israel. The Body of Christ is especially connected with the Mystery, which provides for Gentile salvation through the fall of Israel.

The Second Coming of Christ is another doctrine which is especially related to dispensational truth, but it has already been touched upon above, and was quite fully covered in Study Five on the Resurrections.

ORDINANCES

We come next to consider the subject of religious ordinances. We will need to define this word rather accurately since there are several different Greek words which are translated "ordinance" in our English Bibles. An ordinance may be any decree, statute, or law made by the civil governor or by God. The Law of Moses contained many such ordinances. It is this usage of the word in which we are particularly interested in our dispensational study. We are still under many civil ordinances but the Scriptures teach that in this present dispensation we are not under any religious ordinances. Notice a few passages from Paul:

For He is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in *ordinances*; for to make in himself one new man, so making peace (Ephesians 2:14, 15).

Blotting out the handwriting of *ordinances* that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross ... Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come but the

body is of Christ ... Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? (Colossians 2:14-22)

When we turn to Hebrews 9:1 and 10, we discover this about the Mosaic Law:

Then verily the first covenant [Mosaic] had also *ordinances of* divine service, and an earthly sanctuary ... which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings [baptisms], and carnal *ordinances*, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The grammatical construction makes it clear that the carnal ordinances are not in addition to meats and drinks and baptisms, but rather that these things themselves are all carnal ordinances.

These Scriptures make it very clear that Christ's death has fulfilled the Law and abolished all of these religious ordinances. If this be so, how is it we hear Christians today talking about the ordinances of the church? Most Protestants believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of perpetual obligation upon the church. Where do Christians get such teaching?

There is no doubt water baptism is a religious ordinance. It is called that in [Hebrews 9:10](#). The idea that we are to practice this ordinance until the end of the age is based upon the so-called Great Commission of [Matthew 28:19, 20](#). Supposing this to be the last command of Christ to His disciples, it is only natural to suppose this command is for our obedience today. However, this was not Christ's last command! He later revealed Himself from heaven to the apostle Paul and committed to him the present dispensation of the Grace of God. In this new dispensation Paul says:

Christ sent me *not* to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

The idea that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance comes from I Corinthians 11:2:

Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the *ordinances*, as I delivered them to you.

This is an unfortunate translation. It is the only place in the New Testament where this Greek word is translated ordinance. Practically all other versions render it "traditions." The word actually means, that which is delivered or handed over. The same word is used of the betrayal of Christ; Judas delivered Him over to the Jews ([Matthew 26:15](#)). Traditions are things which have been handed down by God or by man. Paul uses the same word in speaking of the gospel in I Corinthians 15:3 - "For I *delivered* unto you first of all that which I also received."

The Lord's Supper is not an ordinance in the sense that baptism and other

religious commandments are. The Lord's Supper is not obligatory, as ordinances are. It can be observed anytime, anywhere, and there are no explicit instructions how it is to be done. Significantly, too, baptism and the Lord's Supper are never linked together in the Scripture. Surely if the Lord had left two obligatory ordinances for the church, we would expect to find them associated in some way.

Acts 28:28 dispensationalists contend the Lord's Supper is an ordinance, but since it is mentioned in a Pre-prison epistle of Paul, it is not for the Body of Christ. They claim Colossians 2:14 refers to the Lord's Supper, that it is one of the ordinances which was blotted out by being nailed to the cross of Christ. A little reflection should save one from such a blunder of interpretation. The Lord's Supper was instituted just the night before the Cross, and had meaning only in view of Christ's death. If the Acts 28 people were correct it would mean the Lord's Supper was abolished just a few hours after it was instituted. It would thus have been impossible of observance. Not only so, but the Lord's Supper is not "against us and contrary to us," as are the ordinances of Colossians. The Lord's Supper was a truth which Christ delivered to Paul, and which Paul delivered to members of the Body of Christ. There is nothing about it which is incompatible with the dispensation of Grace as revealed in the whole of the Pauline Scriptures.

Since I Corinthians is the only epistle in which Paul deals with water baptism and the Lord's Supper, it is interesting to see what emphasis he places upon them. When it comes to the water, Paul states Christ had not sent him to baptize, and he thanked God he had baptized so few. When it came to the Lord's Supper, Paul did not say: Christ sent me not to observe the Lord's Supper. Instead Paul said he had received truth about the observance of the Lord's Supper from Christ for them, and he goes about to correct the troubles which had arisen over its wrong observance.

S T U D Y Eight - REVIEW

1. What is Israel called in [Acts 7:38](#)?
2. What is wrong about calling the church of today the New Testament church?
3. In what two ways is the expression "New Testament" often used?
4. What are some of the views various Christians hold as to the beginning of the Body of Christ? Do you know of any others not mentioned in the study? Where do most Reformed and Presbyterians begin the church?
5. What is the most evident reason the Body of Christ did not begin at Pentecost?
6. What positive scriptural proof is there that the Body of Christ began before Acts 28:28?
7. What is Israel called in [Exodus 19:6](#) besides a kingdom of priests? Is the Body of

Christ ever called this? Who do you think is meant in [Matthew 21:43](#), to whom Christ said the Kingdom of God was to be given?

8. What is the Old Covenant or Testament, and with what people was it made? (See [Jeremiah 31:32](#).) With what people was the New Testament made? (See [Jeremiah 31:31](#) and [Hebrews 8:8-13](#).)

9. Read [Ezekiel 36:24](#), [2 Samuel 7](#), and [Deuteronomy 28:2-14](#), and put down as many things as you can find that God has promised to Israel.

10. Contrast the blessings and hope of the Body of Christ with the answers given in the above question.

11. If the word "prophecy" is especially connected with Israel and its program, what contrasting word is especially connected with the Body of Christ?

12. What is the difference between the word "ordinance" in [Colossians 2:14](#) and [1 Corinthians 11:2](#)?

13. State how many religious ordinances of the character mentioned in [Colossians 2:14](#) Christ has ordained for the church today. Where in the New Testament are water baptism and the Lord's Supper associated together?

14. Why do extreme dispensationalists who begin the Body of Christ at Acts 28:28 reject the Lord's Supper for our observance today?

STUDY Nine

SUBJECTS RELATED TO DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH, Cont.

SIGN GIFTS

This will be the last of the subjects related to dispensational truth which we will consider in this series of studies. Actually almost every subject in the Bible is affected in some way by dispensational truth. In these chapters we have chosen only a few of the more obvious ones.

By the sign gifts we mean miraculous enablements given by the Spirit of God as signs to the people of Israel. Actually Paul calls only one of these gifts a sign ("Wherefore *tongues* are for a sign" I Corinthians 14:22), but it is evident the associated gifts were also for the same purpose.

The problem involved with this subject is whether or not these sign gifts, which were prevalent in the early church, should be in manifestation today. Pentecostals and others of like belief tell us all of these gifts should be in the church today, and that their lack of manifestation is due only to a lack of faith or of spirituality. Others think they ought to be manifested whenever the gospel is carried into a new region to cause people to believe. Some seem to be in favor of claiming such a gift as healing, but not in favor of tongues. We believe when the Scripture is rightly divided dispensationally, it will be seen that all of these sign gifts have served their purpose and have no further place in this present dispensation.

THE PURPOSE

Paul states in 1 Corinthians 1:22, "For the Jews require a sign" and in 14:22, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign." Paul tells us not to be children but men in understanding, explaining God had told Israel in their Law that He would speak to them with other tongues; therefore tongues are for a sign to Israel. One who doesn't understand this is not mature in his understanding of Scripture, according to I Corinthians 14:20-22.

