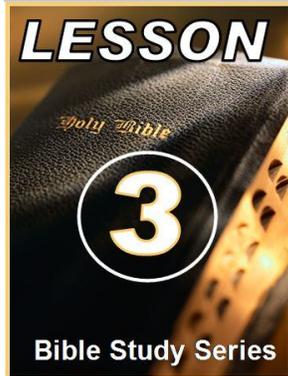


Grace Gospel Ministry

Bible Study Series

www.gracegospelministry.com

In lesson two, *“Distinguishing the Messages of the Bible”*, we learned a very important and practical application of lesson one, *“Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”*. As we take the Bible literally and keep each book and letter in its intended orbit, we begin to move toward distinguishing between things that differ (Phil. 1:9-10).



The scriptures illuminate the distinct revelation of truth for the Church, the body of Christ, which was given to the Apostle Paul (I Corth. 2:6-10, Gal. 1:12). Paul refers to this message as “my gospel” (Rom.2:16; 16:25-26, II Tim. 2:8) and as the “Gospel of the Grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

In our next few Study Series we will journey through the Bible with a more comprehensive look at the various biblical eras’ .i.e., administrations or dispensations and covenants recorded in God’s Word.

Before we get started, let’s equip ourselves with a few more key academic principles for proper bible study. **NOTE:** The authenticity of that which is written in God’s Word will always have consistency and alignment with:

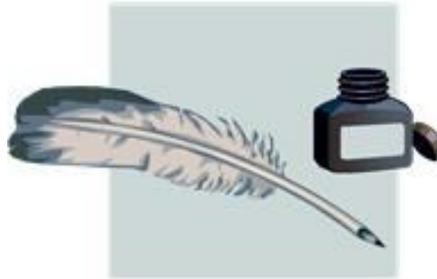
- **The HISTORICAL** content of the scriptures
- **The CONTEXUAL** agreement: the context of the scripture verse
- **The GRAMMATICAL** tense of the scripture text

The GGM Bible Study Series also utilizes the Greek interlinear Bible for the purpose of staying close as possible to the Greek utterances and words recorded in the original scrolls/manuscripts. In this manner we affirm the word translation before the applying any bias interpretation or misinterpretation. LET THE SCRIPTURES SPEAK! This brings use back to our earlier statement: *“the meaning of the scriptures IS conveyed in the context of the scripture.”*

IN JESUS NAME WE PRAY: *“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, Christ.”* 📖 Ephesians 4:12-15

LESSON THREE: **“Dispensational Arrangement of the Bible”**
Defining & Identifying Dispensations

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN



If one takes the position that the entire Bible is equally for us today, he is standing on a very broad platform. It was pointed out in earlier writing that the Bible contains specific messages for given individuals and nations. Some of these have been, are being or are to be fulfilled.

It the entire Bible is equally for us today, then the question is raised, what part of its message should we consider most important? A certain Pastor whom many us knew, loved and highly respected, use to make a statement, "Stop reading other folks mail". The content of Romans 15:4, are certainly true, "it was all written for our learning", but if we violate the principle of to whom and for whom its parts were written, we are confronted with inescapable contradictions (Acts 21:20-26, Galatians 1:6-9, 12:12, 3:19-25, 5:2-6, and Colossians 2:13-19).

In light of this we are forced to come face to face with the fact there are no contradictions in the Bible as long as its contents are kept in their intended historical setting. In other words, the scriptures cannot be rightly divided unless they are dispensationally arranged. Those things, which are true and relevant to Adam in the dispensation of "innocence", may or may not be applicable or relevant to Adam in the dispensation of "conscience". The policy for Noah in the dispensation of "human government" is distinct and different from the covenant that is made to Abraham in the dispensation of "promise". The law and its ordinances as given to Moses exclusively for Israel are not transferable to other nations in the dispensation of the "Law". The Kingdom Gospel introduce by John the Baptist though rejected by Israel is yet reserved for the Jews during the tribulation and the Kingdom Age. The Gospel of the Grace of God as revealed to the Apostle Paul is given solely for the elect, the Church, who is the body of Christ, in the dispensation of "grace". The sacrificial death of Jesus upon Calvary covers the spectrum of all dispensations as the only remedy for the sin nature of mankind.

The Grace Gospel Church Ministry is committed to exegetically analyzing the scriptures dispensationally.

