

The OPEN BIBLE Study Series

**Rightly
Dividing
the
Word**

**A STUDY OF
THE DISPENSATIONS**

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INTRODUCTION

A dispensation is a moral period in the world's history which ends in a special judgment. In each of the seven dispensations, God revealed Himself to His people, or to the world, always in a somewhat different pattern. God's plan of salvation is the same in each dispensation, yet He may deal differently with man in each of these periods of history.

The seven dispensations are: the Dispensation of innocence; the Dispensation of Conscience; the Dispensation of Human Government; the Dispensation of Promise (or Family); the dispensation of the Law; the Dispensation of the Church (or Grace); and the Dispensation of the Kingdom.

God's Three Creative Acts:

From the context of Genesis 1, it is evident that God created something from nothing. Only God can do this. Science has the ability to bring forth some things that are new to man, but there has always been something with which to start. Even the evolutionist must concede that there was matter and force in the beginning.

The Heavens and the Earth. The word "create" is used in Genesis 1 to refer to three specific acts of God. First it is used with reference to the creation of heaven, which in the Hebrew is "heavens," and then with reference to the earth. The first heaven is known as the firmament (Gen. 1:8; 7:11; 8:2). The second heaven is known as the planetary heaven (1:17; 15:5). The third heaven is God's abode, sometimes called "paradise" (II Corinthians 12:2-4). These heavens were created by God out of nothing.

Animal life. In Genesis 1:21 we read that God created "every living creature that moveth." God in one great act created all human life (vv. 21, 24).

Human Life. Genesis 1:27 says that God created man. God produced a living soul and placed it in this body. It is interesting to note that these three distinctive spheres of creation expose the fallacy of the evolutionary theory. The theory requires links between animal and human life – links which have never been found. Several specimens of plaster of Paris, built around a few isolated bones, have been submitted as examples of the links, but the real proof of the relationship between animal and human life is still missing. Evolution remains a theory and a proved hypothesis. The reason that the links have never been found is that they do not exist. God meant what He said when He ordered each species to produce "*after his kind.*" There is one gap that has been bridged, however, and that is the one between God and man. God produced the "missing link" – His Son, Jesus Christ, who reconciled estranged, sinful man to a loving, holy God.

Other Things God Made

Light, in verse 3. Light was created in the beginning, for God was light.

The Firmament, in verse 6.

The land and the Sea, in verses 9, 10. In regard to plant life, the seed was in the plant itself, revealing that God produced a full-grown creation that had the ability to reproduce. It was not a process of evolution but a creation of mature plant life with seed in itself.

The Sun, Moon and Stars were created on the first day (v. 1) but they were not used as light-bearers until the fourth day (v. 14).

The Dispensation of Innocence

This dispensation began with the creation of the earth and ended with expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. The description of this is found in Genesis 1:3 – 3:13. The length of this dispensation is unknown.

Spiritual Applications

Separation of Light from Darkness

God separated the light from the darkness (Gen. 1:4,5). The children of darkness and the children of light are to be separated, never to fellowship together again (I Thess. 5:5-8; II Cor. 6:14-18; I John 2:8-11). It is impossible for light and darkness to coexist or to have perfect fellowship together. The children of light are in the world, but they should have no fellowship with the world.

The Sun, Moon and Stars

The sun was created in the beginning (Genesis 1:1), but it did not become a light-bearer until the fourth day (v. 14). The command “Let there be light” is literally be light-bearers” that is, places where the light is. The subject is the light bearers”, or light holders, not light itself. Light was created on the first day, according to verse 3: “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” The Hebrew word used for “light in the account as the first creative day is or and in the account of the fourth creative day, *maor*. The two different things being talked about: light on the first day, and light bearers on the fourth day.

Similarly, Christ was in the beginning, and His light was seen shining throughout the Old Testament times, but He did not appear in the flesh until the time planned by the Father.

The sun also becomes a type of the heavenly Son of God, whose light penetrates the body to reveal sin to repel sin, and to illuminate the way for the saint (Psalm 119: 105). As the sun rises and drives away the shadows of night so also the Son of God arises as a morning star in our hearts driving away the darkness and the gloom.

On the fourth day God specifically assigned the sun moon and stars to provide and regulate the light for the earth.

The sun is spoken of as the dispenser of light the moon as the reflector of light and the

stars as the distributors of light. The sun like the Son of God, sends forth its ray of light and reflects the light through the moon (the Church and the Christian) upon a benighted world. The individual stars and the individual Christians become the distributors of the light of the Son of God to the world. We should let our light shine before men so they may see our good works and glorify our Heavenly Father. Often there are hindrances to the light. The clouds may hide the direct light of the moon, and so it may be that worldliness in our lives may hide the light of the Son of God, as it reflects through us. A self sufficient church may become so arrogant and proud that the Son of God is left on the outside and His light is not reflected. This is no doubt a description of the Laodicean church of the last days, in which we are now living,

Man

Man was God's masterpiece of creation. Adam is a type of Christ, with rulership over the earth. The first Adam lost his sovereignty, but the last Adam will come to regain it.

Adam was not left alone, but Eve was given to him as a helpmeet. Christ us not left alone, but the Church was given to Him for a helpmeet in His working ministry (II Corinthians 5:18-20).

Eve was formed from Adam as a deep sleep enveloped him. The Church was taken from Christ. The sleep of death was necessary on His part, and the Church came forth, through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:30).

Adam was given authority over the woman. Christ was made Head of the Church. We should take all of our orders directly from Him (Ephesians 1:22; 5:25-32).

As Eve was one with Adam and had all things in him, so the Church is one with Christ, having all things in Him (Colossians 2:9-10).

Life and Death

When all was life, God spoke and warned of death (Genesis 2:16-17). Now when all mankind faces death, He speaks of eternal life (John 11:25-26).

Satan, in opposition to God, made void (by his lies) God's concerning death (Genesis 3:4-5). Now he makes void God's words of life (II Corinthians 4:3,4).

God's Day of Rest

The day of rest is referred to in Genesis 2:1-3. The word "rest" means "to cease from labor." God does not speak of the kind of rest with which we are familiar when we are tired and have to relax from our labors. He ceased from His labors because they were finished.

Only after God had finished His work did He cease. Man was created on the sixth day, entering at once into the rest of God immediately upon being born into God's family

(Hebrews 4:9-10).

The rest if God was broken by the fall of man, but it was restored by the finished work of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:4; Matthew 11:28). Now He is waiting for man to rest upon the finished work of Calvary.

The Triune God's Image Reproduced in the Triune Man

There are various ways in which the Triune God's image has been reproduced in man, but the one in which we are especially interested is that referred to in I Thessalonians 5:23 that man is also a trinity. The eternal God is a trinity; He is three persons, but the three are one. Each of the three members of the Godhead has a distinct function, yet the three together are one God. Man is a triune being, composed of body, soul and spirit. Each has a separate function, but the three make one man.

Body

Man's body was formed of clay (Genesis 2:7). It is described by Paul as an "earthly house of this tabernacle" (II Corinthians 5:1). The body is the visible part of man and that which comes in contact with the world. It is the house of the soul (Genesis 35:18).

Soul

The words "heart" and "soul" are often used interchangeably in the Word of God. The soul is that which has life within itself, gives life to the body and operates through the body. It is "you" the personality that lives in the body or clay. In a certain sense, even animals possess a soul, for they have self conscious life, but the soul of man has undying life within itself, whereas the animal's soul does not. At death the human body and the soul separate. The body becomes dormant, returning to the clay from which it was first formed (vs. 18).

The soul is the seat of all desires, good or bad, such as love, sorrow and lust, which become active through though the body.

Spirit

The spirit is that part of man which is capable of communion with God (I Corinthians 3:1; 6:20; Galatians 6:1).