The Scriptures show that God has always dealt with Israel in signs. (See especially [Exodus 4:8](#); [Deuteronomy 28:46](#); [Joshua 4:6](#); [Matthew 12:38, 39](#); [24:3, 30](#).) The word "sign" occurs seventy-three times in Scripture which is dispensationally Israelitish, and only three times in Paul's epistles, and all of Paul's references clearly refer to Israel ([Romans 4:11](#); [1 Corinthians 1:22](#); [14:22](#)). Israel was born nationally in a cradle of signs when God delivered them from Egypt by mighty signs and wonders. Christ produced many mighty signs in proof of His Messiahship.

And many other signs [besides the eight that are recorded in John] truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30, 31).

THE PROGRAM

Signs were thus a part of Israel's program. Christ wrought many signs, and He promised that His disciples would do even greater signs or works (John 14:12). In the so-called Great Commission of Mark 16:15-18, Christ promised that these signs would follow them that believe:

- Casting out demons.
- Speaking with new tongues.
- Taking up serpents or drinking poison without hurt.
- Healing of the sick.

We see all of these and other miraculous signs being performed both by the twelve apostles and Paul during the period covered by the book of Acts.

If signs were given for the sake of the Jews, why should we find them in manifestation in the church which Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, founded? And if they were in Paul's churches, should they not be in our churches today, if we are supposed to follow Paul? We believe the reason signs continued even after the new church, the Body of Christ, began under Paul's ministry is this: God did not in one stroke cut off and cast away His people Israel. That is not His way of doing things. Paul quotes Isaiah to the effect that "all day long" God had stretched forth His hands unto this disobedient and gainsaying people of Israel (Romans 10:21).

It was not that God was offering the establishment of the Millennium to Israel after Paul came on the scene, but as Paul says, God was trying to provoke Israel to jealousy by beginning a new dispensation with Paul and by sending salvation to the Gentiles (Romans 10:19; 11:11). Remember that the Body of Christ is a joint body of Jews and Gentiles. Even though God had cast aside the national kingdom promises to Israel for the duration of this dispensation, He still had a purpose in saving some of them before the final blow of judgment would be struck in the desolation of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

This last stated fact also gives us a clue to why these gifts are not in operation today. There are two ways of stating when the sign gifts were to cease. In line with what has been said above, they were to cease when Israel was finally given up to judgment by God. We may say this happened judicially at the end of the Acts period, but actually the sentence was not carried out for another ten years. On the other hand, we may say the sign gifts were to cease when "that which is perfect [mature] is come" (I Corinthians 13:10). The coming of that which is complete or mature does not mean our going to heaven, but the bringing in of the mature course of this dispensation of Grace.

The coming in of this established order awaited the complete judgment of Israel nationally and the completion of the revelation of truth for the Body of Christ.

THE PASSING OF THE PROGRAM

We are now in a position to answer the question why these signs are not for us today. Not only do we have the fact that they were designed for Israel and that Israel has been cast away ([Romans 11:15](#)), but Paul clearly states that these signs are to cease. After speaking about the excellence of love in I Corinthians 13 he says:

Whether there be [gifts of] prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be [gifts of] tongues, they shall cease; whether there be [the gift of] knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when *that which is perfect* is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (vv. 8-10).

To illustrate this further he likens the existing conditions of the dispensation to childhood and the coming mature condition to manhood. The sign gifts belonged to the childhood stage, but Paul says, "When I became a man, I put away childish things" (v. 11). Therefore, it is very evident that these sign gifts were to cease as soon as the dispensation had grown up. And we believe it did grow up to maturity with the final epistles of Paul.

Some people suppose these sign gifts continued right up to Acts 28:28 and then suddenly ceased. There is no more a basis for this supposition than for the one that God cast Israel aside with one sudden stroke. One who has studied the book of Acts is aware these signs seem to gradually diminish. W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, states:

There is no record of the continuance of these latter [signs, such as tongues] after the circumstances recorded in Acts 19:1-20.

We do see Paul manifesting the signs of an apostle in [Acts 28:5](#) after the shipwreck. (See also [2 Corinthians 12:12](#); [Romans 15:18, 19](#).) For a special reason, Paul was not healed of his thorn in the flesh, even during the Acts period. After the Acts period we know of several cases where Paul did not exercise any gift of healing on his most trustworthy co-workers. We may not know exactly when the last divinely wrought sign was manifested, although we do know the final prophecy to be fulfilled upon Israel came as late as 70 A.D.

DID SIGNS DEPEND UPON SPIRITUALITY?

Most people who try to take the Body of Christ back to the Jewish Pentecost argue that we would have a great revival of these signs in our day if we were only spiritual and had more faith. There is a simple, twofold answer to this, aside from what has already been said. In the first place, these gifts were not given because of merit. The sovereign Spirit gave them as He willed ([I Corinthians 12:11](#)). Secondly, the

Corinthian church, which had an abundance of these gifts, was the most carnal of all of Paul's churches (1 Corinthians 3:1). God could surely give these gifts to people today if He so willed, but we believe God has made it plain in the unfolding of His purpose that He does not will to give them now.

WHAT ARE THE SIGN GIFTS?

Are all of the gifts in I Corinthians 12:28-30 sign gifts? Let us see.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

We contend that Paul's list of gifts in Ephesians 4:11 are the abiding gifts for the Body of Christ. There we read:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

It will be seen that this listing is almost identical with the first part of the Corinthian passage, but it omits the gifts of miracles, healing, helps, governments, and tongues. These latter gifts we would classify as sign gifts, but apostles, prophets, and teachers are men.

When Ephesians was written there were apostles and prophets still alive and manifesting their gifts, but all such have now passed off the scene. We have no living apostles and prophets today, but we do have the revelation which God gave through them. Apart from these gifts we would have no Scripture for the Body of Christ. Actually then, the only ministry gifts which God dispenses today are those of evangelists and pastors and teachers.

We feel some dispensationalists make a serious mistake in supposing the Lord's Supper, mentioned in the chapter before the sign gifts, passed away along with the signs. They argue that the Supper was Israelitish, that it was instituted before the church which is His Body began, and that it is just as contrary to the will of God to practice it today as to claim the gift of tongues. In our last study we stated briefly some of the reasons why we believe the Lord's Supper is for the Body of Christ today. Let us notice a few further points.

As we have just pointed out, not even all of the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 had passed away in Ephesians, but just the sign gifts. We might as well eliminate the gospel, which Paul describes right after talking about the sign gifts, as to eliminate the Supper. Paul uses identical terminology in describing how he received both the Lord's Supper and the gospel, and how he had delivered them both to the church. We can understand how those who begin the Body after Acts 28 eliminate the Lord's Supper, but we cannot understand how one who admits the Body of I Corinthians 12:13 is the

church of this dispensation can eliminate it; yet some do. Paul told the church that the Supper was to show forth the Lord's death *till* He come. He never said that the signs or water baptism were to continue *till* he come. Had the Supper been temporary, as were the signs, we are sure Paul would have said so. Instead he makes it plain that it is to continue *till* He come.

To sum up, Paul told the Corinthians water baptism was not even in his commission, the sign gifts were to cease, and the Lord's Supper was until Christ returns for the church. Let us be careful to eliminate from our program only that which Paul eliminated.

WHAT ABOUT MODERN CLAIMS?

