

WHAT ***IS*** A DISPENSATION ANYWAY? and WHY DO WE CARE?

Defining the Terms:

what is a dispensation? can you define it? it's a Bible word.
How silly to say I'm dispensational and NOT know what the word means.

EPH 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: **COL 1:25** Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; We should (as good students) KNOW what the word "dispensation" means (2 Tim 2:15)

WHY DO WE CARE SO MUCH ABOUT THIS?

1st and foremost, a SALVATION issue... Clarity of the Gospel.

Rom 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,

James 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Mat 25: Red letters. Go to heaven or hell based on whether or not you blessed Israel (performing works) during the tribulation!

Is the gospel repenting and being baptized, or hearing **1 COR 15:21** and trusting it (**Eph 1:13**)

The Bible **DOES** have contradictions. The Bible **DOES NOT** have mistakes.

SOULS SAVED is the primary reason we've become so **IRRITATING** to everyone.

SAINTS EDIFIED is Primary reason #2, but we'll deal w/ that later.

PRACTICAL DEALINGS - DON'T BE ON THE DEFENSIVE

People have very strong deep-seated opinions. (many cases unlearned and ignorant of some very important Bible truths) Ignorance is CURABLE. Give the Data.

Ex. What do you MEAN all the Bible's not TO ME??? How can you SAY THAT??

Reply: Well should I be worried that I'll find you and your wife naked in your garden later?

What forest are you building your giant BOAT in???

Where are you hiding the BODIES of your adulterers and your disobedient children?

Where is your pet Viper and your bottle of Drano?

Prosperity preachers:

Josh 1:7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. **8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way

prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

He's in violation of this law. He marred the edges of his beard Lev 19, 21

He was wearing mixed fabrics Deut 22:11, how did he handle the last bird's nest he found?

DEFINING A DISPENSATION:

Charles C. Ryrie

There is no more primary problem in the whole matter of dispensationalism than that of definition. By this is meant not simply arriving at a single sentence definition of the word (dispensation) but also formulating a definition/description of the concept

ETYMOLOGY:

The word, "dispensation" is a word that comes from Greek to Latin to French to English.

Sets forth the idea of an ECONOMY. Three principal ideas connected to the meaning of the English word: (1) **"The action of dealing out or distributing"**; (2) **"the action of administering, ordering, or managing; the system by which things are administered"**; and (3) **"the action of dispensing with some REQUIREMENT"**

2 parties in dispensation; 1) Authority/delegator/dispenser 2) Party accountable to respond
Any page in the Bible is not a complete picture of the mind of God. God revealed his purpose and plan Progressively.

Louis Sperry Shaffer

DEF: of Dispensation....a state in the progressive revelation of God constituting a distinctive Stewardship or rule of Life. Pretty Good Def.

Websters' 1828 Dictionary:

4. That which is dispensed or bestowed; a system of principles and rites enjoined; as the Mosaic dispensation; the gospel dispensation; including, the former the Levitical law and rites; later the scheme of redemption by Christ.

WRONG DEF: Of Dispensation. **Hartill: Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics.** *Period of time where God deals w/ man and his sin. Time is an island in the sea of eternity which is divided into different dispensations or periods of time.*

This def makes TIME the major factor. Time is NOT.....

God and what He is doing and what He requires in Return is the major factor.

LOOK TO THE BIBLE FOR A WORKING DEFINITION:

The BIG PICTURE -

BEGIN - GEN 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

END - Eph 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him:

Bible shows us the beginning and the end. What we find *in between* is the Progressive Revelation of God's Plan for the ages.

Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry (several, different) times and in divers (different, various) manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

God, throughout the ages, God reveals His Plan Progressively:

1) **Jer 23:18** vs. **1 COR 2:16**

2) **COL 2:14** 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;

Disciples in Mat/Mar/Luk/John.... what's wrong w/ ordinances? in **Mat 23:3**, Jesus tells them to FOLLOW the ordinances. **Luke 18:34**, Disciples don't understand the cross and it's HID FROM THEM. **Mat 16**, Pete tries to Prevent the cross!

