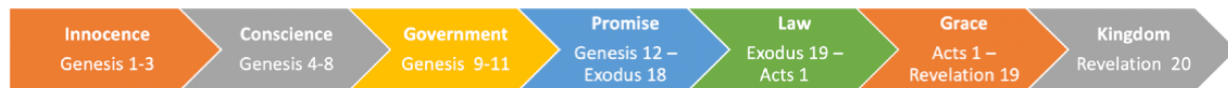


Understanding Dispensations Helps Us Know How to Study the Bible



We need to do more than just read the Bible. We need to know how to interpret and comprehend what we are reading. Many approach the Bible without any methods of how to rightly understand what they have read. This leads to much confusion and oftentimes confusion and discouragement. A popular point of view states that when reading the Bible, “What is true for you may not be true for me” or vice versa. If that is the case who is right and who is wrong? Or, if everyone is right, what do we do when two or more “true” beliefs contradict one another? The solution is to take a dispensational approach when reading and studying the Bible.

Dispensational: It is nothing more than a recognition that, at several times through history, God did some things that fundamentally changed all the rules. Generally, there seven dispensations that are often identified.



- We don't live in a paradise garden in which everything is provided for us, and were God literally walks with us (Genesis 2; 3:8).
- We speak different languages and have different ethnicities (Genesis 11).
- After Genesis 12, the focus of the Bible is Abraham and his family.
- Beginning in Exodus 20 there are 613 laws that govern a right relationship with God.
- In Acts 13, the apostle Paul declares man is justified by believing in Christ and not by the Law.

Dispensation = Greek word *oikonomia*. We get our word *economy* from it. In different economies, for example, there are different rules for what is acceptable as legal tender for buying things. The word can mean *house law*, or *house stewardship*, even *administration*.

To be *dispensational* just means one understands that God acted in various ways during various times in human history. There are some rules we can use to help grasp this:

1. The Golden Rule of Interpretation.
2. The Law of Context (example Zechariah 13:6).
3. Read Literally (Revelation 12:1).
4. Take the Audience as Literal (Joshua 1:8).
5. Always ask, “What dispensation?” is this passage dealing with. (Matthew 23:23; 2 Corinthians 9:7)

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