When God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, man became a living soul. God placed within him that which longs for satisfaction, sometimes known as a religious impulse. When drawn by the Holy Spirit (John 12:32), man can desire God. By nature, however, men do not seek God. (Romans 3:11).

We believe that when the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit's taking His throne in our lives, He is speaking of the Holy Spirit's coming into a man and completely possessing his soul

and body (John 7:37-39; I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Only a man who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and has his spirit enlightened can have knowledge of spiritual things and the interpretation of them (I Corinthians 2:14). That is why unregenerate man cannot understand the things of the Spirit.

The trinity is also seen in the tabernacle constructed in the wilderness by Moses. First there was the outer court, which was in contact with the world. This corresponds to the body of man. Then there was the holy place, the place of fellowship, which corresponds to the soul of man. The soul is that faculty of man through which he may have fellowship with the almighty God. Then there was the Holy of Holies, where God Himself came and tabernacle with men. That corresponds to the spirit of man, or the inmost being of man, which becomes the throne and seat of God the Holy Spirit as He comes to love within the believer. It is from this place, as in the tabernacle, that He wants to govern our actions through soul and body.

What happened when man fell into sin? The God who was enthroned within the spirit of man was dethroned. Spiritual darkness and death possessed man's spirit. If the spirit could be compared with a room, it would mean that the room became a darkened place. This is the same as when the Shekinah glory left the temple after the sins of the kings of Israel. God departed from the temple. That is a picture of what happened to man when he became a sinner through Adam. Being "born again" simply means permitting God the Spirit to take His place on His throne within the spirit of man. After He has taken His place upon this throne, He seeks also to control the soul and the whole body (Romans 12:1-2).

The Fall of Man

The Temptation

The temptation which came to man in the Garden of Eden was threefold. It came to the body, to the soul and to the spirit. It appealed to the lust of the flesh (body), It appealed to the lust of the inner eye (soul) and it appealed to the pride of life (spirit, see I John 2:16).

It is said that Eve was beguiled (I Timothy 2:14). The temptation came to her body when she saw that the tree was good for food. The temptation came to her soul, or intellect, when she was told that it was pleasant to the eyes to make one wise. The temptation came also to her spirit. She was not satisfied to let God be upon the throne of her heart, but she was tempted that she could be like Him.

Christ was tempted exactly as Eve was tempted (Hebrew 4:15). He was tempted in the body, or flesh, when he was called upon to make bread out of stones (Luke 4:3). He was tempted in the soul, or in his intellectual life, when he was presented with the rulership of this world as a reward for worshiping the evil one (vs. 6,7). He was tempted in His spirit when He was called upon to presume that no evil would befall Him. He was tempted to be proud in His spiritual life (vs. 9-11).

The Results of the Fall

Spiritual death and darkness possessed the spirit, or the heart of man (Genesis 3:7). That which was once the throne of God became a darkened faculty in man.

Physical death of the body is part of the curse (v. 19). From that moment on, the body has been in a state of decay.

The soul which was ended with immorality, became alienated from God and lost even its created righteousness.

The ground was cursed (vs. 17-19).

The woman was judged (vs. 16)

And the serpent was cursed (vs. 14).

Death was transmitted to all the offspring of men because, according to the law of nature instituted by God, like begets like (Romans 5:12-14; Galatians 6:7,8). Man transmits a spiritually dead life to his offspring.

By the mercy of God, the way to the tree of life was barred, preventing man from eating of it and living in his fallen condition forever (Genesis 3:22-24).

With the fall, man also partially lost a realm in which his free will could operate. He is not able to return to his former state. He cannot be saved by his own efforts (Romans 9:16). Since God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should have everlasting life (Peter 3:9, He has made provision that man should be brought back into his former state (John 3:16). Since man cannot exercise the power to come back into this state, he must be drawn by God (6:44). God must create in Him a desire to be saved. God also gives man faith to receive Christ's finished work (Ephesians 2:8,9).

Salvation provided by God

Immediately after the fall, God made provision for the redemption of man (Genesis 3:15).

As a means of temporary covering for sin and to keep away judgment, God supplied a cloak made of the skin of animals for a covering for man. This implies the bloodshed of animals (vs. 21).

Salvation is provided through bloodshed. *"Without shedding of blood is no remission"* (Hebrews 9:22). In the Old Testament days, atonement was made through the blood of animals, and sin was covered in that way. Through the gift of the Son of God, reconciliation with God has taken place, and salvation is offered as a free gift to all men (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 3:8-10). Man can exercise his power of choice and receive or reject the gift that God is offering (John 3:16-18).

After man has willingly accepted the gift of salvation offered to him by God, his will becomes merged with that of God. From that time on, man does not will of himself; his free will actually becomes the will of God. God works in man both to will and to perform according to His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

This brings to a conclusion the study of man's incorrect use of his power of choice. God is sovereign being – one who could say No even to his creator.

Adam used his faculty of will power and chose to disobey God in the Garden of Eden. The result was that he was removed from the Garden and was not allowed to go back. He still had his willpower, but a decree of God prevented him from entering forbidden territory. In doing this, God did not annul man's sovereignty. Man can still exercise his will and choose good or evil, God or Satan.

Salvation is provided by God but must be accepted by man through the right use of his will. *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve”* (Joshua 24:15). *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”* (Acts 16:31). Once salvation is accepted, God turns the key, as in the case of the Garden of Eden, and refuses to let the soul return to its former lost condition.

The Dispensation of Conscience

The Dispensation of Conscience began with the fall of man and ended with the period of the flood (Genesis 3:23-8:19). During this time Adam's race was left to its own devices. There was no law or human government. Murderers went unpunished, and every man was a law unto himself, with his conscience as his only monitor. We realize, however, that conscience can become a very poor guide when it is not controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Man's Condition

Knowledge of Good and Evil

When Adam fell into sin, he acquired the knowledge of good and evil, and this knowledge was transmitted to the whole human race (Genesis 3:3).

His responsibility then was to do all known good.

His good deeds were not intended to reconcile him to God. That could be accomplished only by means of blood. Man must approach God by means of blood sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22). This is the established will of God. It is a fixed law which cannot be changed, first mentioned in Genesis 4:4.

Conscience was found to be insufficient as a guide for man, nor is it a sufficient guide for us today. In following our conscience, we look to the Spirit, to yield our lives to Him, and to let Him be our guide, directing us in our judgments and in our walk with Him. Then He

will be our strength (John 14:26; 16:13).

DEGENERATION

During this dispensation there was a long process of falling away. It began with the individual; then it enveloped the family, society, and eventually the whole nation. All except the eight members of Noah's family fell away from their knowledge of God.

Immediately after the expulsion from the Garden, there began to appear a division in man's thinking, and the two gospels (the social and the blood) were born (Genesis 4:2-15). Fundamentalism and Modernism found their origin in the first two children of Adam and Eve. Degeneration is thus seen to begin with the individual.

Abel brought a blood offering as an atonement for sin, and in this we see the true gospel of the grace of God.

Cain, not recognizing himself as a sinner, brought a thank offering. Here we find the social gospel.

Degeneration in families.

Cain followed self-consideration and self development (vs. 16).

Seth followed in fear and obedience to God (vs. 26). This continued in the family until there came a spirit in society, and finally the whole nation followed Cain's example.

Degeneration continued as a result of the intermarriage of the people and the failure of the godly ones to separate themselves from the ungodly. Finally, the nation became totally corrupt, except for Noah's family. We might receive a lesson from this. We see much corruption in the Church today as it seeks the friendship of the world and this. We see much corruption in the world and thus loses its power with God. Instead of being separated, as God commands, it intermingles with the world, and corruption is the result.

A Righteous Remnant (Genesis 5:22-24; 6:8,9)

It is a glorious truth that God has always had a faithful remnant, even during a time of corruption and apostasy.

