

LESSON 3 – DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY



Reading Assignment:

Bible Reading: Exodus 1- 20; Revelation 20, 21
Text Reading: Chapter 4 & 5

A DESCRIPTION OF DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

Dispensational theology is a _____ of theology that attempts to develop the Bible's _____ on the basis of the _____ of God. It represents the whole of Scripture as being covered by several _____ of God's rule.

A DEFINITION OF THE TERM "DISPENSATION"

The biblical word for "dispensation" literally means "management." Thus, a dispensation is a _____ of God administering His _____ over the world as He progressively works out His _____ for world history.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF GOD ADMINISTERING HIS RULE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Adultery -

Murder -

Eating regulations-

Note - It is important to note that God has never changed His moral _____, but from time to time He has changed the ways in which He _____ His unchangeable moral absolutes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH DISPENSATION

A particular _____ of God administering His rule.

A particular _____ for man. Man is responsible to obey God in accord with God's way of administering His rule.

Special _____. Each new dispensation involves a new way of God administering His rule. It is essential for man to know what that new way is, so that he will also know what his responsibility is in the new dispensation. The only way that man can know these new things is by God revealing them to him. Thus, each new

dispensation of God's rule requires some new revelation, and it requires it in the beginning part of the dispensation.

- A _____ for man. The test in each dispensation is as follows: Will man obey God's rule by fulfilling his God-ordained responsibility?
- Man's _____. Each dispensation demonstrates the failure of man to obey God's rule.
- Man's _____. Man's failure brings God's judgment

SOME IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

The dispensations are different ways of God administering His _____ of the world, not different ways of _____. Salvation has always been by the grace of God through faith in the Word of God.

A dispensation is not the same thing as an _____, even though both may cover the same time period. A dispensation is a particular way of God administering His rule, but an age is a particular time period.

A dispensation may involve an administration of God's rule over _____ of mankind (for example, the dispensation of human government) or over only one _____ of mankind (for example, the dispensation of the Mosaic Law).

A new dispensation may continue some ruling _____ of earlier dispensations (for example, human government has continued as a ruling element through several dispensations), or it may _____ some ruling elements of earlier dispensations (for example, the Mosaic Law was discontinued as a ruling element when the dispensation of grace began). But a new dispensation will always have at least one _____ ruling element not introduced before. Usually each new dispensation is named after the new ruling element.

A new dispensation demands new _____. Thus, Dispensationalism has a strong concept of progressive revelation.

EXAMINATION OF THE DIFFERENT DISPENSATIONS

THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCY

1. Time Period - From the _____ of man to the _____ of man.
2. Ruling Element - An unconfirmed favorable _____ toward God.
3. Scripture - Genesis 1:26-3:24.
4. Man's Responsibility - To obey God on the basis of his favorable disposition.
5. Test - Would man obey God on the basis of his favorable disposition?
6. Failure - Man rebelled against God.
7. Judgment -
 - a. Man died _____. He lost his favorable disposition toward God and replaced it with a disposition of enmity against God (the sin nature) (Romans 8:7).
 - b. Man became subject to disease, deformity, accidents, physical death.
 - c. Man lost his perfect environment.
 - d. Satan usurped the rule of the world system.

THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE

Time Period - From the fall of man through the Noahic _____.

Ruling Elements -

- a. The human _____ (Romans 2:14-15)
- b. The _____ by the Holy Spirit (Genesis 6:3)

Scripture - Genesis 4:1-8:19.

Man's Responsibility - To obey God on the basis of his conscience and the restraint by the Holy Spirit.

Test - Would man obey God on the basis of his conscience and the restraint by the Holy Spirit?

Failure - Cain refused to bring the kind of sacrifice required by God, committed the first murder and built a godless civilization characterized by polygamy and violence; the human race became corrupt (Genesis 6:5).

Judgment - The Noahic Flood which destroyed all but eight people.

THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

Time Period - From the Noahic Flood to the _____ of Abraham.

Ruling Elements - Human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit plus human _____ with its authority to administer _____ punishment (Genesis 9:5, 6; Romans 13:1-7).

Scripture - Genesis 8:20-11:32.

Man's Responsibility - To obey God on the basis of human conscience, the restraint by the Holy spirit and human government.

Test - Would man obey God on the basis of these three ruling elements?

Failure - Noah got drunk; his descendants began to build the city and tower of Babel in rebellion against God's command to populate the whole earth.

Judgment - God confused the _____ of the people and thereby forced them to separate and spread out over the earth.

THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE

Time Period - From God's call of Abraham to the giving of the _____ at Mount Sinai.

Ruling Elements - Human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government plus divine _____ (Galatians 3:15-22; Hebrews 6:13-15).

Scripture - Genesis 12-Exodus 18.

Man's Responsibility - To obey God on the basis of human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government and promise.

Test - Would man obey God on the basis of these four ruling elements?

Failure - Through lapses of faith in God's promises, Abraham fathered Ishmael through Hagar and lied twice about his wife; Isaac lied about his wife; Jacob was a deceiver; the Jews did not return from Egypt to Canaan after the famine of Joseph's time ended.

Judgment - Throughout their history the Jews have had problems with Ishmael's descendants, and they eventually were subjected to slavery and threatened with extinction in Egypt.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE MOSAIC LAW

Time Period - From the giving of the Mosaic Law at Mount Sinai to the _____ of Jesus Christ on the cross at Mount Calvary.

Ruling Elements - Human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government, promise plus the _____.