What answer shall we give to those who claim they have the sign gifts today? Are there not thousands who claim to speak with tongues and claim to perform miraculous hearings. Yes, and doubtless this movement is spreading like wildfire. This does not prove, however, that these manifestations are actually the working of the Spirit of God. There are several ways of explaining these phenomena.

In the first place, the Scripture reveals that Satan has power to work lying signs ([2 Thessalonians 2:9](#); [Revelation 13:14](#)). Since Roman Catholics, Spiritists, Christian Scientists, and others all claim authenticated cases of so-called faith healing, it is evident not all healing miracles are from God. If Satan is energizing in these false cults, may he not also deceive even Christians to get them on the wrong track and away from God's purpose in this dispensation? Then, of course, there is no doubt many supposedly miraculous hearings are of a psychosomatic nature. Finally, the majority of cases of supposed hearings, when investigated, are proven to be exaggerated or even fraudulent.

While the gift of healing has passed away, as Paul said it would, we do have today what we might call elective healing. God is the sustainer and upholder of all life. We have full confidence in the efficacy of prayer, and we are sure God restores people to health when it is His will. Practically all so-called "divine healers" begin with the false premise that sickness is the result of unfaithfulness or sin, and that it is not the will of God that many of His people should be sick. There are many scriptural proofs to the contrary. Paul's thorn in the flesh, which he called an infirmity, apparently plagued his body to the end ([2 Corinthians 12:5-10](#)). Timothy was Paul's most faithful co-worker, yet he was often sick ([1 Timothy 5:23](#)). Trophimus, another faithful servant, had to be left behind sick ([2 Timothy 4:20](#)). Epaphroditus became deathly sick because he labored so fervently for the Lord ([Philippians 2:25-27](#)).

Healing was just one of the several sign gifts. If one of the gifts is here today, there is no reason why all of them should not be. Generally the only ones we hear about now are healing and tongues. Why can't these people who claim to have such gifts also cleanse lepers and raise the dead to life? The answer is obvious.

S T U D Y Nine - REVIEW

1. Name some of the sign gifts.
2. According to Paul, what people required signs?
3. Pentecostals teach that everyone who receives the Holy Spirit speaks with tongues. How does this compare with Paul's teaching in [1 Corinthians 12:30](#)?
4. To what does Paul liken the time when the sign gifts were in operation?
5. What is the difference between the sign gifts and the other gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4?
6. If God had cast away Israel with one sudden stroke of judgment, what would have happened to the Pentecostal program of signs?
7. In the record of the book of Acts, do we find a gradual tapering off of the signs ministry, or does it stop suddenly at Acts 28:28?
8. To what characteristic in the nature of God can we attribute the fact that although Paul wrote what he did in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 in about 54 A.D., Jerusalem was not actually destroyed until 70 A.D.?
9. Some people think the statement "when that which is perfect is come" ([1 Corinthians 13:10](#)) means when we get to heaven. Do you think the Bible teaches that heaven comes to us, or that we go to heaven? If this view were correct, then the sign gifts should last until the coming of the Lord; and faith, hope, and love would abide in heaven. Do you think faith and hope will abide in heaven? (See [Romans 8:24](#); [2 Corinthians 5:7](#).)
10. How would you answer the claim that we could exercise these sign gifts today if we were spiritual enough in our walk?
11. You will notice that water baptism is always associated with signs or miracles in some way. Is this true of the Lord's Supper? How would you prove from Scripture that the Lord's Supper did not pass away with the sign gifts?
12. If we believe the gift of healing has passed away, is there any sense in praying for the sick?

STUDY Ten

ARGUMENTS ANSWERED

In this study we want to consider some of the arguments against the dispensational interpretation of the Bible. Everyone who tries to teach others this truth will meet with opposition of some kind from established religion. The reason for this is self-evident. Traditional Christendom has departed so far from the Pauline revelation given to us in the Scripture that a return to this distinctive truth will of necessity reveal its shortcomings and flaws. If one is going to defend many of the traditional practices and teachings of the church, he must oppose dispensationalism. In the fight against dispensational truth, a number of stock arguments have apparently been invented for the purpose of frightening seekers away from even studying the subject.

DISPENSATIONALISM IS DIVISIVE

It is claimed that dispensational teaching makes people cantankerous and argumentative. It divides churches and leaves in its path a great deal of spiritual wreckage, we are told. Scripture is sometimes quoted in defense of those who castigate dispensationalists - "Mark them which cause divisions" (Romans 16:17). It thus becomes Christian duty to oppose dispensationalists and to avoid them.

In this argument, Romans 16:17 is only partially quoted. What did Paul actually say? "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*; and avoid them." Everyone should know that *truth*, as well as *error*, causes divisions. Christ Himself said He had come to bring division ([Luke 12:51](#)). Three times John tells us that there was a division among the people because of Christ ([John 7:43](#); [9:16](#); [10:19](#)). Christ split things wide open wherever he went, and so did the apostle Paul. Martin Luther and all of the great Reformers caused divisions, but they were not divisions "contrary to the doctrine" of the Scripture. None of these men had as their purpose to cause division, but division was inevitable when truth and error met and men took sides.

Churches have divided over dispensational truth, but churches have also divided over many other truths. It is a sad condition when a church divides, but if it is simply a case of true or false doctrine, who is to blame for the division? The ones who hold to the truth or those who cling to error? It must be proven that dispensationalism is unscriptural before this argument has any weight at all. Most divisions in churches are caused by the carnal nature of believers. Dispensationalists and non-dispensationalists, Baptists and Presbyterians, all Christians, in fact, have carnal natures. If some of these are walking in the flesh and thus causing divisions, it is not some particular truth to which they subscribe which is to blame for the trouble, but they themselves. Dispensationalism which is scriptural is no more to blame for divisions among believers than is the doctrine of the virgin birth or the deity of Christ.

We are instructed, if it be possible, as much as is in us, to live peaceably with all men. We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. But we are also to contend earnestly for the faith, and to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. There is absolutely nothing in the nature of dispensational truth itself which would cause an ugly spirit.

DISPENSATIONALISM IS NOT SPIRITUAL

Failing in the first argument, anti-dispensationalists claim dispensational Bible study is too technical. It is too cut and dried; it pigeonholes the truths of Scripture too neatly; it robs the believer of the spiritual content of the Scripture. Our answer to this charge is that the same argument can be brought against any doctrinal study of the Bible. It is not the fault of any doctrine, but of the student. An unspiritual approach to any part of the Bible will produce a knowledge which merely "puffs up" (I Corinthians 8:1), which is but "sounding brass" or "clashing cymbal" (I Corinthians 13:1).

Any true student knows that there is much technical knowledge with almost every field of endeavor. Little Mary may argue that she can't see any sense in learning all the theory of music; all she wants to do is to play the piano. But in most cases it would be agreed that a good musician is one who not only can perform well, but who also knows something about music itself. It would be too bad if one spent his whole life studying the theory of music and never learned to play or sing or to enjoy music. And of course it is regrettable when a student of the Bible singles out any one doctrine and supposes that a study of it is an end in itself. Men study electronics to learn how to operate radar or guided missiles. We study dispensational truth to learn how God wants us to live and to minister in this present age.