Enoch was a man who walked with God. He is a type of the true Church that walks with God. As Enoch was taken up before the judgments fell upon the world, the Church will also be translated before the great and terrible judgment comes (Revelation 3:17-13).

Noah also walked with God. He becomes a type of the Jewish remnant which will be left on the earth, preserved through the Tribulation. (Revelation 7:1-8).

These two men become outstanding examples of a faithful remnant. Today there is a faithful remnant in the church which has not succumbed to Modernism and worldliness

which has kept itself clean and free from the entanglements of carnality. There are those in the Jewish race who have not “bowed the knee to the image of Baal” (Roman’s 11:4). Although they have rejected Christ, they have not rejected God as they knew Him in the Old Testament. In Revelation 7 we read that God will seal 144,000 Jews and take them safely through the Tribulation, as Noah was carried though the great flood.

The Ark of Safety (Genesis 6:14; 7:1-24)

For the faithful remnant of Noah’s time, there was an ark of safety. Enoch was taken to be with God, and Noah and his family were placed in an ark made of gopher wood, which floated on the waters and kept them safe through the judgment. In the last days the Church will be taken away, and the Jewish remnant will be kept through the Tribulation period.

The pitch that was used to keep out the judgment waters is typical of the atonement in the Old Testament, which kept the judgments of God from man. God’s grace was extended to anyone in that dispensation who would enter the ark; however, only eight persons did so.

The Hebrew word for “**atonement**” means “**to cover.**” Each sacrifice covered the sin of the person who offered it, securing God’s forgiveness. Because the punishment was placed on the victim, the person could go free. The blood of an animal could not really take away a person’s sins. (Hebrews 10:11), but the animal sacrifice pictured the great sacrifice that Jesus would make on the cross. Looking forward to that, God was able to pass over sins that had been covered by sacrifices in this dispensation.

In the last seven days God gave “signs of the times” by calling into the ark all animal life two of each kind (Genesis 7:4,16).

Noah believed and obeyed God, going into the ark. Notice that it was not what Noah was but where he was that saved him. So it is today. Faith brings us to Christ, and only those who are in Christ are saved. As Noah was preserved in the ark and sealed from judgment, so our lives are safely hid with Christ and we, too, are sealed from the coming judgment (John 5:24; Romans 8:1; Colossians 3:3,4; Revelation 3:9,10).

God’s judgments are final, but before judgment comes, grace is extended to man. As God in grace offered salvation in the time of Noah (Genesis 7:23), so He offers salvation to men today (Hebrews 2:3; 3:7-19).

God’s Faithful Witness

Not only does God have His faithful remnant, He has His faithful witness at all times.

Enoch Was a Faithful Witness to His Generation (Genesis 5:22-24)

He preached about the coming judgment (Jude 1:14, 15).

He was quietly unseen and unheard taken away. The Church, too, will be raptured quietly unseen and unheard by the world.

Noah Was Another Faithful Preacher (Hebrews 11:7)

He was a preacher of faith, and it was this faith that saved him not his works. His faith was manifested by his works (Hebrews 11:7).

Noah was not a sinless man either before or after the flood. God had provided the blood offering as a means of keeping the fellowship intact between Himself and His creatures. Noah followed God faithfully through these offerings (Genesis 8:20).

God's Present Appeal

Conditions of Noah's Day are repeated in the Latter Days (Matthew 24:37)

Just as unbelief abounded in Noah's day, there is much unbelief today.

God appeals to Us to Watch for the Signs of the End Time (Matthew 24:33)

These signs can easily be recognized in our own day.

In the days of Noah an Ark was prepared as the means of safety for those who would enter it by faith

Today Christ is that Ark of safety to everyone who will come and be identified with Him through the new birth (John 10:9; 11:25,26; Romans 8:1).

As you have studied this lesson, have you become aware of the fact that you are safe in the hands of God as Noah was? Through identification with Christ, you are secure in the Arc of Safety – Christ Jesus.

The Dispensation of Human Government

The Dispensation of Human Government is described in Genesis 8:20 – 11:32. In this dispensation, which began with Noah, after the flood, there was the laying of the foundation for human government, which will eventually be under the leadership of Jesus Christ Himself during the millennium.

Responsibility Increases

Under the Dispensation of Conscience, men were personally held responsible to God to do all known good. Man's conscience was his guide. Now, during the Dispensation of Human Government, God held man responsible for governing other men as well (9:5). This responsibility is placed on the head of the family. Each family head is to govern his

own immediate family. In the Kingdom age this responsibility will be transferred to Christ, the Head of the spiritual family (Ephesians 5:21-23)

Noah's Offering

Immediately after coming out of the ark, Noah brought an offering. By doing so, he acknowledged his complete dependence on God.

God acknowledges that man has a sinful nature; therefore, He deals with him, not on merits, but completely on the basis of his identification with the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 3:10-23). Man's heart is desperately wicked, and there is no hope for him apart from God's dealing with him on the basis of grace. Noah gained favor with God because he acknowledged his dependence on Him for salvation.

God Blesses Noah

This was the first blessing on man since Adam's time, and it was given in spite of man's sinfulness. This blessing, however, was associated with the offerings on the altar, which made possible the fellowship between Noah and God. This points to the cross (Hebrews 9:22).

Animal Life Changed

After the flood there was a distinct change in the condition of animal life. Animals could now be used as food for man as well as for other practical purposes. The normal, or antediluvian, condition of animal life will again prevail during the earthly reign of Christ (Isaiah 11:6-8).

Man's life Shortened

It was much better for man to have his life shortened than for him to be able to live and find out the many new and different ways of enlarging upon his already sinful life (Ps 90:10). The promise of the Word is that human life will be brought back to normal conditions during the reign of Christ, the millennium (Isaiah 65:20).

Man's Posterity

The race was divided into three groups – each of the three sons of Noah heading his own: **(1) Ham** (Genesis 10:6-20); **(2) Shem** (Genesis 10:21-31); **(3) Japheth** (Genesis 10:2-5).

With the descendants of Japheth came government, science, art and so on. God's final dealing with the world during the millennium will be through Israel, the nation descended from Shem.

Types

Some interesting types were found during this dispensation. The history of Babel parallels the history of the professing church.

Unity

Compare man-made unity (Gen. 11:1) with the unity of the Church – united by the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:32,33).

Ambition of Man (Gen. 11:4)

The descendants of Noah wanted to make a name for themselves. They built a city and a tower so they might not be scattered. God said that they should be scattered and should replenish the earth. The Church was instructed to replenish itself. In the Genesis account we note the use of worldly means rather than spiritual for this unity. Men were following a set pattern of rules instead of God's method – through the new birth (see Luke 11:24-26; John 3:5-7). God speaks of born-again Christians as living stones, created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10; I Pet. 2:5). Thus, we are held together by the bonds of the Holy Spirit. Looking again at the Genesis account, we notice that bricks were used for stones and slime for mortar. This is a picture of much of Christendom today. Men are said to be Christians when they are molded according to certain man-made patterns. The basis of man's unity is thus in the plan and ingenuity of man rather than through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:12).

Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11:7)

This was a judgment on men at the time of Babel, and it formed the beginning of all nations. All nations will one day stand before God in judgment (Matt. 25:31,32). After this judgment, when all the wicked nations have been disposed of, all other nations, people, and tongues will be made one in Christ again (Eph. 1:10).

Here we see, in type, Protestantism, with its many sects and isms and the confusion of denominationalism, out of which God will rapture His true Church. There will be a final unity of people of all the nations and denominations during the Kingdom Age. This will not be a man-made union, but God will unite those who are truly born from above (all believers).

Nimrod Rises and Establishes His Kingdom

This caused many men to become his slaves. Nimrod set up his first world kingdom and immediately became a type of the Antichrist in that he established a kingdom against God and proclaimed idolatry as a principle of worship. Nimrod and his wife eventually became the gods and were worshiped. Thus, pagan religious began. Many of our false religions of today had their beginning in Nimrod's religion. It is out of this ungodliness that God called Abraham, and the dispensation of the family began.