Scripture - Exodus 19:1-Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:41; Luke 23:49 and John 20:30.

Man's Responsibility - The people of Israel were to obey God on the basis of human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government, promise, and the Mosaic Law.

Test - Would the people of Israel obey God on the basis of these five ruling elements?

Failure - The people of Israel broke the Mosaic Law repeatedly, rejected their Messiah, and had Him crucified.

Judgment - Israel suffered many judgments during the fifth dispensation. Among the worst were the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, Israel's temporary removal from its place of blessing (Romans 11) and its worldwide dispersion as the result of its rejection of Christ.

THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

Time Period - From the death of Jesus Christ to His _____ coming.

Ruling Elements - During most of its duration, the sixth dispensation has five ruling elements: Human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government, promise plus _____ (Titus 2:11-12). The Mosaic Law was abolished as a ruling element when Christ died (Galatians 3:19; Romans 6:14), thus, it is not a ruling element in the sixth dispensation. In addition, the restraint by the Holy Spirit will be removed as a ruling element when it is time for the Antichrist to be revealed near the end of this dispensation (2 Thessalonians 2:7,8).

Scripture - Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:50 and John 19:31 through Revelation 19:21.

Man's Responsibility - To obey God on the basis of human conscience, the restraint by the Holy Spirit, human government, promise and grace.

Test - Does man obey God on the basis of these five ruling elements?

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Failure - The majority of unsaved Jews and Gentiles do not accept the gift of righteousness. Organized Christendom does not fulfill the Great Commission, maintain a pure membership, discipline unruly members, prevent false teaching from existing within it, and contend earnestly for the true faith. Individual believers do not always live sensible, godly lives, associate with a local church, evangelize and make disciples and use spiritual gifts properly. By the end of this dispensation the unsaved will stage a major revolt against God's rule (Psalms 2:1-3; Revelation 16:12-16; 19:17-21) and organized Christendom will be very apostate (Revelation 17).

Judgment - God chastens believers for disobedience (even premature physical death)(Acts 5:1-6; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 11:27-32; Hebrews 12:5-13; 1 John 5:16). He puts some local churches out of existence (Revelation 2:5). Toward the end of this dispensation God will remove the Holy Spirit's restraint of evil (2 Thessalonians 2:7,8); apostate organized Christendom will be destroyed (Revelation 17:16); God will pour out divine judgments upon the world (the Tribulation Period) (Revelation 6-19), and He will crush the revolt of the unsaved (Revelation 19:17-21).

THE DISPENSATION OF THE MILLENNIUM

Time Period - After the second coming of Christ and for _____ years.

Ruling Elements - human conscience, human government, plus the _____ of Christ. Since the seventh dispensation will be the final one, it will bring the fulfillment of God's promises. Once promises are fulfilled, they cease to be promises. Thus, promise will not be a ruling element in the last dispensation. In addition, although salvation will continue to be by grace through faith, grace will not function as a ruling element (Isaiah 11:3,4; 29:20,21; Zechariah 14:16-19).

Scripture Revelation 20:1-6.

Man's Responsibility - To obey God on the basis of human conscience, human government and the theocratic rule of Christ.

Test - Will man obey God on the basis of these three ruling elements?

Failure - Some unsaved will rebel outwardly against Christ's rule during His reign (Isaiah 11:3,4; 29:20,21; Jeremiah 31:29,30). Others will despise Christ's absolute, righteous rule inwardly, then will follow Satan in his last revolt against God's rule when he is released from the abyss after the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-10).

Judgment - Those who will rebel outwardly during Christ's reign will be executed (Isaiah 11:3,4; 29:20,21; Jeremiah 31:29,30). God will crush the final revolt after the Millennium by sending fire to destroy the human rebels and by casting Satan into the lake of fire for everlasting torment (Revelation 20:9,10).

KEY ELEMENTS OF DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY'S BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

➤ **The Ultimate Goal Of History**

According to Dispensational Theology, the ultimate goal or purpose of history is for God to _____ Himself by demonstrating the _____ that He alone is the _____ God.

➤ **The Recognition Of Distinctions**

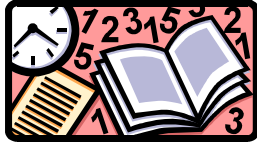
According to Dispensational Theology, the distinctions in the Bible are the result of God administering His _____ in different ways in different _____ of history. In other words, the distinctions are the result of the different _____ of God's rule.

➤ **The Progress Of Revelation**

According to Dispensational Theology, each _____ dispensation requires new _____ because it involves a new _____ of God administering His rule.

➤ **The Unifying Principle That Ties The Distinctions And Progressive Stages Of Revelation Together And That Directs Them Toward The Fulfillment Of The Goal Of History**

According to Dispensational Theology, the unifying principle for _____ of history is the sovereign _____ of God.



Homework

Using your lecture tapes, syllabus, textbook, and Bible, **briefly** answer the following.

1. Define Dispensational Theology and briefly name the dispensations. [20 points]

2. Give a brief history of Dispensationalism from its beginning through to the 20th Century. [20 points]

3. Define “Dispensation.” [20 points]

4. Give the essential characteristics [primary and secondary] of a dispensation. [We do not want a discussion of specific dispensations, just those characteristics held in common.] [20 points]

5. Briefly discuss the Dispensation of Human Government. [20 points]

I have read _____ % of the textbook. I have read _____ % of the Scripture Reading

Signed: _____ Date: _____