Those who use this argument usually have a distorted idea of what constitutes spirituality. They seem to think only that which affects them emotionally is spiritual. They do not seem to understand that to be spiritual is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to have the mind of the Spirit. People may appear to be pious, may be moved to tears, may pray in private and in public without exercising a speck of spirituality. God no doubt honors true sincerity, but spirituality does not put a premium on intellectual ignorance of the Word. The Word is the sword of the Spirit, and if we don't know it rightly divided, we cannot be as spiritual as we might otherwise be. Since dispensationalism gives the true interpretation of the Word, it can be one of the greatest aids to real spirituality.

DISPENSATIONALISM ROBBS US OF THE WORD

This argument is very closely related to the one we have just considered. The charge is that dispensationalists say: "Oh, that's not for us; that's for the Jew." Some claim the dispensationalist takes most of the Bible away from the believer, and leaves him only with the Pauline epistles. Our critics tell people that if they accept our position

they can no longer turn to the Psalms for comfort since those words were written to the Jews. We can't take anything out of the Gospels since Jesus ministered only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Those who make this charge show their ignorance of dispensational truth. The true dispensationalist first of all affirms that *all Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is *all profitable* (2 Timothy 3:15, 16). He makes a careful distinction between the interpretation of a passage and an application of it. Any one passage has only one true interpretation, the literal and primary meaning, whereas it might have many applications. He tests all Scripture by the completed and final revelation given to the apostle Paul, and all truth from Genesis to Revelation which dovetails with Pauline truth he has every right to apply to himself.

For example, John 3 teaches the necessity of being born again. This was spoken to a ruler of the Jews in another dispensation. But Paul shows that a new birth (regeneration) is a necessary part of *our* spiritual experience; so we can apply John 3 in our ministry today. But we recognize that if we consider John 3 in its primary interpretation we must admit that when these words were spoken to Nicodemus water baptism was required as a work of faith for the remission of sins. There were also many other religious requirements. But it appears the Holy Spirit led John to omit mention of those things so that his Gospel could be applied to preaching today in a manner the other Gospels cannot be.

Our critics claim we rob the believer of much of the Scripture. Let us ask them what they do with such passages as Matthew 10:5-10, or 18:18, 19, or 23:1-3. Do they go only to the lost sheep of Israel? Do they heal the sick, cleanse the leper, or raise the dead? Do they make no provision of food or clothing or money for the morrow? Can they bind anything on earth and be sure it will be bound in heaven? Can any two of them agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, and it shall be done for them? Do they obey Christ in submitting to every ordinance of the Mosaic Law?

We can hear our critics beginning to hedge and to say: "Well it's true Jesus commanded all of these things, but later on He changed some of His commands, and instead of telling His disciples to go only to Israel, He told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel." Now we have our critics right where we want them, because they are contending for exactly the same principle as is the dispensationalist. They must say the command of Matthew 10 was superseded by that of 28:19 and Mark 16:15, 16. If such an important commission could be rescinded and new marching orders be given by Christ within a period of three years, is it unthinkable that after another thirty, after Israel had rejected the proffered mercy of God and the offer of their Kingdom by the risen Christ, Christ could have again changed His marching orders? Of course, it is not so much a matter of whether it is thinkable or unthinkable, but whether the Scripture actually teaches that this is what did happen. We believe that in our past studies we have shown from Scripture God did begin a new dispensation with the apostle Paul.

It has often been pointed out that these very critics of dispensationalism are guilty of the very sin with which they charge us. Wherever they find the curses of God pronounced in Scripture they will place a heading, "The Jews Cursed." In the same Old Testament books where great blessings are promised, they place the heading, "Blessings upon the Church." We believe in allowing the Jew to have everything God has promised that nation, whether it be curses or blessings. In Paul we learn that we have been blessed with *all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ, so we do not need to rob Israel of hers.

An intelligent dispensationalist would never make the statement, "That is not for us; it is for the Jews." We believe every word of Scripture is *for* us, but we do not believe that every word of Scripture is *about* us, nor that it is written specifically *to* us for our obedience. Not even the most violent anti-dispensationalist believes Leviticus, for example, is written *to* us for our obedience today. If he would but intelligently and consistently use the same principle throughout Scripture which he does in eliminating the practices of Leviticus from the program of the church, he would be in perfect agreement with our position. But as suggested in our introduction, such consistency would bring him into too much opposition to traditional ritualism. He would have to break with denominationalism, and that might involve suffering for the sake of the Mystery.

DISPENSATIONALISM IS AKIN TO HIGHER CRITICISM

This argument is simply an intensification of the one we have just considered. A more serious charge is made, however, to the effect that dispensationalism is really destructive higher criticism working under the guise of fundamentalism. The destructive critics were men who set out to prove that the Scriptures were not written by the supposed authors at the time they were supposed to have been written. Only a few books were spared by these higher critics. Thus they just as effectively cut the whole Bible to pieces, as did King Jehoiakim the writings of [Jeremiah \(36:22, 23\)](#). It is claimed that what we call rightly dividing the word of truth accomplishes the same end which the destructive critics sought to accomplish, namely, leaving only a few epistles of Paul intact for the church.

In answer to this false and very unjust charge it need only be pointed out that the whole plan of dispensationalism takes for granted and is built upon the foundational fact of the divine inspiration of *all* Scripture. If the entire Bible is not inspired, if each book was not written at the time claimed in the Bible, the dispensationalist just doesn't have any basis left for his position.

The fact is that dispensationalism does more than any other segment of biblical endeavor to harmonize the various parts of the Bible and to thus show its divine unity and inspiration. As we pointed out in our first study, many outstanding teachers of the Bible have borne witness to this fact. One teacher quoted said that "dispensational classification can alone save truth from contradicting itself." Apart from

dispensationalism, the Bible appears to be full of contradictions, and in order to explain these apparent discrepancies men have invented their various critical views of the Bible. Many of the critics have seen the differences in the ministries of Jesus and of Paul, for example, but they have tried to explain them on the basis either that Paul invented a new Jesus who was free from Jewish prejudice, or that the supposed writings of Paul were actually the product of a later generation. Once recognized, the dispensations and all of these differences are easily reconciled.

DISPENSATIONALISM IS A RECENT INVENTION

Because very little can be found in church history about dispensationalism it is argued that it is an innovation, and as such it should be dismissed as unworthy of further consideration. "Isn't it regrettable," they ask ironically, "that no one in the past knew anything about these wonderful principles of dispensationalism until you twentieth century prophets discovered them?" Of course, the religionists of Luther's day in effect said the same thing about the doctrine of justification by faith. Every Protestant has to admit that the great doctrine of the Reformation had been practically lost to the church for many centuries. Rome claims that what we affirm to be a return to the truth of the Bible is only the following of a new heresy invented by Luther, just as our critics claim we are following the innovations of a few men like John Nelson Darby or C. I. Scofield or E. W. Bullinger.

Of course, these arguments are very easy to answer. All one has to do is to turn to the Bible itself, and just as surely as we find justification by faith plainly taught in Paul's epistles, we also find the truth of dispensationalism. In our English Bibles (KJV) we find the actual word "dispensation" four times, and the kindred root word appears a number of other times. Dispensationalism was known to and taught by the apostle Paul. He is the great dispensationalist of the Bible. There was not too much need for this principle of Bible study until Paul, because before Paul the revelations of God all concerned one and the same spiritual program - the subduing of the earth and the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness and peace upon it. When Paul came on the scene, God inaugurated an entirely new dispensation which concerned the outcalling of a body of believers for a heavenly position and inheritance. Paul shows in such passages as Romans 11 that this newly revealed purpose of God is being accomplished upon the basis of the temporary setting aside of the purpose which He had revealed by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.