Application

God is calling His true Church out of this sinful world today. He is first calling believers to be set apart – to live separated lives. Then He calls them to be with Him forever (Rev. 3:7-13). We also read, in Revelation 19:7-10, that the Bride makes herself ready for the coming of Him who will separate her from this world forever.

The Dispensation of Promise (or Family)

The third dispensation came to a close with judgment, as do all dispensations. Out of the chaotic condition of the world at that time God called a man named Abraham into a far country and gave him unconditional promises. With the call of Abraham, the fourth dispensation began (Genesis 12:1; Exodus 19:7). God began His dealings with a people completely separate from all other peoples of the earth. The history of the earth began to revolve around God's chosen People, Israel. He used this nation as a channel of blessing to the other nations (John 4:22; Romans 3:1,2).

Israel was chosen for a four-fold purpose: (1) to prove to the nations that there was a true and living God (Genesis 12:1-3); (2) that through them He might transmit the oracles of God (Romans 3:1,2); (3) that through His people He might send the Redeemer, Christ, through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3); (4) that He might preserve the earth through them, they being the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13).

The dispensation of promise began with Abraham and closed with Moses (Genesis 12:1-Exodus 20:1). Abraham became a great and prominent leader. It is interesting to study the four-fold surrender of Abraham, as we see that after each surrender God gave him a promise, increasing his blessings.

Abraham

Abraham surrendered home, country, and kindred (Genesis 12:1)

This same command was given to all Christians (II Corinthians 6:14-18)

At first Abraham went only to Haran (about half-way). "Haran" Christians are those who are not all out for God and therefore cannot be used by Him.

Finally, Abraham left Haran (after his father's death) and entered the land of Palestine. There, as a result of his surrender, he received a special promise of both earthly and spiritual blessings (Genesis 12:2,3; Mark 10:29,30).

Abraham Surrendered Earthly honor and Supremacy

The land could not hold both Lot and Abraham. Both were rich in cattle, and their herdsmen fought, so a separation was necessary. Lot was permitted to choose the land he wanted, and Abraham took what was left. (Genesis 13:5-18).

Lot began to walk by sight, as do many Christians today, but Abraham walked by faith and trusted God to fulfill the unconditional promises that had been given him as a result of his surrender.

Abraham received the title deed to all the land of Canaan, but Lot lost all that he had gained (18:19).

An unconditional promise was made to Abraham because of his second great surrender (13:14,15; 17:18).

God said that all of the land would be given to Abraham and his seed, meaning that believing Israel would someday return and possess it (Jeremiah 25:5) and that Christ, to whom the promise was made, would also return as Israel's King (Galatians 3:16).

The final possession of it is in the future (Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:8-13).

Abraham surrendered his riches

He refused the riches of an earthly king in favor of the riches promised by Almighty God (Genesis 14:21-24).

After capturing those who had taken Lot, Abraham came home, but he stood in great danger at the hands of the kings from the north, against whom he had fought. Since Abraham refused the riches of an earthly king, God protected him from the other kings of the north (Genesis 15:1).

One who surrenders completely to Christ must be willing to give up earthly possessions (Matthew 6:19).

Abraham was promised protection.

Abraham Surrendered His Only Son

God called on him to bring his only son as an offering. After having waited 25 years for a son, Abraham was asked to give him back to God. All the promises that were made to Abraham were to be fulfilled in his son and in his posterity. The son's death, of course, would prelude their fulfillment.

Abraham again trusted in God, even though all circumstances seemed to be against him (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Abraham was then promised both spiritual and earthly seed (Genesis 22:16-19). The stars in this passage no doubt refer to a spiritual posterity, while the sand may refer to the physical posterity of the earth.

The Christian must be willing to give up loved ones (Matthew 10:37).

Isaac

The Promises Made to Abraham Were Extended to Isaac

1. Child of promise (Genesis 15:4; Isaiah 7:14).
2. Birth preannounced (Genesis 18:10; Luke 1:31).
3. Named before birth (Genesis 17:19; Luke 1:31).
4. Birth contrary to nature: Sarah was barren (Genesis 11:30); Mary was a virgin (Matthew 1:18-20).
5. Called the “only son” (Genesis 22:2; Hebrews 11:17; John 3:16).
6. Mocked and persecuted by kindred (Genesis 21:9,10; Galatians 4:28,29).
7. Innocent of the claims of the law (Genesis 22:2; Matthew 27:24-29).
8. Carried the burden alone: carried the wood (Genesis 22:6); Christ bore our sin (John 19:17).
9. Went willingly to the altar (Genesis 22:9; John 10:17).
10. Forsaken by the Father (Genesis 22:12; Matthew 27:46).
11. Rose from the place of death (Hebrews 11:17-19; Matthew 28:6).

Eliezer

Both Eliezer and the Holy Spirit Submitted Themselves to Become Servants

Abraham Sent His Servant to find a Bride for His Son (Genesis 24)

The Heavenly Father sent the Holy Spirit to call and prepare the Bride (the Church) for His Son.

Only After Abraham’s Son Had Been Offered Did the Father Send for a Bride (Genesis 22,24)

Our Heavenly Father sent the Holy Spirit after the Son had been offered.

Abraham Sent for the Bride After the Death of Sarah (Genesis 23)

God the Father sent the Holy Spirit for His Son’s Bride after Israel had been rejected.

The Servant of Abraham Spoke Not of Himself But of the Son (Genesis 24:34-42)

The Holy Spirit came not to speak of Himself but of the Son (John 16:13).

The Mission Was Urgent (Genesis 24:53-56; Luke 14:23).

Abraham's Servant Gave Gifts to Isaac's Bride

The Holy Spirit brings gifts to the Bride of Christ (Genesis 24:22, 53; I Corinthians 12).

After Completing His Work, Abraham's Servant Was Free to Perform Other Services (Genesis 24:61-67)

After the Holy Spirit has brought the Bride into the presence of the Lord, He, too, will be free to carry out other phases of the Lord's work.

Rebekah

Rebekah Yielded to the Plea of the Servant (Genesis 24), Even Though She Had Not Seen the Bridegroom

The Church yields to the plea of the Holy Spirit, although with her physical eye she has not seen the bridegroom.

Rebekah Was Willing to Leave All for the Sake of Her Beloved

The Church is also willing to leave all for the sake of Christ.

All Things Concerning the Bridegroom Were Told to Rebekah By the Servant

The mysteries of Christ, our Heavenly Bridegroom, are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

Rebekah Was Neither of the Chosen Seed of Abraham Nor Completely of the World, But She Was Related to Both

Christ's Bride is neither Jew nor Gentile but a new creature, "the middle wall of partition" having been broken down (Eph. 2:14).

The Bride Was Received by Isaac Before the Tribulation of Egypt Occurred

The Bride of Jesus Christ will be received into glory before the Tribulation comes upon the earth (Rev. 3:10).

Isaac Went Out to Meet His Bride

Christ will come to meet His Bride, the Church (I Thess. 4:13-18).

Abraham Married Keturah After His Son Had Taken a Bride (Gen. 25:1)

Keturah is a type of Israel, who will be restored after the Bride has been taken to be with Jesus Christ.

Joseph

In the following outline we find 23 occurrences in the life of Joseph which are typical of the life of Christ.

