

REVISITING THE DOCTRINE OF DISPENSATIONALISM

Part II: An Historic Dispensationalist's Guide To Handling Scripture Correctly

I. Introduction

- A. Interpreting Scripture literally leads to dispensationalism, and handling the Bible this way leads us to identify each dispensation and know how to apply Scripture from each dispensation in our era as Romans 15:4 directs.
- B. We thus observe the practical, Biblical guide to handling Scripture correctly as dispensationalists (as follows):

II. An Historic Dispensationalist's Guide To Handling Scripture Correctly

- A. By an inductive Bible study, we identify **seven** dispensations in Scripture (as follows):
 1. The KJV names the dispensation of Grace, the Church era in 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2 and Col. 1:25.
 2. The dispensation of the "fulness of times" in Eph. 1:10 is Christ's Millennial Kingdom, the time when all things are brought under Christ's leadership, Isaiah 2:2-4; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 618.
 3. If the Church era is a dispensation, the era before the Church must also be a dispensation.
 4. However, the definition of the term *oikonomia* that is translated "dispensation" (Strong's Exhaust. Conc. of the Bib., p. 51, no. 3622) describes an economic arrangement where a master appoints a servant to oversee his family and estate in his absence for a period of time and thus to "dispense" his master's resources for their upkeep, Luke 16:1-5 KJV. A **spiritual** "dispensation," then, is an arrangement by which God assigns a set of regulations under which his servant(s) oversee His people for their welfare in a set period of time in history. This truth **logically** leads us to identify **several more** "dispensations" in Scripture (as follows):
 - a. Before the Fall, man could eat of the Tree of Life (Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17) where after the Fall he could **not** do so (Gen. 3:22-24). Thus, for Scripture to be inerrant as interpreted literally, there must be a pre-Fall dispensation and a post-Fall one to account for this contrast in God's rules for man in those two periods.
 - b. Before the Flood, there was no capital punishment, no carnivorous diet for man and no divine promise no longer to flood the world where after the Flood, these things were instituted (Gen. 9:1-17), so we must distinguish a pre-Flood from a post-Flood dispensation to interpret an inerrant Scripture literally.
 - c. When God called Abram after the Tower of Babel, unlike before, He had Abram part with the lost world to form a holy people by whom God's blessings would come to the world, Gen. 12:1-3 with Gal. 3:13-14. Inerrant Scripture handled literally thus requires us to see a dispensation begin with God's call of Abram!
 - d. Before the Law, man could eat every kind of animal and marry close relatives (Cain with his sister!) where the Law prohibited such practices and added more rules, so in support of Scripture's inerrancy as it is interpreted literally, there must be a pre-Law dispensation that differs from the dispensation of the Law.
 5. Thus, if we interpret inerrant Scripture literally, we **logically** arrive at **seven** dispensations (as follows):
 - a. The Dispensation of **Innocence**, Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 3:6 (Pre-Fall of Man)
 - b. The Dispensation of **Conscience**, Genesis 3:7 to Genesis 8:19 (Man's Fall into Sin to the Flood)
 - c. The Dispensation of **Human Government**, Genesis 8:20 to Genesis 11:32 and Job (the Flood to Abram)
 - d. The Dispensation of **Promise**, Genesis 12:1 to Exodus 19:2 (Abram to the Mosaic Law)
 - e. The Dispensation of the **Law**, Exodus 19:3 and the rest of the Old Testament [minus Job] up to Christ's death in the Four New Testament Gospels. (Christ's death to Acts 2:1 is transitional from Law to Grace)
 - f. The Dispensation of **Grace**, the **Church**, Acts 2:1-Revelation 4:1 (Pentecost to the Revelation 4:1 Rapture. Actually, parts of Scripture from Christ's death through Acts are transitional from Law to Grace.)
 - g. The Dispensation of the **Millennial Kingdom**, Rev. 20:4-10. (The seven-year Great Tribulation in Revelation 4:1-20:3 is a transitional period from Grace to the Millennial Kingdom, for the Gospel of the Millennial Kingdom is preached during that time period, Matthew 24:13-14 with Revelation 11:15.)
- B. If the Bible is sectioned into differing dispensations [and transitions between dispensations] with differing rules for believers in each case, and Romans 15:4 claims **all** Scripture is profitable for **our** edification, **we in the Church era must screen all of non-Church-era Scriptures through the Acts 2:1-Revelation 4:1 Church era writings to determine their proper APPLICATIONS for US!** For example, though Exodus 20:8-11 under the Law requires one to observe the Sabbath Day to testify that God created the universe **in six solar days**, Colossians 2:11-17 tells us in the Church era not to observe Sabbaths, for Romans 7:6 explains we are not under the Law. **However**, Romans 1:18-20 in the Church era claims God created the universe, so we **use** Exodus 20:11 to assert as **our** belief that God created the universe **in six solar days**, or **Pure Creationism!**

Lesson and Application: May we heed Scripture's guidelines in handling all of its information, meaning that we screen all the non-Church dispensational information through Church era writings for proper application today.