Defining Dispensations

Dispensations mean

- ◆ **Administrations**
- ◆ **House rules**
- ◆ **Economies**

Ephesians 1:10; 3:2, 9

Lesson Three-Scripture Lesson Context



The basic Greek word for “dispensation” in the Scriptures is **ee·kon·om·ee·ah**, which means the following in other forms. It is translated “household rule and stewardship” in I Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25; I Timothy 1:4. It is translated “a steward” in Romans 16:23; I Corinthians 4:1-2; Galatians 4:2; Titus 1:7. It is translated “to manage” in Luke 16:2.

The idea of a dispensation is similar to a group of people who have been organized to accomplish a goal. They may write a constitution or make ground rules that states:

- 1). Why the organization exists and its goals as well as what it hopes to accomplish.
- 2). What its members’ obligations and privileges are, which would be stated in the administration of household policy or rules.

The Biblical meaning of the terms “dispensation, administration and economy are: “the volume of Truth,” “The Mystery” and “the Gospel of the Grace of God.” In the epistles that were written to the present dispensation church by Paul, there are two possible scriptural definitions of the term: “the Dispensation of Grace:” 1). It is an arrangement of grace based on how God relates to His elect through Christ and His Church. 2). It is an administration or economy of grace by which God is governing His people through Christ and His Church.

Dispensation and Covenant Arrangements Chart

THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

The first dispensation is **Innocence**, wherein God created all living creatures upon the earth (Genesis 2:8-17, 25). Adam heads this economy.

The second dispensation is **Conscience**, wherein Adam and (Eve) fell into sin and all the earth received the curse and penalty of sin (Genesis 3:10-18, Romans 2:11-15). Adam heads this economy.

The third dispensation is **Human Government**, which came after the flood, wherein God destroyed all who were living upon the earth, with the exception of Noah and his family. This dispensation was the first wherein God established civil rule (Genesis 9:6 Romans 13:1). Noah heads this economy.

The fourth dispensation is **Promise**, wherein God called and separated Abraham and ultimately created from Abraham one sanctified nation (Israel) to be His elect or His people (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:17-18). Abraham heads this economy.

The fifth dispensation is **Law**, wherein God gave His Law and ordinances exclusively to His people (Exodus 20:1-26; Galatians 3:19). Moses heads this economy.

The sixth dispensation is **Grace**, which is the present dispensation from which the Body of Christ, the Church is revealed and manifested. Also, God's elect for this economy is comprised of **all of** mankind (both Jew and Gentile) (Romans 5:20-21 Ephesians 3:1-9). Paul heads this economy.

The seventh dispensation is **Kingdom**, which will be administered during the Millennium (one thousand years) Kingdom subsequent to Jesus Christ's return to the earth to set on the throne of David and rule this earth in perfect peace for one thousand years (Isaiah 9:6-7:11:1-9). Jesus Christ heads this economy.

Identifying the Dispensations

Scriptures: Given in Chart

Key Point: *The Seven Dispensations*

Key Verses: *See Chart*

Lesson Three Introduction

The scriptural divisions of the Bible are not two-fold (old and new covenants) but seven, which are defined by different dispensations or administrations revealing God's policy-dealings with mankind during the ages of time. The Bible should be divided according to dispensations and covenants as outlined in the Dispensations charts above. Notice that the actual opening words of the Bible as recorded in Genesis 1:1 reads, "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth." From there the focus moves immediately to God's purpose concerning the earth, which is quite different from His purpose concerning the Heaven(s). Some have erroneously viewed this opening statement to be saying that all writings in the Old Testament (Genesis and Malachi) and that which is arranged prior to the emergence of the Apostle Paul (Matthew, Mark Luke, John and Acts chapters 1-8) are unimportant to the elect of today's Grace Dispensation. But this is not what the statement is saying neither should it be thought to be saying that. Now as one looks at these earlier messages of the Bible, it should become evident that they have not been directly addressed to members of the Body of Christ, the Church in this grace age. To look closely at what is addressed **for** but not specifically **to** us (the Grace age's elect), note first that which God spoke to Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:16-17). Second look at what God spoke to Noah (Genesis 6:14; 7:4). Third, look at God's covenant with Abraham through the promises that God spoke to him (Genesis 12:1-3). Fourth, look at how God delivered and administered the Mosaic Law to Israel (Exodus 19:3-20; 20). Fifth, look at the record of Jesus' ministry in the Synoptic Gospels and the ministry of the Kingdom message in the first eight chapters of the book of Acts. After examining all these areas of the Bible, it should become crystal clear that these portions of the Bible have not been addressed or written to believers in the dispensation of grace. Thus one should acknowledge that these messages are the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God that are recorded **for** the purpose of encouraging us and adding to our hope. Romans 15:4 states (from the Greek Text), "For as much as was previously written, it was written for our teaching, in order that through the patience and through the comfort of the scriptures we might have hope". Here the phrase, "for as much as was previously written", means all that had been written prior to the revealed message to the Apostle Paul. So the reason why these things were written is "for our teaching (and learning)." Notice that these writings and messages all had a special purpose because they were spoken about things concerning what was happening in that point in history and reason for observing them is limited to the reason stated in the verse; which is, it was "for our teaching (instructions)." So its value to us for the Grace age and is included in the Bible so that through the "patience," "endurance," "comfort" or "encouragement" of the scriptures, we might have hope. Here the thought is that the reading of these scriptures, which were written before Paul's message (Mystery Truth) would encourage us to have greater patience resulting in strengthened our hope.