Genesis

New Testament

37:3	Beloved of the father	Matthew 3:17; John 17:24
37:4	Hated by his brothers without cause	John 15:25
37:5	Rejected by his brethren	John 7:5
37:7 1:18	His preeminence rejected	Matthew 21:37-39; Colossians
37:8	His reign rejected	Luke 19:14
37:11	Delivered because of envy	Mark 15:10
37:13	Came to his brothers	John 1:11
37:14	Sent as a servant	Matthew 21:33-39
37:18	They conspired to kill him	Mark 14:1
37:21	Sought to have him delivered	Matthew 27:24
37:28	Joseph sold for 20 pieces of silver, the price of a boy slave	Matthew 26:15
39:1	Became a servant	Philippians 2:7
39:2	God was with him	John 8:29
39:4-6	All things were given unto his charge	Matthew 11:27
39:30	He was bound	Matthew 27:2
40:2,3	Punished with two malefactors	Luke 23:32
40:13	One malefactor pardoned	Luke 23:43
40:14	Requested that he be remembered	I Corinthians 11:24
41:14	Was delivered from prison	Acts 2:24
41:41	He was exalted	Hebrews 1:13
41:45	Received a Gentile Bride after rejection	Ephesians 3:6

41:55 He was all-powerful but did not have his own throne John 2:5

42:6 Only approach to the king was through him John 10:9

The life of Joseph stands as a type of Christ in seven other ways.

Trouble Came to Joseph's Brethren After He Had Received His Gentile Bride

Trouble will come to the Jews, Christ's brethren in the flesh, after He has received His Gentile Bride. This will occur during the Tribulation period.

Joseph Knew His Brethren When They Came The First Time, But They Did Not Know Him (Genesis 42:8)

Jesus also knew His own the first time He came, but they neither knew Him nor received Him (John 1:11).

The Second Time Joseph Met His Brothers, He Made Himself Known To Them (Genesis 45:1-3)

Christ will also make Himself known to His own at His Second Coming (Ezekiel 36).

After Joseph Had Revealed Himself To His Brothers, They Proclaimed Him to Be Alive and the Saviour of Mankind

Men will proclaim Christ to be alive and the Saviour of mankind after He has revealed Himself to His own at the close of the Tribulation period (Matthew 24).

After Joseph Had Revealed Himself, He Established His Brothers in the Land

When Christ has revealed Himself to His own, they, too, will be established in the land (Ezekiel 36).

Joseph First Reconciled His Brothers to Himself and Then Exalted Them

Christ will reconcile His own to Himself, and then He will exalt the Jews (Romans 11:25,26).

Joseph Was Rejected by His Brothers, But Later He Became Their Preserver

Christ, who was rejected by His own, will also preserve His own (see 144,000, Revelation 7).

Lot

Lot Chose Earthly Possessions Rather Than Heavenly Joy

This is true of much of the Church and of Christian individuals. Because carnal Christians

do not see the future, they choose the possessions of earth instead of the Heavenly joys that could be theirs.

Instead of Separating Himself to God, Lot Lost Himself in Worldly Associates and Pleasures

In Mingling With the World, Lot Lost His Own Testimony

The Christian of today who does this same thing loses his testimony before the world, and Christ is not glorified through him.

Lot Not Only Lost His Earthly Possessions, He Died a Pauper in Spiritual Glory

This is repeated in the life of Christians today.

Jacob

God Promised Jacob the Privilege of the Birthright

Rather than waiting on God, he plotted to receive it earlier than God had planned (Genesis 25:23). Self-willed Christians today are not willing to wait on God for that which He has promised.

God Also Promised Him Blessings, But Jacob Stole These Blessings (Genesis 27:35,36)

Often Christians, not willing to wait, steal the blessing, scheming to work ahead of God. (Hebrews 12:16,17).

After God Had Extended His Grace to Him, Jacob Made a Vow to God Which He Failed To Keep

Here he became a type of the Christian who has all the promises of God in the Word but fails to hold true to the vows he makes to God (Genesis 28:12-22).

After Jacob Returned From Lebanon, He Faced a Great Test as He Met His Brother Face to Face

He prevailed upon God for a real blessing. After the emergency was over, however, he failed to allow God to keep his promise and in his own way attempted to fulfill it himself (Genesis 32,33). When Christians today face a great crisis, they turn to God and trust in His promises, but after the crisis is over, they often return to their own way- the way of the flesh.

At the Close of His Life, Jacob Finally Learned That What he Had Sown, He Must Also Reap

Christians cannot escape that same law of nature. *"For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"* (Galatians 6:7).

How God Preserves His People

As God Viewed Israel in the Land of Canaan, He Saw the Danger of Intermarriage, by Which the Purity of the Hebrews Would Be Lost

God through circumstances, arranged to send the Israelite's into the land of Egypt, where they served as shepherds. This was a disgraceful occupation in the eyes of the Egyptians. Thus God hindered them from intermarriage with the people of Egypt, keeping within the Hebrew people the pure-blooded heritage of Abraham.

The Fourth Dispensation Lasted for Approximately 430 Years

The closing years found Israel in captivity in Egypt. Their expulsion from Egypt and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai ended the dispensation.

The Dispensation of the Law

Second Timothy 3:16 tell us that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. There are some who teach that certain parts of the Word have a higher degree of inspiration than others. They say that the Ten Commandments are somewhat superinspired, because the finger of God engraved them into stone. They also say that where God used the hand of man, the inspiration is not to such a high degree. However, God says that all of His Word is inspired.

It is true that God used different methods of giving the Scripture, but all of it is equally inspired. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) were engraved by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). The Book of the Revelation was given to John in a vision. Other portions of the Bible were given as the Holy Spirit led men to write them. All Scripture is inspired and is profitable.

Some believe that since Christ came to fulfill the Law, not to destroy it, we, too, must fulfill the Law if we would be one with Christ. Those who teach this have failed to understand that Christ came to be the fulfillment of the Law for us. We continually break the Law, but He came to fulfill it perfectly (see Matthew 5:17; John 17:4).

It is important for us to understand that the relationship of Christ to the Law was the same as that of the Jewish people at the time of Moses. He came during the Dispensation of the Law, and 33 years of His life were spent in fulfilling the Law. In His life in the flesh, Christ completed the Law by fulfilling its demand for perfection. In His death He completed it by accepting its penalty meant for us (Galatians 3:13). Since Christ fulfilled the Law, it can no longer demand anything from us.

The Interpretation of the Law

It was necessary that God add the Law to reveal His high standard and man's transgression and sinfulness (Roman's 3:19,20).

God Led Israel Out of Egypt Before the Law Was Given

1. He promised that He would lead them eventually into the land of Canaan
2. The people of Israel, like many today, were not willing to accept God's leading by grace. They wanted written rules and regulations, so they asked for the Law.

In Accepting the Law and Promising to Do All That God Would Ask of Them, They Did Not Recognize His Absolute Holiness.

The Law Was To Serve As a Schoolmaster to Bring Men to Christ

1. If man would look at himself in the mirror of the Law, he would have to admit that he was not fulfilling the demands of the Law.
2. After seeing himself "short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), he recognizes himself as a sinner and comes to Christ, who is the only means of salvation (Galatians 3:24).

God's Plan For Making Man Righteous is Not By Keeping Rules and Regulations

1. God offered His own perfect righteousness in exchange for man's faith (Romans 3:21,22; §:5).
2. Only those who believe and receive Christ will become righteous (v. 22).

The Law Was Given to Israel Alone

It was given during a time of disobedience, during the nation's wanderings, and was to serve until Christ finished the Law by His death on the cross (see Ephesians 2:11-13 and Romans 9:3,4).

Some Differences Between Law and Grace

1. The Law was given to one people; grace is given to all (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. The Law was given in one language (Hebrew); grace is given in all languages (Acts 2:8).
3. The Law permitted but one place of worship (Jerusalem); grace opens the way so that men may worship anywhere in faith and truth (Acts 1:8; John 4:23,24).

At Times Men Become Confused By the Words of Inspiration, Which Demands We Obey a Law (I John 2:4)

The Law of which John is speaking is neither the Law of Moses nor the Law given during the Old Testament dispensations. It is the Law of Christ clearly described in I John 3:22,23.

