

DISPENSATIONS OF THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

THE ENGLISH WORD "DISPENSATION" - means **(1)** the action of dealing out or distributing; to dispense; **(2)** the action of ordering or managing the system by which things are administered; **(3)** the action of dispensing accompanied with some requirement; **(4)** an administration, as in government.

THE GREEK WORD "OIKONOMIA" - **(1)** two parts: "Oikos" = household, "Nomos" = law. Their meaning together is to dispense, distribute, management of the affairs of a household. The English word "economy" is derived from this. **(2)** As used by the Lord in Luke 12:42, 16:1-13, for management of a household by a servant. **(3)** Steward or stewardship, as in 1 Cor.4:1-2, Eph.1:10, 3:2-3, Col.1:25-26. A steward is to be accountable to his master.

THEOLOGICAL DEFINITION - a period of time during which man is tested as to his obedience to God's will. A dispensation involves stewardship, a solemn responsibility, resting upon an individual or individuals to order their lives in keeping with the revealed will of God, which is applicable to them. There are seven dispensations in God's plan for the ages. Man fails in every one. With each dispensation, God reveals more of Himself to man. Throughout all dispensations, fellowship with God is restored through the shedding of innocent blood.

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE DISPENSATIONALLY ? - **(1)** It is important for understanding the Scriptures (2 Tim.2:15). **(2)** The Bible is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim.3:15-16). **(3)** To be able to understand so that we can help others (Heb.4:12). The unsaved and unlearned can't understand many parts of Scripture, and "wrestle" with it (2 Peter 3:15-18). **(4)** The Bible tells us to (Eph.3:1-11). **(5)** For the testimony of the Law (Isaiah 8:20, Luke 16:29-31, 1 John 4:5-6), and the prophets (Acts 15:12-19). **(6)** God speaks to us in various ways (Heb.1:1-2). **(7)** God's word is not void (Isaiah 55:11).

PROBLEMS IN CHRISTIANITY - There are many sects and divisions in Christianity today, due to a large part from a failure to see Scripture in a dispensational way. There must be: **(1)** a literal interpretation of Scripture, not allegorical as supposed by many. **(2)** A contextual application of Scripture (e.g. Matthew 24:13, which actually means saved alive at the end of the Great Tribulation period, to enter into the Kingdom Age), also: Ps.33:12, Matt.10:5-14, Ps.51:10-11, John 14:16. **(3)** A "rightly dividing" of the Word (2 Tim.2:15). **(4)** Proper exegetic principles used at all times in Bible study, to find God's intended meaning, and not make it say what we want it to.

FEATURES OR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISPENSATIONS -

- (1) **NAME** - Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Church, Kingdom.
- (2) **TIME PERIOD** - each has a definite start and end. There are also continuing principles that persist.
- (3) **TEST** - man's responsibility to be obedient to God, and accountability for his stewardship.
- (4) **FAILURE** - of man to his responsibility for that dispensation.
- (5) **JUDGMENT** - by God, against man for his failure.
- (6) **REMEDY** - The Grace of God, innocent blood, is the necessary element of the remedy for each dispensation.

(dates - for the entire study of 7 dispensations: June 2002 to Feb 2003 , June 2005 to July 2006 ,)
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