It is because men early turned away from the distinctive Pauline revelation that they also turned away from dispensationalism. These two things go hand in hand and cannot logically be separated. In the degree to which a man is Pauline he will be dispensational, whether or not he actually uses that word to describe his position. Many very bitter opponents of our position are actually quite dispensational, but they find themselves in a place in the ecclesiastical world where a subject like water baptism becomes a very delicate issue. Increasing numbers of such people, however, are coming to see that they cannot hold onto the water without giving up dispensationalism altogether. It may cost them something in the way of persecution and opposition, even

as it cost the earlier advocates of dispensational truth for standing for the seemingly simple and well-accepted truths of fundamentalism today.

There are doubtless other minor objections which men have expressed against the teaching which we are seeking to uphold, but we believe what has been said covers the major arguments.

S T U D Y Ten - REVIEW

1. While we are not to judge the motives of others, what seems to be the reason most people object to dispensational truth?
2. In what sense only is it true that dispensationalism is divisive? What is the cause of most of the divisions in Christendom?
3. What kind of knowledge does an unspiritual approach to any doctrine of the Bible engender?
4. Is it missing the mark to make the study of dispensationalism an end in itself?
5. How does a true definition of the term "spiritual" prove that true dispensationalism contributes to spirituality instead of detracting from it?
6. What is wrong with making the following statement about a certain part of the Bible: "That is not for us; that's for the Jew"?
7. What rule does the dispensationalist follow in seeking to apply other Scriptures to himself besides those addressed specifically to us today?
8. How can it be shown that actually all Christians are dispensational to a degree?
9. What do we mean by higher criticism? What is the difference between what the higher critic does to the Bible and what the dispensationalist does?
10. Who invented dispensationalism?
11. Why was there not much need for the dispensational principle before Paul?
12. List any other objections which you have heard people voice against dispensational truth, and then try to answer them from Scripture.

STUDY Eleven

DISPENSATIONAL BOUNDARIES

We considered the extent of dispensationalism in Study Two. There we made special reference to the dispensational chart of the Bible. It will be well for us to refer to the **chart** again as we work our present study. In most of the past dispensations the boundary which marks the beginning is quite clearly defined. Innocence began with man's creation; Conscience began with man's fall; Human Government began with Noah after the Flood; Promise began with Abram; Law began with Moses at Mt. Sinai. When we come to the beginning of the present dispensation, however, the case is not so simple. There are many problems which confront us. Our solution will determine whether we shall be Pentecostalists, Baptists, posttribulationists, pretribulationists, scriptural dispensationalists, hyper-dispensationalists, or something else.

It is very natural that there should be many problems with the beginning of our dispensation because of its proximity to the greatest event in human history - the incarnation, ministry, death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God. We learn from Paul that the Cross is central in all of God's dealings with sinful man throughout all dispensations. Hence it has seemed only natural to feel that the coming of Christ into the world must mark the beginning of the greatest and the last of God's dispensations. What dispensation could surpass or eclipse that which Christ Himself inaugurated? This has undoubtedly been the approach of the amillennialist, for he believes the Gospel dispensation is the final one in God's dealings with mankind on earth. Others have felt since the Cross is the culmination of Christ's work, that event, or the closely related one of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost must mark the starting boundary of our dispensation. After all, does not Paul teach it was by the Cross that God reconciled both Jew and Gentile in one body ([Ephesians 2:16](#))? Where, it will be asked, can any subsequent event be found sufficiently great to mark the beginning of this dispensation of the Grace of God? These are some of the questions which we must face and answer if we would know just where our dispensation began.

In studying our **chart** it will be seen there is considerable detail shown between the birth of Christ and the beginning of the dispensation of the Mystery. First we note Christ "was made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4), and that He "was minister of the circumcision" (Romans 15:8). The Gospels relate that Christ Himself taught He was "not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). Although the Incarnation was the most stupendous event in human history up to that time, it is also true the ministry of the incarnate Son of God was limited to one small nation and that it transpired under the dispensation of Law. It was a ministry of *confirmation* of the promises made unto the fathers of the nation Israel, as Romans 15:8 goes on to say. It was not the beginning of a new dispensation, but the culmination of the old. The work of redemption had not yet been accomplished and the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. Both of these facts, and many more, are essential to the beginning

of a new dispensation.

There is, therefore, much more basis for beginning a new order after the Cross and with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Probably the majority of expositors take the view this is where our dispensation began. They would agree that the earthly ministry of Jesus was related to the Israelitish "kingdom of the heavens" which will be established when Christ returns as King of kings. Since Jew and Gentile have been reconciled in one body by the Cross ([Ephesians 2:16](#)), and since Jew and Gentile have been baptized by one spirit into the one Body of Christ ([I Corinthians 12:13](#)), it appears self-evident to many Bible students that the present dispensational order must have begun at Pentecost, which followed the Cross by a comparatively few days. Where else could they have been baptized by the Holy Spirit? (Compare Acts 1:5 - "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.")

The chief objection to this theory for the beginning of the new order is the revealed fact that at Pentecost God was not beginning the dispensation of the Mystery (which by definition means it was never before revealed), for Peter plainly states that that which God was doing was that which all of the prophets had foretold since the world began ([Acts 3:21, 24](#)). Had God not revealed exactly what He was doing at Pentecost, we might speculate. We know the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit are essential to the formation of the Body of Christ and to the beginning of the dispensation of the Mystery, but these things are just as essential to the establishment of the millennial kingdom. And Peter makes it very clear that what God was doing at Pentecost was with a view to establishing the long prophesied and promised kingdom, not to the beginning of a unique and entirely unprophesied Body of Christ.

We have spoken about the centrality of the Cross. We must bear this in mind when dealing with Ephesians 2:16. Paul does not state, as so many seem to think, that Jew and Gentile were reconciled in one Body at the time of the Cross, but *by* the Cross. This means it was through the instrumentality of the Cross. Many things have been done and will yet be done through the instrumentality of the Cross which were not done at the time of the Cross. When a sinner is saved today, it is *by* the Cross, but no one would claim he was saved at the time of Christ's death. Just so, Hebrews 2:14 states that Jesus Christ partook of flesh and blood "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." But was Satan destroyed at the time of Christ's death? Potentially, yes; just as that death is the basis for all of God's workings in redemption. But historically the answer is no, for years after that death Peter wrote that the Devil was going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). John even later tells us about a war that is yet to be fought in heaven, when the Devil and his angels will be cast out into the earth ([Revelation 12:9](#)). Satan's final and complete overthrow at the end of the Millennium is going to be *by* the Cross, just as the Body of Christ has been formed *by* the Cross, but neither of these events took place historically at the time of the Cross.

In spite of these scriptural reasons, some will still contend the Body of Christ

must have started at Pentecost, for there the baptism of the Holy Spirit first took place. Again we must scratch below the surface and see exactly what the Bible says. It is evident that whatever work of Holy Spirit baptism took place at Pentecost, it was that which John had predicted ([Acts 1:5](#)). Matthew 3: It tells us John preached, "He shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost, and with fire." In this baptism Jesus Christ is the Baptizer, and He baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 12:13 that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body." Here the Holy Spirit is the Baptizer. The Bible never confounds the Persons of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit does not send the Holy Spirit; neither does Christ baptize into Christ. Christ baptized with the Spirit at Pentecost, which resulted in their being endowed with miraculous power ([Acts 1:8](#); [Luke 24:49](#)). The Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ, which results in our being made members of His Body. These are evidently two separate and distinct works of baptism. Two associated facts will help to make this even more evident.