The New Law of Christ Is a Law of Love

1. To fulfill the whole Law, we must love one another (Romans 13:10).
2. Since the Spirit of God is shed abroad in the hearts of men, the love of God is also shed abroad in our hearts, that we might fulfill all of His commandments (Romans 5:5).
3. God has given us Christians a deeper love than mere human love, and when we realize this and are motivated by it, we fulfill God's Law.
4. By this commandment we can check ourselves in regard to our attitude toward God and our fellow men. We can fulfill the Law of Moses in spirit by manifesting the love of Christ.

The Law Differs From the Grace Manifested in Christ

Read carefully Romans 8:2-4 and II Corinthians 3:7-9. If we can understand the difference between Law and grace, it will result in a deeper, richer, more fruitful Christian experience.

Law and Grace Differ as to Dispensation

1. The Law was given on Mount Sinai shortly after the Israelite's left Egypt (Exodus 19:1,2; 20:1-17). "It was added . . . till the seed [Christ] should come" (Galatians 3:19; see vs. 16; John 1:17).
2. There was a special time for the Law. It had a beginning and an end.
3. There is a special period of time known as the Grace Dispensation, which began after the Law was fulfilled.
4. Jesus became the "end of the Law" (Romans 10:4) by fulfilling it perfectly.
 - a. In His life, He fulfilled the moral law
 - b. By His death, He fulfilled the ceremonial law. We benefit, therefore, from Christ's work in our behalf. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13).
 - c. We are dead to the Law, since in Christ we died to it. Its demands have been fulfilled (2:19).
 - d. The Law could not help us to overcome sin in our lives, but God's grace will (Romans 6:14). Through grace we receive divine power to meet the demands of the divine Law.

Law and Grace Differ as to Sacrifice

1. Law

- a. The priest had to offer sacrifices daily and a special one on the annual Day of Atonement (Hebrews 9:7).
- b. The Old Testament sacrifices did not take away sin, but merely kept out the judgments of God (Hebrews 10:11).
- c. The word “atonement” did not mean that men were fully reconciled to God. It meant that God’s judgment was withheld until Christ shed His blood. Now men are completely reconciled to God (Psalm 85:2).

2. Grace

The sacrifice of Christ differed from the Old Testament offerings.

- a. It was sufficient to take away all sin once and for all (Hebrews 10:14).
- b. It brings us into the presence of God, because we were reconciled through Christ (Hebrews 9:26). God looked upon the Old Testament sacrifices as being sufficient for a covering for sin and did not impute the sin to the people. Covering, however, is not sufficient for man to be able to see the Lord. Sin must be put away, and Christ alone was able to do it. He destroyed the memory of it (Hebrews 10:17). Any man who tries to enter Heaven by any means other than by accepting the finished work at Calvary is “a thief and a robber” (John 10:1).

Law and Grace Differ as to Message

1. Under the Law, man is told to seek God (Jeremiah 29:13). Under grace, Christ came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).
2. The Law requires that we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and might (Deuteronomy 6:5). Under grace, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.
 - a. Under the Law, man was commanded to love God, but the Law supplied no power to love.
 - b. Under grace, God’s love is given us, that we might love through His life. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). By so doing, He made it possible for us to have the love of God in our hearts, thus fulfilling the Law through Him. He works in us “to will and to do of His good

pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

The Law Could Not Produce Salvation From Sin (Romans 8:3,4)

1. The Law was weak
 - a. The flesh was not able to fulfill it (Romans 8:3).
 - b. Man is carnal and fleshly and, therefore, he cannot fulfill the demands of the Law (Romans 7:17).
2. The Law was helpful, in that it convinced man of his need of Christ. It served as a mirror to reveal what was wrong (Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24).
3. No man can please God by attempting to keep the Law.
 - a. By so doing, he acknowledges that he has recognized the high demands of the Law.
 - b. Man can please God by accepting His provision on the basis of faith (Hebrews 11:6).
4. Man can find cleansing for his sin only by the blood of Jesus Christ, not by means of the Law (I John 1:7).
5. Only when he accepts God’s righteousness as a gift, can man become acceptable to God (Romans 3:21,22,28).

There is nothing wrong with the Law. It is pronounced good, holy and spiritual, but sinful man cannot be saved by it, because he needs more than willpower to fulfill the Law. He needs divine life, which he does not possess. The Law, therefore, could only condemn or pronounce the penalty for death for sin. It had no life to offer.

The Law Separates Man From God, But Grace Brings Him To God

1. Israel was not permitted to come directly to God, for they were a sinful people (Exodus 20:18,19). To come to God alone would mean death.
2. Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:2).
3. Only by bloodshed or complete atonement and reconciliation, can man expect to come into God’s presence (Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 10:19).
 - a. The blood of goats and other animals was not sufficient to bring any man into the presence of God.
 - b. Jesus Christ is the way (John 14:6). Through His life, He fulfilled the Law.

By His death, He took the penalty that was coming our way. When He comes again, He will bring us to God.

4. Only after man has accepted the complete salvation offered by God will he be able to see Christ's face at the Second Coming (I John 3:2).

The Law Cannot Remove the Condemnation or the Curse

1. Man was first created in the image of God.
2. Man did not remain in that sinless, innocent condition. He sinned and came short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23; see Ezekiel 18:4).
3. The spiritual condition of man is that of condemnation, being alienated from God forever (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:19). "For all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). The death penalty is, therefore, passed upon all men (5:12).
4. Since the Law had no life to give, it could not remove this curse.
 - a. It could only place the curse upon man (Galatians 3:10).
 - b. It was weak in performing and giving life, because of the weakness of the flesh (Romans 8:3).
 - c. No man can claim to be righteous in his natural condition (3:10).
5. God has provided an escape from death and judgment through Christ.
 - a. It is no longer the sins which we have committed that condemn us.
 - b. The rejection of God's remedy condemns us (John 3:18; 3:36).
6. By faith in God (and His provision through Christ) man can escape this judgment and be pronounced righteous (John 5:24; II Corinthians 5:21).

The Law Demands Righteousness and Perfection

1. God, who made the Law is absolutely holy and righteous.
 - a. His holiness cannot be contaminated by man's sinful presence.
 - b. If man wants to stand in God's presence, he must be as perfect as God (Matthew 5:48). Man says, "I have infirmities that I cannot help. I am sincere in what I do." The Law can make no allowance for imperfect obedience. The Law must be fulfilled to perfection.
2. The Law requires perfection, but cannot assist in procuring it (see Galatians

3:21).

3. Man's righteousness in God's sight is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

Man needs a perfect, righteous robe in which to stand in God's presence. Since man is born with a corrupt nature (Psalm 51:5) and does not have the spiritual capability to produce a perfect righteousness (Isaiah 64:6), he is hopelessly lost. "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:3,4). Man is made righteous by accepting the righteousness of Christ, by faith.

- a. God imputes His righteousness to man.
- b. God takes man's sin away (II Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 1:28).

The Law Could Not Justify a Sinner (Acts 13:39)

Grace justifies a sinner without works.

1. The Law could not remove sin. It admitted that one must be righteous in order to meet God.
2. When man is justified, his past, present and future sin is removed. Even the stigma of the natural birth in sin is removed.
3. The Law cannot destroy or blot out the remembrance of sin (Hebrews 10:13).
4. We must turn to Christ, who alone can blot out all remembrance of sin (Hebrews 10:10,17).
5. The Law had no power to remove the past record of sin. It could only condemn men for sin. (Romans 3:19,20).
6. In Christ our past is wiped out. We may now be justified of things whereby we could not be justified in the sight of the Law (Acts 13:39).
7. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, man is at peace with God (Romans 5:1).