Exposition of Scriptures

In studying the "DISPENSATIONS" of the Bible, it is very important to understand what they mean in the scriptures. In addition, there are several other things that must be understood about the word "DISPENSATION" itself means.

Recognizing what the Differences are

It is certainly true that God never changes, as He is ALWAYS the same. This is testified to in many of the Old Testament writings, for example, Malachi 3:6 states, "For **I AM** the LORD, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." Hebrews 13:8 states: "Jesus Christ yesterday and today the same and to the ages." From this we can always count on God being God so we never have to wonder whether He will suddenly become different from what He is and has always been. But this unchanging God has different dealing with different administrations of His elect throughout the course of time. Hebrews 1:1 states that God has dealt with different ones at different times in different ways! In essence, God did not deal with the Apostle Paul in the same manner that He dealt with Abraham. God was merciful to both, He saved both and has favorable eternal relations with both but He did not deal with them in the same manner. Paul and Abraham lived at different times in history and they had different responsibilities, obligations, expectations and goals according to their respective covenants. This is also true concerning Noah and Moses, as God dealt differently with them according to their respective administrations. For instance, Noah's responsibility was to build an ark and replenishing the Earth and Moses was charged with dispensing the Law.

Differences in how much Truth is Revealed

Throughout all the ages of time, God has been revealing His truth to His elect gradually but not all at once. God revealed certain things to Adam but there were many things that God did not reveal to him. Later God revealed even more things to Abraham. He later revealed even more things to Moses and then to David etc. During the earthly abode of Jesus, He revealed certain things to His disciples, which were never revealed to those in the Old Testament. Matthew 13:17 states (Greek Text), "for verily I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men did desire to see that which ye look on, and they did not see, and to hear that which ye hear, and they did not hear." But even these disciples were only given limited revelations of truth because there were many things that Jesus did not tell them. Note that He withheld certain knowledge in the era of His ministry on the Earth, which had been previously ordained for others to receive afterwards. John 16:12 states (Greek Text), "I have yet many things to say to you but ye are not able to bear {them} now." Later at the appointed time, God revealed "The Mystery to the Apostle Paul (Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:3-5). After Paul's establishment of the Church in the Grace administration, God revealed truth to the Apostle John, which forms the prophecy of information in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:1-3, 9-12).

Different Methods Used for God's Revelations

God has always revealed Himself to His elect but according to DISPENSATIONS and His COVENANTS that were assigned to designated ones at different times but never all at once. Hence God revealed His truth progressively and gradually through the ages of time. Some examples of these communications are:

Adam: (Innocence)	"Walked with God in the cool of the garden."
Abraham: (Promise)	"At different times God would appear and speak to him" (Genesis 17:1; 18:1)
Moses: (Law)	"God's Words in the five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy"
David: (Law)	"God's dealings with him in the Books of Samuels, Kings and Chronicles as well as many of the Psalms which he wrote"
Ezra: (Law)	"Writings of much of God's historical dealings with His Covenant People, Israel."
Daniel: (Law/Kingdom)	"Prophecy of Kingdom for the purpose of its Revelation "
John the Baptist: (Law/Kingdom)	"Revelation of the impending Kingdom for the purpose of its proclamation"
Paul: (Grace)	"Revelation of the Mystery for the purpose of this information being made known to the Grace Church."
John: (Law/Kingdom)	"Revelation of the end of time for the purpose of this information being made known about future ages to come."

Some Noticeable Differences

From eternity and throughout time God has always been merciful and gracious to His elect in that He has made it possible for them to have a personal relationship with Him. Throughout the centuries God has manifestly been saving by His grace through His faithfulness (Ephesians 2:8). Here questions may be asked how was Abraham saved (Genesis 15:6) and how was David

saved? These revelations were given to Paul regarding Abraham (Romans 4:3) and David (Romans 4:6) as well as all who have been saved by grace in every dispensation (Romans 4:5) through Jesus Christ's faithfulness! All who are eternally saved (whether Noah, Isaiah or Peter) have the same testimony: "I AM SAVED ONLY BY THE GRACE OF GOD (God's kindness and love to me which I did not even deserve)!" Throughout history the ETERNAL GRACIOUS GOD has manifested salvation to sinful ones of mankind but He has always dealt with different ones at different times in different ways.