It's imperative to know 1) Who's speaking, 2) To Whom, and 3) is it me? Where am I in the course of this progressive revelation??

c . We must divide the Scriptures to put them in context of God's plan

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

THERE ARE DIVISIONS

There are Only 2 options: Rightly or Wrongly..... dealing w/ a quick and powerful 2edged sword.

The proper way to Deal with God's WORD is found in **1 Thes 2:13** when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received [it] not [as] the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God. Believe it as it is.... Literally.

Believing your Bible literally WILL make a dispensationalist out of you

Covenant Theology teaches that every page of the Bible is all TO US.

Defining a Dispensation in a Biblical Context.

Dispensation:

EPH 3:2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: **3** How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, **4** Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)..... **6** That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, (PLAN) and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (PURPOSE)

To get the Simplest Definition: Strip it down to its core: *A new revelation from God about his plan and purpose*

How many dispensations? 3, 4, 7, 9, 12?? Lots of different opinions, amounts.

By the strictest definition, every verse in the Bible is a dispensation, so there are 31,102 dispensations.

b. Gal 3:17-15 – Biblical passage listing the revelations from God

GAL 3:17 And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Promise came 1st. Time before the LAW was called Promise. Law can't disannul promise.

Promise distills into the seed line of Abraham. **GAL 3:18** For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Promise of blessing and the land - **GEN 12:3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 15:18 17:7-8 LAND GRANT In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

d. Law

GAL 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

The purpose of the law **ROM 3:19** that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **20** by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises [made] unto the fathers: (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) Stewards of PROMISE dispensation

GAL 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

The law and the covenant BEGIN OT- Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and **keep my covenant**, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: **6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an **holy nation**. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. **7** And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. **8** And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Steward: Moses – **Luke 24:44** These [are] the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and [in] the prophets, and [in] the psalms, concerning me.

Rest of OT, Law & Prophets till the time when Messiah shows up.

Kingdom

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets [were] until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. Kingdom ADDED to the law & prophets **17** And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Law from ZION **Isaiah 2:2** And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. **3** And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion **shall go forth the law**, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **4** And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many

people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. **5** O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the **light of the LORD**.

Walk in the Light of the Lord: **REV 21:23** And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. **24** And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

The Kingdom is the culmination of God's Covenant Arrangement for His earthly People Israel where God LITERALLY fulfills ALL the Promises He made to the Fathers. AND Israel is doing what THEY promised WAY back in **EX 19:8** And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.

EZE 36:24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. **25** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. **26** A new heart also will I give you, and a **new spirit** will I put within you: and I will take away the **stony heart** out of your flesh, and I will give you an **heart of flesh**. **27** 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**. **28** And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

JER 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put **my law** in their inward parts, and **write it in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. **34** And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

NEW TESTAMENT, KINGDOM, THE LAW REMAINS - WRITTEN IN THEIR HEART, and THEY WILL DO IT. Culmination of God's Prophetic Program (Promise/Law)

Kingdom not yet here - **Hebrews 2:8** All things not yet under His feet.

Stewards: Peter and the Disciples - **Luke 12:32, Matt 16:19** (Keys to Kingdom)

e. Grace (Faith)

GAL 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. **24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25** But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. **26** For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, (vs. 16 CHRIST) and heirs according to the promise.

Eph 3:1-3 – the dispensation given to PAUL **1** For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, **2** If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is

given me to you-ward: **3** How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

1 COR 9:17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation [of the gospel] is committed unto me

Romans 16:25 – which was kept secret since the world began

Steward: Paul - **1 Tim 1:16** Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Col 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

g. Fullness of times

Eph 1:10 – dispensation of fullness of times

3. Understand the dispensations

When reading God's Word and revelation we must read it in the proper context in relation to his plan and purpose

Gods word is true and accurate

Who is speaking, about what, and to whom