The Law Could Not Give Life, But Grace Gives Man Life

1. The Law had no life to offer – only death (Ezekiel 18:4; Galatians 3:10).
2. The Law prescribed wages (penalties), and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

3. The Law had no mercy. It offered only condemnation (Romans 3:19; Galatians 3:21).
4. God, who alone possess life, is the giver of life, and He gives to all who believe (John 10:28).
5. The Law condemns everyone, even the best of people (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23).
6. The life that God offers is eternal (Romans 6:23).
7. God the Father has life in Himself, which He has given to the Son, that the Son might have life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).
8. This life may be obtained by receiving the Son (Revelation 3:20).
9. This new life is not ours to live as we would, but it is Christ's in us (Colossians 3:3,4).
10. Grace will save the worst of sinners (I Timothy 1:15).

On the basis of the death of Christ in behalf of the sinner, God has grounds for forgiving man and completely justifying him (Romans 3:21-26). This righteousness is free to all who will believe it and receive it (4:5).

The Place of the Sabbath in God's Plan

It is essential that we study the proper place of the Sabbath in God's plan, because of its gross misinterpretation in our day.

The First Mention of the Sabbath – "God rested from all his labours" (Genesis 2:3)

The words "Sabbath" and "rest" come from the same root word, meaning "to cease." On the Sabbath, God ceased from His labors. He blessed the day as a time of cessation from His work of creation. On the previous six days of creation, the words "evening and morning" are used, no doubt signifying 24 hour days. Concerning the seventh day, no such statement is made, which may indicate that the first Sabbath was a continuous rest or ceasing from labor until man fell into sin. We have no way of knowing how long this period was.

The Second Mention of the Sabbath Was About 2500 Years Later, 1500 Years Before the Birth of Christ.

The Sabbath Was First Given to Mankind After Israel Had Been Taken Out of Egypt (Exodus 16:32; Nehemiah 9:13,14).

Later It Was Incorporated as Part of the Law (Exodus 20:8-11).

The Sabbath Was Given to Israel as a Special Sign (Exodus 31:13-17).

1. The Sabbath sign was given to Israel exclusively.
2. Israel has been scattered, and the sign has no present value. In the present dispensation, which is not the Dispensation of the Law, God is calling out a people for His name called the "Church." The Church not Jewish nor Gentile. The partition wall between the Jew and the Gentile is broken down (Ephesians 2:14), and God has formed a "new man" (v. 15), namely, the Church. The sign, therefore, is not carried over to this dispensation (Colossians 2:16).
3. The Jewish people will be called back into the land, and the Sabbath will again be restored as a special sign for them (Isaiah 66:23; Ezekiel 36:16-18; Amos 9:7-9).

The Sabbath Rules and Regulations are specific

1. They could be fulfilled only in a land with climatic conditions such as exist in the land of Palestine.
 - a. The people were not to build a fire on the Sabbath (Exodus 35:1-3).
 - b. The people were not to leave their homes on the Sabbath to gather manna (16:20-29).
2. Present-day Sabbath keepers are under the curse of the Law, because they have not kept the complete Sabbath (Galatians 3:10; James 2:10).

The Sabbath is a Specific Day

1. Saturday, the seventh day, is the one chosen by God.
2. There is no such day as a "Christian Sabbath."

Confusion has risen in regard to this matter, because Christians have not properly "divided the word of truth" (see II Timothy 2:15) and have called Sunday the "Christian Sabbath."

Why Are Christians Not to Observe the Sabbath?

1. It was given only to Israel (the Jews).
2. We are told that we will not be judged by the Sabbath (Colossians 2:16).
3. After the resurrection of Jesus, the Jews continued to meet on the Sabbath, but all Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, meet on the first day of the week (Luke 24:1; John 20:19; I Corinthians 16:2; Acts 20:7).

The Roman Catholic Church did not begin the-first-day-of –the-week worship, as the Seventh-Day Adventists claim. It was begun by the apostolic churches and early believers. According to church history, the churches at the close of the apostolic era were independent of one another, each being governed by its own pastor. If there were more than one pastor then Precedence was given to one who came to be called “bishop.” Some of these churches were those at Smyrna, Carthage, Ephesus, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Corinth, Antioch and Rome.

The church at Rome had no authority above or over that of any other church. However, because Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire, the Roman bishops frequently tried to lord it over the other churches, and were often rebuked for this by other bishops. The practice of a pastor exercising “lordship” or control over another smaller church was called “Metropolitanism.”

In 325 Constantine, the Roman Emperor, made Christianity the state religion and set himself up as the head of the church. He called the Council of Nicaea, which was the first world council of churches. The council, however, accorded the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch full jurisdiction over their provinces-the same as the Roman bishop-and did not make them subject to Rome.

This act of Constantine in marrying the Roman Church and the Roman Empire did much to foster the cause of the Roman bishops. Later, Leo I (440-461) regarded by many as the first pope, claimed lordship over the whole church and instituted several Catholic dogmas.

Note that the observance of the first day of the week had been practiced for about four centuries by this time, beginning before the Roman Catholic Church existed. The later pronouncements of this church recognized what was already being practiced.

The Moral and Ceremonial Law

The Law is Divided Into Two Classes

1. The moral law (the Ten Commandments) is God’s standard of righteousness, and it stands as a mirror to reflect and reveal the sinfulness of man (Romans 3:19,20).
2. The ceremonial law (concerned with sacrifices, and so on) was God’s method of grace to cover sin (John 3:14-18).

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

1. He fulfilled the moral law by keeping it.
2. In becoming the perfect man, without blemish of sin, by His sacrifice of Himself, He fulfilled the ceremonial law for our sins.

3. The curse of the law has been removed (Galatians 3:13). The law says, “Do and live.” Now, through the perfect sacrifice, we “live and do” (see Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:1-13). Even after Israel has been regathered in the land, God will put His law within their hearts, and they, too, will thrive on the perfect grace of God—first by receiving light and then by doing according to His desires and wishes (see Ezekiel 36:22-27).

Grace, the Only Means of Salvation

Throughout All Ages and Dispensations There Has Been Only One Method of Salvation

1. God provides this salvation through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.
 - a. He was a divinely provided Lamb, slain for our sins.
 - b. This salvation must be accepted by faith (Ephesians 2:8,9).
2. Christ’s righteousness becomes the garment we wear when we are presented to Him.

In Old Testament times, man looked forward to Christ as the perfect Lamb and brought substitutionary sacrifices which would cover sin. Coats of skin were given to Adam and Eve by God, signifying that bloodshed had been necessary in order to secure the skins, which became a covering for sin (Genesis 3:21).

3. After Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden, the offering of a lamb was made as the means of providing salvation (4:4), for bloodshed was necessary (Hebrews 9:22).
4. Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord. He first brought offerings to the Lord and trusted in God (Genesis 6:8,9; 8:20).
5. Abraham, the great patriarch, was justified by faith before God (Romans 4:2-5, 20-22).
 - a. This faith was expressed by his works (James 2:21-24).
 - b. His salvation was provided altogether by faith.
6. Even during the Dispensation of the Law, grace was the only means of salvation (Galatians 3:12-24).
 - a. The Law proves man’s sinfulness.
 - b. The Law points to Christ for salvation (Romans 3:19,20).
 - c. All through this dispensation, the ceremonial law was God’s means of

grace. Sin was hereby covered and God's judgment withheld from those who were exercised thereby (Hebrews 10:1-4; 11-14; 17-20).

Summary

The Dispensation of the Law was a period of time before the cross when God chose a small group of people, known as "Israel." Through them He wanted to prove to the rest of the world that, although they were given a perfect standard of righteousness, they would not be able to be saved by it, because of the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:2,3).

In our next lesson we will study the Dispensation of Grace, which is the dispensation in which we are now living. The grace of God for salvation is more perfectly revealed here, and another demonstration of the ability of God's perfect grace to save and keep men will be given during the Dispensation of the Millennium, when Christ Himself shall reign on the earth and the laws of God will have been put into the hearts of men.