God's workings in the Grace Covenant can be better understood from carefully analyzing some of the differences of His workings in other covenants:

- ◆ Adam under the Dispensation of Innocence was told that there was one fruit tree that he was not to eat from (Genesis 2:16-17). There is no such dietary restraint in the Grace Covenant (I Corinthians 7:8).
- ◆ When those under the Dispensation of Law assembled to worship, they were required to bring sacrifices with them (I Samuel 7:9; Leviticus 3:7; 4:32). Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon all offered animal sacrifices but this no longer God's requirement in the Grace Dispensation and Covenant.
- ◆ Also, all those under the Dispensation of Law were required to assemble in worship on Saturday (the seventh day of the week). Anyone who disregarded this command was put to death as there was once a law, which said that those who worked on Saturday must be put to death (Exodus 35:2). Even if such one was only "gathering sticks," he was still guilty of violating the Sabbath law (Numbers 15:32-36)! In the Grace Covenant, there are no such stipulations of a certain day favored over another (Romans 14:5).
- ◆ Also under the Dispensation of Law, worship was centered on the temple in Jerusalem and the priesthood. In the Grace Covenant, believers can come directly to God and do not need to go through anyone other than Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5).
- ◆ In the Abrahamic Covenant and more specifically under the Law, all males were at birth required to be circumcised (Genesis 17:10-14; 34:15, 17; Leviticus 12:3; Joshua 5:3,5,7). In the Grace Covenant, there are no requirements for circumcision nor any other ritual, ceremony or observance (Romans 14:4-14).
- ◆ Under the Law/Kingdom Dispensation, physical baptisms were performed in water. Also, the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples preached to the lost sheep of the house of Israel only (Matthew 10:5-7). When this is understood, it includes the instructions given in Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15. In the Grace Covenant, there are no such stipulations, because the Grace Gospel includes all in the Body of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3:26-29).

These are obvious differences, as God spoke to different ones at different times. Thus one needs to recognize these differences in order to discover the proper

order of God's workings in different dispensations. God did not require the same, as there are terms but no conditions in the Grace Covenant in the Dispensation of Grace.

DISCUSSION POINTS

(Match with scriptural verses)

1. In studying the " _____ " of the Bible, it is very important to understand what they mean in the _____.
2. Hebrews 13:8 states: "Jesus Christ _____ and _____ the same and to the _____."
3. Paul and Abraham lived at different _____ in history and they had different _____, obligations, expectations and _____ according to their respective _____.
- 4 Noah's responsibility was to build an _____ and replenishing the _____ and Moses was charged with dispensing the _____.
5. At the appointed time, God revealed "The _____ to the _____".
6. God has always revealed Himself to His elect but according to _____ and His _____ that were assigned to designated ones at _____ times but never all at _____.
- 7 Throughout the centuries _____ has manifestly been saving by His _____ through His _____.
8. Revelations were given to _____ regarding Abraham and David as well as all who have been _____ by grace in every _____ through Jesus Christ's _____!
9. All who are eternally _____ (whether Noah, Isaiah or Peter) have the same testimony: "I AM SAVED _____ BY THE _____ OF _____ (God's kindness and love to me which I did not even _____)!"
10. Throughout history the _____ GOD has manifested salvation to sinful ones of mankind but He has always dealt with _____ ones at _____ times in _____ ways.
11. One needs to recognize these _____ in order to discover the proper order of God's workings in different _____. God did not require the same, as there are terms but no _____ in the Grace _____ in the Dispensation of _____.

1. God revealed certain things to Adam but there were many things that God did not _____ to him. Later God revealed even more things to _____. He later revealed even more things to _____ and then to _____.
2. God revealed His _____ progressively and gradually through the ages of time.
- 3 From _____ and throughout _____ God has always been merciful and gracious to His elect in that He has made it possible for them to have a personal _____ with Him.

4. Both Abraham and David were both saved by _____ grace.
5. There are obvious _____ as to how God spoke to His elect at _____ times.

END OF LESSON THREE

Have questions about Lesson Three, “Dispensational Arrangement of the Bible”? List them below and then post your questions on Community Forum Bulletin Board on the Contact Us page at GraceGospelMinistry.com OR email your questions to:

BibleStudySeries@GraceGospleMinisty.com