Peter interpreted this baptizing work of the Spirit at Pentecost to be the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy ([Acts 2:16](#)). According to Ephesians 3:5, 6, the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy could not have marked the beginning of the Body of Christ "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." Also Peter identifies Pentecost with "the *last days*" ([Acts 2:17](#)). If Pentecost ushered in the *last days* prophesied by Joel, it is difficult to see how Pentecost could have been *the first days* of the Body of Christ.

Referring to our [chart](#) again, we note that the first twelve chapters of Acts are labeled, "Gospel of the Circumcision Concerning the Kingdom." This section begins, as we have just seen, with the ushering in of the last days, which means that the first days of the Kingdom must have been close at hand. Peter made the return of Christ to establish the Kingdom to be conditional upon Israel's repentance ([Acts 3:19-26](#)). The nation did not repent - its leaders incarcerated the apostles and stoned Stephen to death. By the time of Acts chapters 7 and 8, it is evident that Jerusalem had given its answer to God. The offer of the Kingdom had been rejected. Severe persecution had been instigated against all of the followers of Jesus. From this point on to the end of Chapter 12 there is no statement to tell us exactly what God was doing or just what He was going to do.

There were two very important events in this period, however. The first was the conversion of the chief of the persecutors, Saul of Tarsus, and after that the sending of Peter to preach to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. Some feel these two events intimate that God was beginning something new, although it is admitted there was no direct revelation of the fact as yet. It cannot be denied that God was making preparation for something new, for He was saving the man who was to become the apostle of the new dispensation, and He was sending salvation to some Gentiles before Israel was converted.

Saul was converted about seven years after Pentecost. A year later Peter was sent to Cornelius. In the meantime Saul had gone to Arabia, returned to Damascus, and after three years had gone up to Jerusalem to see Peter ([Galatians 1:17, 18](#)). After that he went back to Syria and then to his home territory of Cilicia ([Galatians 1:21](#))

where he apparently continued to preach Jesus to his fellow Jews. A church had sprung up in Antioch of Syria as a result of the preaching of these Jews who had been scattered by the Jerusalem persecutions. Barnabas was sent by the Jerusalem church to investigate this new work. Upon seeing this was a real work of God, he went to Tarsus in search of Saul and brought him back to Antioch, where they ministered together for a whole year (Acts 11:22-26). The church then sent Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem with relief for the Jewish saints in Judea who had been hard hit by the great famine. About this time Herod had put James the brother of John to death and had tried to kill Peter. As Herod sat upon his throne and made an oration, the people who had rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah gave a shout, saying, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." The angel of the Lord immediately smote him and he died (Acts 12:23). This sorry event winds up God's dealings with Jerusalem. Saul and Barnabas return to Antioch, and from this point on the book of Acts is occupied with Paul and his new ministry.

Thus some seventeen years after Pentecost and ten years after Saul's conversion, the Holy Spirit said to the prophets and teachers at Antioch, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Saul had been saved for ten years before God separated him to his distinctive ministry in the dispensation of the Grace of God. He now goes forth on his missionary journeys, and the door of faith is opened unto the Gentiles (Acts 14:27). This great event, we believe, is the beginning of this present dispensation of the Grace of God, which is also called the dispensation of the Mystery because it was a secret, heretofore unrevealed purpose of God.

Referring to the **chart**, it will be seen that while Paul's separation in Acts 13 marks the beginning of our present dispensation, the remainder of the book of Acts, covering some twenty years, is a period of transition. Paul was saved during the previous period of introduction to and preparation for the millennial kingdom. There were thousands of Jewish believers, as well as the twelve apostles, who were in the same circumstances. God did not immediately overthrow the existing order to make place for the new. In fact, there was much which did not need to be overthrown or changed. While Paul preached the same Jesus and the same death upon the cross as did the Twelve, he preached it with a new meaning, for God had revealed to Paul the secret of His will (Ephesians 1:9).

The closing boundary line of this dispensation is the Rapture described in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Corinthians 15:51, 52. This will happen in an instant of time and will result in the removal from the earth of the entire Body of Christ, both living and dead. This will be followed by the period of Tribulation upon the earth. We do not believe the Body of Christ will experience any part of this Tribulation, and that for at least two reasons. The Tribulation is one of the most prophesied periods, whereas this dispensation was not predicted. The Tribulation is an entirely different dispensation from that of the Grace of God. When the Body of Christ, which is basically the Mystery, is removed from earth, there will be no further dispensing of the Mystery.

The chart shows that the dispensation of the Kingdom will be set off in its

boundaries by the Second Advent of Christ at the beginning, and by the final rebellion and judgment at the end of the thousand years. This will be followed by the dispensation of the Fullness of Times, in which there will be new heavens and a new earth. There is no record that this dispensation will ever end. Its very name implies an endless duration, for it is the dispensation of the filling up to completion of the times. It is the final and eternal state of all of the saved when all things in heaven and earth will have been headed up in Christ.

Most of our present study has been devoted to the boundaries of our present dispensation. There have been two reasons for this emphasis. First, it is more important for us know about our own dispensation than some other one. And second, the beginning of our dispensation has many more complications than that of any other period. If we know when our dispensation began and with what event it will end, we will be able to render a much more intelligent service to our Lord. Our service must first of all be a spiritual service, but it must be an intelligent one as well.

S T U D Y Eleven - REVIEW

1. State what events mark the boundaries of the first four dispensations.
2. According to [Hebrews 8:13](#), what was it that brought the Law covenant to an end? Did the Jewish believers have this fact revealed to them during the first part of the Acts period? (See [Acts 2:46](#); [3:1](#); [5:12](#); compare [Acts 21:20](#).)
3. Why are there more problems connected with the beginning of this dispensation than with any other?
4. What is a person called who believes the present dispensation began with Christ's earthly ministry and that there will be no Kingdom dispensation after this one?
5. Although we might naturally have expected that when God sent His Son into the world He would have manifested Himself in a glorious display of power to all peoples, what does the Scripture actually reveal?
6. What two great events had to be accomplished before there could have been either the present dispensation or that of the Kingdom?
7. Do you think Peter had any doubt about what was happening at Pentecost, according to [Acts 2:16](#)? Did he say anything about God beginning an entirely new and unprophesied dispensation?
8. What is the difference between that which was done *at* the Cross and that which was done *by* the Cross?
9. Compare the Holy Spirit baptism at Pentecost and the baptism described in [1 Corinthians 12:13](#). Explain the difference between the Persons doing the work and the

work which was done.

10. If it be true that God was bringing the old dispensation into its last days and was offering the millennial kingdom to Israel at Pentecost, why was the Millennium not established?

11. What two important events happened during the first twelve chapters of Acts which we can now see were preparatory for the new dispensation?

12. How long after Pentecost was Saul converted? How long before he was separated unto his special "grace" ministry?

13. Although Paul began his special ministry in dispensing the grace of God in Acts 13, what characterizes the period of the next twenty years?

14. What reasons can you give to show that the Body of Christ will not be on earth during the Tribulation period?

STUDY Twelve

THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY

In our concluding study in this series we want to try to answer the question, "What is the dispensation of the Mystery?" We have learned that that is the name which the Bible gives to our present dispensation. We have discovered why it is called the Mystery - because it was a purpose which God had kept as a secret from all generations of mankind until it was revealed through the apostle Paul. We have understood from Ephesians 3 that it is also called "the dispensation of the Grace of God" because all of God's working today is based purely upon grace and not upon the kingdom covenants and promises. We have not, however, examined the particular practices which are basic to this dispensation - a word, as we have seen, which means the laws by which a household is governed.

