

## WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

### THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE

*Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:*

#### Study 47

### DISPENSATIONS

#### 1) THE DEFINITION OF DISPENSATION.

1. The dealing of God to his creatures; the distribution of good and evil, natural or moral, in the divine government.

2. 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; the latter the scheme of redemption by Christ.

3. Administration (of a household or estate); specially, a (religious) "economy":-- dispensation, stewardship.

#### 2) THERE ARE ONLY 4 VERSES WHERE THE WORD DISPENSATION APPEARS IN THE BIBLE.

*1 Corinthians 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*

*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.*

*Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

*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:*

*11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

*12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

*Ephesians 3:1 ¶ 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,*

*4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

*5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

*6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

*7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.*

*Colossians 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;*

*26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

*27 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:*

*28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*

*29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

#### 3) WHAT IS DISPENSATIONALISM?

Dispensationalism is a method of interpreting history that divides God's work and purposes toward mankind into different periods of time. Usually, there are seven dispensations identified.

#### **4) THE SEVEN DIFFERENT DISPENSATIONS.**

##### **1. THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE.** (*Genesis 1:28-30 & 2:15-17*)

This dispensation covered the period of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

##### **2. THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE.** (*Genesis 3:8–8:22*)

It lasted about 1,656 years from the time of Adam and Eve's eviction from the garden until the flood.

##### **3. THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT.** (*Genesis 8-11*)

God had destroyed life on earth with a flood, saving just one family to restart the human race. God made promises and commands to Noah and his family.

##### **4. THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE.** (*Genesis 12:1–Exodus 19:25*)

It started with the call of Abraham, continued through the lives of the patriarchs, and ended with the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt, a period of about 430 years. During this dispensation God developed a great nation that He had chosen as His people.

##### **5. THE DISPENSATION OF LAW.**

It lasted almost 1,500 years, from the Exodus until after Jesus Christ's death.

##### **6. THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE.**

It began with the New Covenant in Christ's blood. This "Age of Grace" or "Church Age" starts with the resurrection of Christ and ends with the Rapture.

##### **7. THE DISPENSATION OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM OF CHRIST.**

It begins with the return of Christ to Earth and will last for 1,000 years as Christ Himself rules on earth. Prior to this dispensation is the 7 years of the judgements of God which leads into this millennial kingdom of Christ.

#### **5) WHAT IS HYPER-DISPENSATIONALISM OR ULTRA-DISPENSATIONALISM?**

Ultra- or hyper-dispensationalism takes the basic tenets of dispensationalism to an extreme, resulting in unbiblical teachings. According to ultra-dispensationalism, the four Gospels are for Jews only and have no bearing on the church. The book of Acts deals with a different "church" and not the body of Christ. Only the Prison Epistles of Paul are directed to the body of Christ or "mystery" church. Not even the book of Revelation addresses the church—the letters to the seven churches are written to the "Jewish" church of the tribulation. Also, most ultra-dispensationalists reject the ordinances of the church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper were for the "Hebrew" church. The most glaring of all "errors" is that they believe that people were saved differently in different dispensations.

H. A. Ironside, a strong dispensationalist himself, wrote a good booklet outlining some of the dangers of ultra-dispensationalism. In it he says that he has "no hesitancy in saying that [ultra-dispensationalism's] fruits are evil. It has produced a tremendous crop of heresies throughout the length and breadth of this and other lands; it has divided Christians and wrecked churches and assemblies without number; it has lifted up its votaries in intellectual and spiritual pride to an appalling extent, so that they look with supreme contempt upon Christians who do not accept their peculiar views; and in most instances where it has been long tolerated, it has absolutely throttled Gospel effort at home and sown discord on missionary fields abroad. So true are these things of this system that I have no hesitancy in saying it is an absolutely Satanic perversion of the truth" (*Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, chapter 1, Loizeaux Brothers, 1938).

#### **6) THE MOST QUOTED VERSE IN DISPENSATIONAL TEACHINGS.**

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

This verse is used to justify their position on dividing the Word of Truth based on a division of dispensations of time. The position that I hold is that we should rightly divide the Word of Truth based on topic and doctrine. In other words, doctrine stays the same throughout the different dispensations of time.

*Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

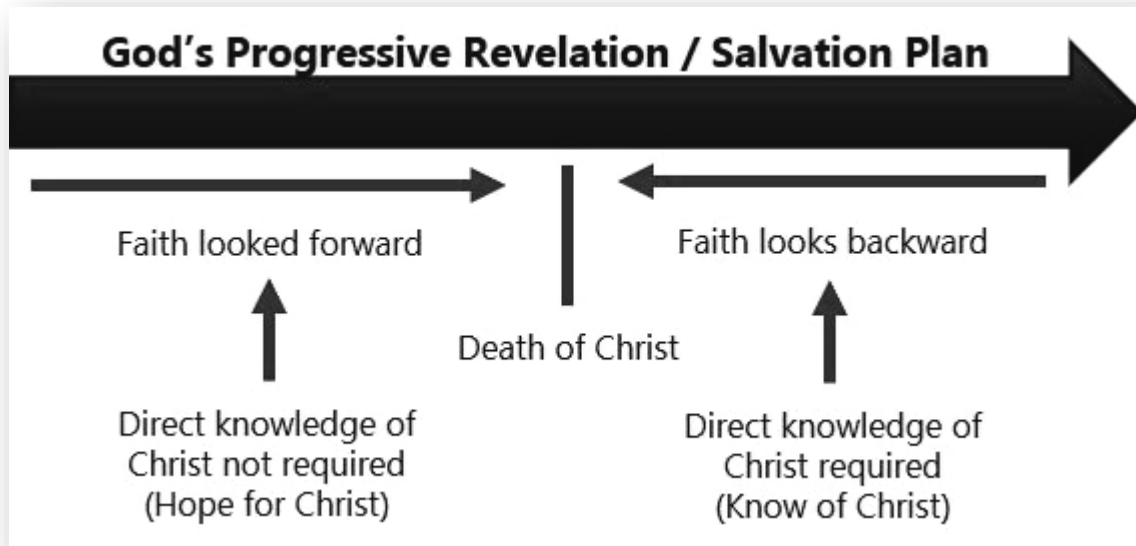
*Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

*James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

## **7) THE TEACHING OF PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.**

The term “progressive revelation” refers to the idea and teaching that God revealed various aspects of His will and overall plan for humanity over different periods of time, which have been referred to as “dispensations” by some theologians. To dispensationalists, a dispensation is a distinguishable economy (i.e., an ordered condition of things) in the outworking of God’s purpose. Whereas dispensationalists debate the number of dispensations that have occurred through history, all believe that God revealed only certain aspects of Himself and His plan of salvation in each dispensation, with each new dispensation building upon the prior one.

While dispensationalists believe in progressive revelation, it is important to note that one does not have to be a dispensationalist to embrace progressive revelation. Nearly all students of the Bible recognize the fact that certain truths contained in Scripture were not fully revealed by God to prior generations.



God reveals truth to mankind a little bit at a time throughout time. However, “newly revealed truth must be built upon “previously revealed truth” in order for it to be TRUTH.

*Isaiah 28:9 ¶ Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

*10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:*

*11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.*

*12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*

*13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*

## **8) WHEN STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES, WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT ALL SCRIPTURE ALWAYS AGREES WITH ITSELF.**

There will never be any contradiction in the Scriptures no matter the time period in which the

verse may be found. We must keep our doctrine to what has been clearly and simply revealed by God. It is very dangerous to imply what God never clearly says.

*2 Corinthians 1:12 ¶ For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

*13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;*

*14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

*2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

*4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*