

DOCTRINAL STUDIES - Dispensations

- 1 Definition: A period of human history expressed in terms of Divine revelation.
- 2 Dispensations are the Divine categories of human history or the Divine outline of history.
- 3 In effect, dispensations are God's interpretation of history as well as a divine plan for man related to time.
- 4 A believer must be oriented to time to understand God's plan. When we understand God's time, we understand His purpose.
- 5 In every age or dispensation, the plan of God operates through a specific agency. In Old Testament times it was Israel, and now it is the Church. In the Millennium, Christ Himself will be God's agent.
- 6 Salvation is always the same in every dispensation: personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in that dispensation.
- 7 There are four words in the Greek used to present dispensations:
 - a) χρόνος (*chronos*) – Time as a succession of events---events of history in *chronological* order. [1 Thess. 5:1](#)
 - b) καιρος (*kairos*) – time in the concept of a period of a time---used for the organization of events in their categories. [1 Thess. 5:1](#)
 - c) οἰκονομος (*oikonomos*) – the administration of a household---it refers to God's administration of believers for blessing and judgment. [Eph. 3:2](#); [Col. 1:25](#)
 - d) αἰών (*aion*) – ages—period of time—an age. [Eph. 3:5](#); [Col. 1:26](#)
- 8 Age of the Gentiles – [Genesis Chapters 1 through 11](#). This age is divided into three parts:
 - a) Period of innocence, or positive volition.
 - b) Period of conscience, or negative volition.
 - c) Period of the development of the Laws of Divine Establishment. This age extends chronologically from the time of Adam up to (but not including) the time of Abraham. Some of the unique characteristics of the Age of Gentiles included:

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- One language, one race (until the Babel incident—many languages and races from Babel to Abraham).
- No Canon of scripture—all Divine revelation was given verbally or by dreams and visions.
- No specific missionary agency.

There were attacks upon the new Divine Institutions:

- Volition attacked--[Genesis chapter 3](#).
- Marriage and family attacked—[Genesis chapter 6](#).
- Nationalism attacked—[Genesis chapter 11](#).

9 Age of Israel – divided into three parts:

- Abraham to Moses (Patriarchs)
- Moses to Pentecost after Christ's crucifixion (the Law) A parenthetical interruption of the Jewish Age by the Church Age.
- The resumption of the Jewish Age from Christ (at the Rapture) to the Second Advent.

During this dispensation, there were many languages and many races, and there was a missionary agency—Israel. The first missionary was called “*the one crossing the river*”, or “*Hebrew*”—this was Abraham.

Security for Israel was established under four covenants:

- Abrahamic
- Palestinian
- Davidic
- New Covenant

As the administrator of this dispensation, Israel was subject to a specific disciplinary action for failure. Cycles of discipline were administered at various points in Jewish history. These cycles culminated with the fifth cycle of

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discipline (national dispersion) administered once to the Northern Kingdom (in 722 BC) and twice to the southern Kingdom (586 BC and 70 AD). This discipline will terminate at the Second Advent.

Salvation during the Age of Israel came by Faith. [Genesis 15:6](#)

10 The Church Age—found in the New Testament in Acts Chapters 2 through 28, the epistles, [Revelation Chapters 1 through 3](#), and referred to by our Lord in [John 14 through 17](#). The Church age is divided into two parts and center around the completed canon of scriptures:

- a) The pre-canon period from 30 AD to 96 AD.
- b) The post-canon period from 96 AD to the Rapture.

Characteristics unique to the Church Age include:

- Unique status of the believer *“in Christ”*.
- Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- Universal indwelling of Christ.
- Universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- Universal priesthood of the believer.
- Completed canon of scripture.
- Believer in full-time Christian service.
- The believer’s life has its meaning, purpose, and definition *in Christ*.

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11 The Age of Christ—The Millennium—begins at the Second Advent, and continues for 1,000 years under the direct personal rule of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unique characteristics of the Millennium include:

- Perfect environment—no religion—Satan removed from the earth. [Rev. 20:1-3](#)
- Ecstatic in worship. [Joel 2:28ff](#); [Zech. 14:16,17](#)
- Restoration of the nation Israel—world peace. [Eph. 1:10](#)
- The fulfillment of the unconditional covenants. [Dan. 9:24](#)
- Universal peace and prosperity. [Psalm 72:7, 16](#); [Isa. 2:4](#); [Hos. 2:18](#); [Micah 4:3](#); [Psalm 46:9](#)
- Universal knowledge of God. [Isaiah 11:9](#)
- Perfect world government. [Zech. 14:9](#); [Isaiah 11:1,2](#); [Psalm 72](#)
- Radical change in nature—creation loosed from the bondage of sin. [Rom. 8:19-22](#); animals will lose their ferocity, and their fear of man. [Isaiah 11:6-9, 65:25](#). Plant life will abound. [Isaiah 35:1,2 & 7](#)
- Extended life-span during the Millennium – except for capital punishment, death will take a holiday ([Isaiah 65:20](#)).
- Justice will be available to all. [Isaiah 11:3-5](#); [Psalm 72:12-14](#)

The Millennium will begin with only believers—the survivors of the Tribulation. As the Millennium continues under conditions of perfect environment, there will be an increasingly large number of unbelievers. At the end of 1,000 years, Satan (imprisoned at the end of the Tribulation) will be released, and will instigate a revolt known as the Gog Revolution. This rebellion will be brief, as described in [Rev. 20:7-10](#). The revolt is proof that perfect environment is not the solution to man’s problems. When this revolt is put down, there will be the destruction of the earth, the last judgment, and the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth—the New Jerusalem, forever and forever.