

**THE DISPENSATIONS**  
**FALL, 2020**  
**“INTRODUCTION”**  
**AUGUST 26, 2020**

*I. DEFINING A DISPENSATION*

*A. Greek word - oikonomeia*

- 1. From oikos meaning house*
- 2. And nomos meaning laws, rules or guidelines*
- 3. Therefore oikonomeia means the “the rules of the house” or “the way things are to operate or function in the house”*
- 4. It comes to mean then, a stewardship. A stewardship is defined as “the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property.”*
- 5. It is translated in the Scriptures as stewardship and also as dispensation*
- 6. Here are some verses in which the word oikonomeia is used*

*Lu 16:2 "So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'*

*Lu 16:3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg.*

*Lu 16:4 'I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'*

*1Co 9:17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.*

*Eph 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.*

*Eph 3:2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,*

*Col 1:25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, (NKJV)*

*B. Oikonomieia is the root for our English word economy*

- 1. An economy is “careful management of the wealth and resources of a country or region, especially in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services”*
- 2. We live in a “free enterprise” or “capitalist” economy, an open economy where we can purchase, sell or create anything we wish as long as the capital is available to do so. We could call that the dispensation of free enterprise*
- 3. This election is an attempt to change that economic system to a socialist economy where the state or the collective is in a shared relationship with the producers of wealth to assure equal distribution of that wealth. Then it would be the dispensation of socialism*
- 4. The point is that there are dispensations or stewardships that determine how the state is to be operated. These can be changed when dictated by need.*

*C. Our working definition: “A dispensation is God’s distinctive method of governing mankind or a group of men during a periods 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” (Nevin, quoted in Ryrie, “Dispensationalism” p. 30. 1995)*

*D. The distinctives of dispensationalism*

- 1. **Keeping Israel and the Church as distinct from one another.** Though they have the same God as Father they have a different relationship with Him. God the Father “married” Israel in the Palestinian (or Mosaic) Covenant and she became His wife/nation which she will always be; God, the Son, “married” the Jew and Gentile who believed in Jesus as the Son of God and son of man, the Christ, and became the Church who will rule and reign with Him in His kingdom*
- 2. **Literal or Normal or Plain hermeneutic (interpretive plan)** Using the grammatical-historical method*
- 3. **That the purpose of God in His progressive revelation is the manifestation of His own Glory in restoring that which was ruined by iniquity, transgression and sin in***

***the whole of the cosmos to its original holiness and glory***

**II. INTRODUCING THE DISPENSATIONS**

- A. *The Dispensation of Freedom (often called Innocence)*** – to Adam and Eve and their children. Crisis: Disobedience with the fruit. Judgment: Exiled from the Garden; no open communion with God Mercy shown: skins from the animal to cover them Blessing: A messiah promised
- B. *The Dispensation of Conscience*** - to a fallen Adam and Eve and their children Crisis: Intermarriage with Sons of God, violence and wickedness Judgment: World-wide flood Mercy shown: The Ark Blessing: fruitfulness
- C. *The Dispensation of Civil Government*** - given first to Noah and then to all those at the Tower of Babel. This is still binding upon all men on earth. It will not end until the end of the Times of the Gentiles in which all kingdoms end but Christ's. Christ is the fulfillment of this law as well as the Torah. Crisis: Conquest, idolatry, wickedness, depravity, war, etc. Judgment: the return of Christ; on a smaller scale perpetually, the defeat of nations, slavery, death Mercy shown: Scattered out all over the world
- D. *The Dispensation of Promise or Patriarchal Rule*** - the call of Abraham out of the rest of the Gentiles and the promise to him of the blessing of God. This is not an age of all men but a subset of the larger one. It selects a smaller group of people but they will interact with many of the nations and will one day be a blessing to all nations Crisis: Move to Egypt to live not visit Judgment: Imprisonment in Egypt Mercy Shown: Moses raised
- E. *The Dispensation of Mosaic Law*** - Once again, not a dispensation given to all dwellers of earth but specifically to the children of Israel. God makes a binding everlasting covenant with Israel as His Wife. It becomes binding to Gentiles who seek to convert to the Mosaic Covenantal Law (Torah) Crisis: Failure on Israel to keep the covenant; rejection of Christ Judgment: Dispersal around the world; Exile into Babylon and return only to reject Messiah - dispersal around the world, loss of temple;

*ridicule, harassment, persecution and attempted genocide*  
*Mercy Shown: Restoration at the end of the age*

**F. *The Dispensation of Church (often called Grace)***

*Established by Christ by His perfect life, substitutionary death, resurrection and ascension into heaven to the right hand of God. A time of complete amnesty, forgiveness and restoration to God to any human who would come to Christ trusting Him as the Messiah (King of kings, Lord of lords); the restoration of the Kingdom of Heaven by the defeat of Satan* Crisis: *Failure to trust Him; rejection of Jesus as the resurrected Messiah* Judgment: *The Tribulation, the Great Tribulation, the Outpouring of God's Wrath; Christ's return to earth defeating the rebellious powers of heaven and the rebellious humans of the earth* Mercy shown: *Salvation to anyone who will call on the name of the Lord*

**G. *The Dispensation of the Millennium***

*The one thousand year righteous rule of Christ on a restored earth together with His saints and free from the interference of Satan.* Crisis: *Unbelievably there will be a rejection of the righteous rule of Christ. Near the end of the Millennium those who have rebelled against Christ will unite with the newly released Satan and attack the holy city, New Jerusalem on earth.* Judgment: *Fire from heaven will destroy and devour all the rebels. The Great White Throne Judgment will soon follow* Blessing: *We enter into the eternal state never to be bothered with any of this rebellion again - ever!*