

God's Plan For The Ages



Dispensationalism

1

Dispensationalism Part II

2

The Greek word *oikonomia* (*οἰκονομία*), comes from the verb that means to manage, regulate, administer, and plan. The word itself is a compound whose parts mean literally "to divide, apportion, administer or manage the affairs of an inhabited house." In the papyri the officer (*oikonomos*) who administered a dispensation was referred to as a steward or manager of an estate, or as a treasurer.

➤ Thus, the central idea in the word dispensation is that of managing or administering the affairs of a household.

3

The various forms of the word **dispensation** appear in the New Testament twenty times.

The verb *oikonomeō* is used once in Luke 16:2, where it is translated "to be a steward."

The noun *oikonomos* appears ten times (Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; Gal. 4:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10) and is usually translated "steward" or "manager" (but "treasurer" in Rom. 16:23).

The noun *oikonomia* is used nine times (Luke 16:2,3,4; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2,9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4). In these instances it is translated variously "stewardship," "dispensation," "administration," "job," "commission".

4

Definitions:

Scofield Bible: "A Dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God."

5

The Concepts implied:

(1) a deposit of divine revelation concerning God's will, embodying what God requires of man as to his conduct;

(2) man's stewardship of this revelation, in which he is responsible to obey it; and

(3) a time period, often called an "age," during which this divine revelation is dominant in the testing of man's obedience to God.

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The Purpose

The purpose of each dispensation, then, is to place man under a specific rule of conduct, but such stewardship is NOT a condition of salvation.

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A Stewardship

On man's part the continuing requirement is obedience to the revelation of God. This obedience in a stewardship of faith. Although the divine revelation unfolds progressively, the deposit of truth in the earlier time-periods is not discarded; rather it is cumulative. Thus conscience (moral responsibility) is an abiding truth in human life (*Rom. 2:15; 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2*), although it does not continue as a dispensation.

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Similarly, the saved of this present dispensation are "not under law" as a specific test of obedience to divine revelation (*Gal. 5:18; cp. Gal. 2:16; 3:11*), yet the law remains an integral part of the Holy Scriptures which, to the redeemed, are profitable for "instruction in righteousness" (*2 Tim. 3:16-17; cp. Rom. 15:4*).

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A Functioning Definition

"A dispensation is God's distinctive method of governing mankind or a group of men during a period of human history, marked by a **crucial event, test, failure, and judgment**. From the divine standpoint, it is a stewardship, a rule of life, or a responsibility for managing God's affairs in His house. From the historical standpoint, it is a stage in the progress of revelation." (*Paul David Nevin, "Some Major Problems in Dispensational Interpretation" (unpublished Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1963), 97.)*

"A dispensation is from God's **viewpoint an economy**; from man's, **a responsibility**; and in relation to progressive revelation, **a stage** in it." *Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 30*

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The structure of the dispensations is an attempt to relate successive stages in God's dealings with us to His overall plan. We cannot discover the broad scheme except through the individual parts, and we should review our understanding of the separate pieces in the light of the whole. *Paul S. Karleen, The Handbook to Bible Study : With a Guide to the Scofield Study System, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).*

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The "sine qua non" Latin-"without which not" of **Dispensationalism**:

- (1). A **consistent**, normal (historical- grammatical) literal interpretation of Scripture.
- (2). A clear **distinction** between Israel and the Church. A distinction between Law and Grace.
- (3). Taking into account **progressive revelation**. For example, the doctrine of the Trinity is not fully developed in the Old Testament.
- (4). Recognizing the **glory of God** as the ultimate purpose of God in all his dealings with man. (Salvation is one of the manifestations of that overall program of glory.)

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How Many Dispensations are there?

At least three(3) Dispensations are specifically mentioned in Scripture.

Some Dispensationalist have found seven(7) inferred in the Scriptures.

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In Ephesians 1:10 he writes of "an administration [dispensation, KJV] suitable to the fullness of the times," which is a future period.

In Ephesians 3:2 he designates the "stewardship [dispensation, KJV] of God's grace," which was the emphasis of the content of his preaching at that time.

In Colossians 1:25-26 it is implied that another dispensation preceded the present one, in which the mystery of Christ in the believer is revealed.

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Future Dispensation:
"Fullness of Times"
(The Millennium)

Present Dispensation:
"Grace"

Past Dispensation:
Old Testament Dispensation

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The Relation of the word "Age" to "Dispensation."

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Age

AGE. (αἰών). "This term, which is translated *world* 31 times in the KJV of the New Testament, means a block or period of time. It hardly need be said that there is no observable relation between the English noun *world* and a period of time. By reason of this confusion in terms, the whole revelation respecting successive ages was soon lost to view because of the translation."

Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Originally Published: Dallas, Tex. : Dallas Seminary Press, 1947-1948. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 7:121.

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Passages affected by the mistranslation of AGE *aion* (αἰών).

Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the ~~worlds~~ (aion NOT kosmos) ages

Here it is declared that Christ arranged or programmed the successive ages of time

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Matthew 13: Kingdom Parables

Matthew 13:38-40: "The field is the (*kosmos*) world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom (Jews); but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end (full completion) of the ~~world~~ age; 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~~ (*aion* NOT *kosmos*) age"

Reference here is made to the Jewish age (tribulation) which has yet seven years to run after the church age.

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In this period between Jesus' rejection and His future return, He the King is absent, but His kingdom continues, though in a newly revealed form (*The Church- called the mystery form of the Kingdom*).

This Age is broader than but includes the Church Age. The church did not begin until the day of Pentecost, and it will conclude at the Rapture, at least seven years before the end of this Age. This "mystery period" is characterized by profession of faith but also by a counter-profession that cannot be separated until the final judgment. This mystery period does not involve a universal triumph of the gospel, as postmillennialists affirm, nor does it include Christ's earthly reign. It simply is the time between His two Advents, before He returns to institute the kingdom promised to David through his greater Son. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:50.

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The Mystery of the Church

"To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration [dispensation] (*οικονομία*), of the mystery which for ages (*αἰών*) has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places." (**Ephesians 3:8-10, NASB95**).

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continued...

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation [stewardship] (*οικονομία*), of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages (*αἰών*) and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (**Colossians 1:24-27, KJV**).

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Augustine (354 - 430 A.D.)

"Distinguish the ages and the Scriptures harmonize"

23

Important Distinctions

➤ LAW AND GRACE

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

"It is a serious mistake to press law-observance in the face of repeated revelations that the believer of this age is not under law as his rule of life (Rom. 6:14; 10:4, 5; Gal. 5:18; 2 Cor. 3:11, 17)."

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For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. **Romans 6:14 (NKJV)**

⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. ⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." **Romans 10:4-5 (NKJV)**

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **Galatians 5:18 (NKJV)**

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⁷But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, ⁸how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. ¹⁰For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.

¹¹For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious. ¹²Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech-- ¹³unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. **2 Corinthians 3:7-17 (NKJV)**

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The Apostle Paul's Testimony

"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law *μη ὦν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον*), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law (*μη ὦν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ* - not being an outlaw [lawless] of God but an in-law of Christ), so as to win those not having the law (*the Gentiles*)." **(1 Corinthians 9:19-21, NIV).**

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➤THE JEW, THE GENTILE, AND THE CHURCH

"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (1 Cor. 10: 32).

The Jew	The Gentile	The Church
who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. Romans 9:4-5 (NKJV)	¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called the Circumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- ¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Ephesians 2:11-12 (NKJV)	¹² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ¹³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23 (NKJV)

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The Church and Israel

"A mixture of the teachings concerning Israel, as a nation, with the revelations concerning the Church, the body of Christ, is groundless in Scripture. It is hopelessly confusing and grotesque, for under this plan only Israel's blessings are borrowed; her curses and penalties are, naturally, not wanted. No progress can be made in the kingdom studies unless plain words are taken in their obviously plain meaning..."

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...In the Bible "Israel" is not the "Church"; "Zion" is not the body of saints of this dispensation; the "throne of David" is not Heaven, nor will it ever be; the "land of your fathers" is not "Paradise" and the "house of Jacob" is not a host of Gentiles ignorantly attempting to force an entrance into Judaism."

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*The Dispensations
& their relationship to
The Covenants*

The Covenants are
the unity to the
diversity of the
Dispensations

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The Dispensation of Innocence—

Genesis 1:28–3:6

The Dispensation of Conscience—

Genesis 3:7–8:14

The Dispensation of Government—

Genesis 8:15–11:32

The Noahic Covenant - Genesis 9:7-on

**Abrahamic Covenant - Genesis 15:18 through
the Kingdom**

Dispensation of Promise –

Genesis 12:1-Exodus 18:27

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Mosaic Covenant - Exodus 19:1-Mt. 27:51

Dispensation of Law - Exodus 19:1-Mt. 27:51

The New Covenant - Begins in Acts 2:1

*Dispensation of the Church - Acts 2:1-I
Thessalonians 4:18*

The Tribulation

*[Begins sometime after the Church is raptured and
ends with the Second Coming of Christ, Rev. 19:11]*

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Dispensation of the Kingdom

The Abrahamic Covenant

The Davidic Covenant

The New Covenant

The Land Covenant

all fulfilled!

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