It is our understanding that the revelation of this dispensation is to be found only in the Pauline epistles and that everything essential to it is to be found in this body of Scripture. As we have pointed out before, all Scripture is profitable for us, some in one way and some in another. Throughout the Bible we learn the many great unchanging truths about God, as well as discovering His methods of dealing with mankind in other dispensations. We can hardly understand and appreciate this present dispensation without having a knowledge of all of the others. But when it comes to the content of God's spiritual program for today, we believe this is to be found in its completeness in Paul's epistles. This conviction is based upon Paul's own claims of being the vessel through whom God made known the Mystery ([Ephesians 3:25](#); [Colossians 1:24-27](#); [Galatians 1:11, 12](#); [Romans 16:25](#)).

In this study we want to look at our present dispensation from the viewpoints of salvation, standing, supply, and service.

SALVATION

When we examined the study on the various gospels in the Bible we learned that God's requirements for salvation, as far as man is concerned, have not been the same in all dispensations. We saw, however, that God has revealed to us today through Paul's epistles the one and only basis upon which He has been able to offer salvation in any dispensation. That basic fact is, of course, the vicarious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:25 makes it plain that Christ's death is the basis not only for the forgiveness of our sins, but also for the forgiveness of the sins of past ages. This underlying secret of God's method of dealing with sin was not made known until it was revealed through Paul.

God had made known other facts about salvation previously. It has been a basic fact throughout all dispensations that "without faith it is impossible to please Him"

(Hebrews 11:6). In pre-Cross days God required the offering of animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins. There is nothing in Scripture to intimate that these people understood their sacrifices were a foreshadowing of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We now know that they were, however, by the revelation given in the epistles. Nevertheless, these sacrifices did plainly teach the idea of substitution or vicarious suffering. The worshipper laid his hands upon the head of the animal, thus identifying himself with the animal, and then killed the animal ([Leviticus 1:4, 5](#)).

This was not salvation by works, although certain works were required as an expression of faith. God told the people their sins would be forgiven if they would offer the sacrifices He had prescribed. If they believed God they would indeed offer the required sacrifices. But the sacrifices in themselves did not save. This is evident from the fact many people offered sacrifices without real faith and were not saved ([Isaiah 1:11-13](#); [Jeremiah 6:20](#)). The Old Testament made it plain that to obey is better than mere animal sacrifices ([I Samuel 15:22](#)). And of course in [Hebrews 10:4](#) we learn it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Nevertheless God required various sacrifices and ceremonies as expressions of faith.

Most Christians can understand the truth about the Old Testament animal sacrifices but they cannot understand the truth about water baptism. The Old Testament, we are told in Hebrews 9:10, had its standing in meats and drinks and "divers baptisms." Baptism ordinances were an integral part of the Law. Christ lived His life under the Law. He along with His disciples observed all the ceremonies of the Law. John's baptism, and later the baptism which Christ commanded His apostles to practice, were expressions of faith on the part of believers just the same as the other ordinances were. They were required for salvation just as much as the sacrifices were. The word in the commission to the Twelve was, "He that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The Pentecostal message was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for* the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Christ's word to Saul was, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

Baptism never saved anyone, but it was required as an obedience of faith under the Pentecostal order. Only unbelief would have refused baptism. But in this Present dispensation of the Mystery, salvation is wholly by grace and entirely apart from works, both the works of the Law ([Romans 3:20-22](#)) and the works of righteousness ([Titus 3:5](#)). Just as definitely as God once required certain works as an expression of faith, just so definitely He requires we now come for salvation entirely apart from any works with all of our faith in the finished work of Christ - "For by grace are ye saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). God has always showed grace to mankind, but because salvation today is wholly by grace apart from all works, this dispensation of the Mystery is also called the dispensation of the Grace of God ([Ephesians 3:2](#)).

Another factor which makes this the dispensation of the Grace of God is the position into which the whole world has been brought. God long ago gave up the Gentile world and confined His special dealings to the one nation Israel. Israel had a

claim upon God by reason of the covenants God had made with her. While God was showing a certain amount of grace, it was limited to only one nation. As long as Israel stood as the favored nation there could not be a dispensation of pure grace. One of the determining factors in the beginning of this present dispensation was the casting away or the fall of Israel ([Romans 11:12, 15](#)). When this took place, all nations had been cast aside by God so that no one in the whole world had any claim upon God. As Galatians 3:22 puts it, "The Scripture hath concluded *all* under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Romans 11:32 states this same truth, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

Thus we see that in this dispensation the whole world has been leveled before God. The Jew has no more claim than the Gentile. If anyone out of this guilty world is ever to be saved, it must be wholly by grace. And that is exactly the situation. How aptly does Paul call this - the dispensation of the Grace of God.

STANDING

Salvation in this dispensation of the Mystery brings believers into a new and unique position or standing before God. They become members of the Body of Christ. As we have seen, this is the name for God's church in this present dispensation. This Body did not exist prior to this dispensation, except in the mind and purpose of God. Historically it came into being when God cast Israel aside and inaugurated the present dispensation. It is important to see this had happened before Paul wrote his first epistle. The fact is plainly recorded in Galatians and Romans, both written during the Acts period, and in his earliest epistle where Paul says of Israel, "for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (I Thessalonians 2:16). This new position as members of the Body of Christ is also plainly described in Paul's earlier epistles ([Romans 12:5](#); [1 Corinthians 12:13, 27](#)). Acts 28 does not mark the beginning of a new dispensation or of the Body of Christ, as some extremists contend, but rather the end of a transition.

This new standing in Christ is described as being blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ ([Ephesians 1:3](#)). It is based upon the doctrine of identification. In being baptized by the Spirit into Christ, we have been baptized into His death, burial, and resurrection ([Romans 6:35](#); [Colossians 2:10-12](#)). Ephesians 2:6 tells us we have not only been raised up with Christ, but we have been given a seat with Christ in heavenly places.

All of these heavenly possessions which we have in Christ are called "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8). This means not merely that they are beyond estimation but that they cannot be traced out in the Old Testament Scriptures. This whole truth of unto what we have been saved is a part of the great Mystery which was revealed to and through Paul. Surely we can find no more fitting a term to describe this glorious position than that which Paul employs in Ephesians 2:7, "the exceeding riches of His grace"!

SUPPLY

By supply we mean the equipment God has given us for the spiritual life in this dispensation of the Grace of God. This supply stands in sharp contrast with that of the Law dispensation. The Law made all of its exacting demands upon the flesh. Man had to muster sufficient strength in himself to measure up to God's holy demands. Of course, no one (except Jesus Christ) ever measured up to the righteousness of the Law. Instead, the Law brought in the whole world guilty before God and the conclusion is inescapable, "therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Romans 3:20).

Under the dispensation of Grace, God does not make any demands of the flesh. Instead, as we have just seen, God identifies the believer with Christ. Therefore he should reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God (Romans 6:11). The believer is not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Romans 8:9). He is called upon to walk in the Spirit so that he will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). The believer's supply is nothing short of Christ Himself indwelling the believer by means of the Holy Spirit. Thus Paul could say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). The indwelling Christ is the believer's armor as described in Ephesians 6:11-18. There he tells us to put on the whole armor of God. In Romans 13:11-14 he speaks of the armor again, but here he says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

The life under grace is nothing short of a supernatural, heavenly walk. The nature of flesh cannot even begin to approximate its requirements. The flesh must be reckoned dead and God's divinely given supply must be relied upon. No one but Christ can live the Christian life, and He lives in the believer today for this very purpose. Right here we can see a contrast between the present and the coming Kingdom dispensation. Today we are given the Spirit and told to walk in the Spirit and to be filled with the Spirit. In the coming Millennium, the Spirit will also be given in fulfillment of the New Covenant, but from Ezekiel 36:27 we learn this - "And I will put my Spirit within you, and *cause you* to walk in my statutes, and ye *shall* keep my judgments, and do them." It appears from this, and from the foretaste of this experience at Pentecost, that God will so take possession of these Jewish believers that they will be caused to do God's will, much the same as will be our experience in glory after the resurrection. Today it is our privilege to yield to the Spirit of God and live a Spirit-filled life, but we have the power to refuse and to walk on a carnal plane, even as did the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

SERVICE

Anyone who makes a study of the words related to service in Paul's letters will have no difficulty in understanding that service was to be rendered primarily to God. He calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ. He told slaves to be obedient to their masters, "not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ" (Ephesians 6:6). Over and over he speaks about serving God and with goodwill doing service as to the Lord (Galatians 1:10; Romans 6:22; Colossians 3:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). Paul tells

us, "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (I Corinthians 7:23). Since we are not our own we owe all of our service to our Master, Who is Christ. When we serve Him we will be serving others also, but it is easily possible to serve men in religious matters without ever serving Christ.

In past dispensations, specially that of the Law, service consisted almost wholly in the ritual of the priesthood. One whole tribe was set aside in Israel to do nothing but accomplish the service of God. Hebrews 9:9 makes it plain, however, that these priests who did this service were never made perfect. They had to offer often times the same sacrifices, year by year continually, which could never take away sins ([Hebrews 10:1, 11](#)).

Our service today is rendered on the basis of the finished work of Christ. Since the work is completed, there is now no place for an order of priesthood or sacrifices. Under Moses it was "meats, and drinks, and divers baptisms" (Hebrews 9:10), but under grace we have nothing to do with the practice of any such ordinances. Although ritualistic denominations have made a sacrifice and a sacrament and an ordinance out of the Lord's Supper, God never made it that. Unfortunately the King James translators read this idea into I Corinthians 11:2 and called the Lord's Supper and other of Paul's divinely given instructions by the name of "ordinances." The word actually means things delivered. See any revision or marginal reading, as in the *Scofield Reference Bible*.

Very closely related to the believer's service is his commission. One of the great blunders of the church has been in trying to follow the so-called Great Commission given by Christ to the Twelve. (See [Matthew 28:19, 20](#); [Mark 16:15-18](#)). The only thing this commission has in common with ours is that it is worldwide. In every other detail it is different. It commands the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom with a view to establishing the millennial order, whereas our commission commands the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God with a view to building the Body of Christ. It included signs connected with serpents, poison, healing the sick, and raising the dead; ours has nothing to do with these things. By trying to follow the Kingdom commission the church has been led into all kinds of fanaticism and error. The commission for the Body of Christ will be found throughout Paul's epistles. Perhaps one of the clearest statements of it is in [2 Corinthians 5:14-21](#). Remember, these instructions of Christ through Paul were spoken from heaven years after Christ gave the Kingdom commission.

In closing this series of studies you should be aware of the great importance of interpreting the Bible dispensationally. You should have a fairly clear understanding of God's overall plan. And it is to be hoped you have learned what God's dispensation for us is, and that you have submitted yourselves to His current program to be used in His service.

S T U D Y Twelve - REVIEW

1. Why is our dispensation called the dispensation of the Mystery?

2. What is another name for this dispensation?
3. In what part of the Scripture will we find the special truth about our own dispensation?
4. What great truth does [Romans 3:25](#) make clear?
5. Although Old Testament saints did not understand that their animal sacrifices were types of the coming sacrifice of Christ, what must they have understood to be the meaning of their offerings?
6. If animal sacrifices could not actually take away sins, as Hebrews 10:4 states, what was the sense in offering them?
7. What Scripture shows us baptism is in the same category as the Old Testament meat and drink ceremonies?
8. Although neither animal sacrifices nor water baptism in themselves ever saved anyone, in what sense were they necessary for salvation?
9. What does God ask us to do today as an expression of faith for salvation?
10. Why could there not be a dispensation of Grace as long as God was dealing only or primarily with His specially privileged nation Israel?
11. What event in God's dealings with Israel really marks the beginning of this present dispensation?
12. What standing do believers today have before God that people have never before had or ever will have in future dispensations?
13. Through what act of the Holy Spirit does the believer come to possess all of the blessings which belong to Christ?
14. Do you think God expected a more righteous life of the people under the Law than He does now under grace?
15. Which people do you think had or have the greatest advantage in being able to live a life well pleasing to God, those under Law or under grace? Why?
16. If all believers today have Christ indwelling their bodies by the Holy Spirit, why is it that all do not live good lives?
17. Indicate in what ways the service of God differed in Old Testament times from that of today.

18. Why is it there is no scriptural place today for a human priesthood?
19. What do we have in common with the so-called Great Commission, and what is there which is different in these orders from those God has given to us?
20. If a master gives two different sets of orders at different times, which should be obeyed, the first or the last ones given? Which commission did Christ give last, that of [Mark 16:15-18](#) or [2 Corinthians 5:14-21](#)?

CHART OF THE DISPENSATIONS

CHARLES F. BAKER

SECOND ADVENT

HUMAN GOVERNMENT CULMINATED WITH COMING OF CHRIST AS KING

I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION

EXODUS 19 - THE GOSPELS

ACTS 1-12

ACTS 13-28

PAULINE EPISTLES

CREATION OF MAN

INNOCENCE

THE FALL

CONSCIENCE

NOAH - FLOOD

HUMAN GOVERNMENT

BABEL

ABRAM IN UNCIRCUMCISION

PROMISE

ABRAHAM IN CIRCUMCISION

THE LAW ENTERED THAT THE OFFENSE MIGHT AROUND

LAW OF MOSES ADDED TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME GALATIANS 3:19

CHRIST MADE UNDER THE LAW - A MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION

CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW - ROMANS 10:4

PENTECOST

GOSPEL OF CIRCUMCISION

CONCERNING THE KINGDOM

PAUL SEPARATED

TWELVE DECREASE TRANSITION - KINGDOM TO BODY

GOSPEL OF THE PAUL UNCIRCUMCISION GALATIANS 2:7-9

ISRAEL SET ASIDE

DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY

(A PARENTHESIS IN PROPHECY) THE BODY OF CHRIST "GRACE"

FULLNESS OF GENTILES

RAPTURE

GREAT TRIBULATION

MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

FULLNESS OF ISRAEL WHOLE WORLD BLESSED ROMANS 11:12-15

FINAL REBELLION - JUDGMENT REVELATION 20:7-15

NEW HEAVEN - NEW EARTH

DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES EPHESIANS 1:10

IN THEE SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED

CONSCIENCE ACTIVE BUT MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY MODIFIED BY PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

4000 B.C.

2400 B.C.

1500 B.C.

35 A.D.

45 A.D.

70 A.D.

1900 yrs +

7 yrs.

1000 yrs.

ETERNITY