The Dispensation of the Church (or Grace) Part 1

The chronological development in the Church Dispensation is well outlined in the prophetic Word (Revelation 2,3). It is noted throughout our study of the Church that we are not referring to an invisible, mystical body. We are referring to the local New Testament Baptist church. There is a difference between the family of God and the church. To be a member of the family of God you must be saved. To be a member of the local New Testament Baptist church you must be saved and baptized by immersion. The local New Testament Baptist church is the expression of Jesus Christ on this earth until He comes. When referring to the dispensation of the church we are talking of it as a whole as Christianity in general. In the seven churches of Revelation it is interesting to note that all churches in these time periods were not all one type. The different types of churches listed all existed at the same time but an emphasis on the type of church of that time is more easily seen than the other types of churches. The Laodicean "type" church existed during the Ephesus church time period just like the Philadelphian "type" church existed at the same time. We may be in the Laodicean "type" church time frame but that doesn't mean that there are not Philadelphian "type" churches in our day that are going soul-winning or Smyrna "type" churches today that are going through horrible persecution.

The History of the Church

Ephesus Represents the Church at the End of the Apostolic Age (Revelation 2:1-7)

During the first century of Christian history, the Church was faithful in proclaiming the good news of salvation to all known humanity, yet they were told of one fault – that they had left their first love (v. 4). This "first love" meant "being occupied with Christ Himself." Service had been substituted for this. Service should be the result of our relationship with Him, for "the doing flows from the being" (Lewis). This church was admonished to return

to its first love and fellowship with Christ. They were told to repent of their evil ways or they would lose the power of the Holy Spirit in their service (v. 5). The removal of the Holy Spirit from this service did not mean the removal of the Holy Spirit from their lives (i.e., the removal of salvation).

Smyrna Represents the Church of Great Persecution (Revelation 2:8-11)

This period of church history, which ended in A.D. 316, covered about 200 years. It was described as a time of great persecution. Much encouragement is given to this church through the period of persecution. The promise of the “Crown of life” is given to them for faithfulness in the midst of persecution (v. 10). This crown of life is not salvation, it is a reward.

Pergamos Represents the Church under Imperial Favor (Revelation 2:12-17)

This church began in A.D. 316 and continued through A.D. 500. When the Church came under imperial favor, during the time of Constantine the Great, it had abnormal growth. It was faithful to the name of Christ, but its orthodoxy was “dead.” It denied the power of the Gospel. This church was not separated from evil and unbelief. It entertained the doctrine of Balaam, which is, in effect, “mixing with the world.” This church is spoken of as committing spiritual fornication; that is; the spiritual ones were having unlawful relationships with the world. They were also admonished to repent of believing the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, which was the usurpation of ecclesiastical authority by the clergy. They were told that unless they repent and return to God, He would come and fight against them with the “sword of His mouth” (see v. 16). Although much of this has been fulfilled, some of it is yet in the future.

Thyatira Represents the Church of the Dark Ages (Revelation 2:18-29)

The period of this church extended from A.D. 500 to about A.D. 1500. This is the part of the Church Age which was thoroughly saturated with the leaven of evil. During this thousand years of history, the majority of Christendom went into spiritual idolatry. There was, of course, a small remnant of faithful ones during this time (v. 24). This unbelieving church, with its many offshoots, will be cast into the Tribulation.

Sardis Represents the Church of the Reformation (Revelation 3:1-6)

This period is from about 1500 to the end of this dispensation. This church made a good start in protesting against evil and soon gained the name “Protestant,” but at the present time it has lost its protest. It was “garnished” (Matthew 12:44) within – clean, but empty. Matthew 12:43-45 describes the outcome of having a clean house yet having it empty. Sardis thus became the church with much outward show but little inward possession. Revelation tells of a few who “have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white.”

Philadelphia Represents the True Missionary Church (Revelation 3:7-13)

This typifies the possessing church in the last times of this dispensation. Although it is not large in number or powerful in organization, God is at its side. It has been promised that it will not be cast into the Great Tribulation, for it will be taken up at the Rapture (v. 10).

Laodicea Represents the Final Apostate Church (Revelation 3:14-19)

This is the church that is settled in the world and has earthly riches. It feels that it needs nothing else, and thus it becomes the church of the last days, which God will spew out of His mouth into the Tribulation (v. 16). It is the formal church – professing but not really possessing. All of the other churches are addressed as being the church that is in a certain area like “...to the angel of the church in Philadelphia...” or “...to the angel of the church in Smyrna...” but the Laodicean church is addressed “...unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans...” This is different in that Jesus doesn’t call it His church. The Laodicean church is the church of the Laodiceans or the peoples rights and the peoples desires. During the closing days of this Church Dispensation, Christ stands outside many church doors, knocking and asking for entrance because materialism dominates the church. We can still have revival and God is still in the soul saving business but most of the churches as a whole fall in this category. God’s final appeal will be very personal (Revelation 3:20).

The Close of the Church Age

Christ’s Second Advent

1. The Second Coming closes Christ’s threefold ministry to the world.
 - a. He came in humility the first time to die and bring salvation to all humanity. A special heavenly messenger announced this at His birth (Matthew 1:20, 21). This salvation must be personally accepted.
 - b. He is living now within the newborn child of God, giving him the power to live a godly life and overcome sin. The fact that He is alive was told by the heavenly messenger (Luke 24:4-6). His ministry is described in Hebrews 7:25.
 - c. He will return in great power and glory to set up a heavenly kingdom on earth, together with His saints and with Israel. This was foretold by a heavenly messenger (Acts 1:11). His arrival the second time will also be announced by heavenly messengers (I Thessalonians 4:16). The Second Coming of Christ is so important an event that about a fourth of the verses in the Bible refer to it. Twenty times more is said of His Second Coming than His first. His first coming was in rejection and much suffering, but His second coming will be in power and great glory.
2. The purpose of the Second Coming is threefold.
 - a. He is coming in the air to rapture the Church before the Tribulation, that it

might become His Bride for eternity.

- b. He is coming to earth after the Tribulation to regather Israel as a nation and to establish the nation in peace and power.
 - c. When He returns to earth, Christ will destroy the present political system and judge the Gentiles (Matthew 25:34-36). He will then set up His kingdom on the throne of David, with Israel as the literal ruler on earth, the Church as His spiritual ruler, and the Gentiles who are left, as many of the subjects over whom the rulership will be exercised.
3. The condition of the world will be the result of sin.
- a. Although some, called “postmillennialists,” teach that the world will be converted and become better before Christ returns, the Scripture and modern trends do not agree with such views (see II Timothy 3:1-13). Just as the past five dispensations closed with ungodliness and a great judgment, this sixth dispensation will close in the same way.
 - b. Christ taught that there will be many false prophets and much falling away before His return (Matthew 24:24).

The Rapture of the Church

1. The meaning of the Rapture is important.
 - a. By the word “Rapture” we refer to the sudden snatching away of the believers, that is the Church, when Christ returns in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16,17; I Corinthians 15:51,52).
 - b. The Rapture will be two-fold (I Thessalonians 4:13-18): (1) The resurrection of the dead in Christ; (2) The transformation of the living believers.
2. The Rapture will be a surprise to the world. The children of God, however, are not the children of darkness, so they should not be surprised (Matthew 24:42-45; I Thessalonians 5:1-6).
3. The Rapture will be only for a certain group – those who are in Christ, whether dead or living when He comes. The second resurrection will be for the unsaved, and it will not occur until 1,000 years after the return of the Lord Jesus (Revelation 20:5,6).
4. The Rapture is but one phase of the Second Coming.
 - a. At the close of the Dispensation of the Church, or shortly before the beginning of the Tribulation period, Christ will appear in the clouds to

receive His own (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

- b. After the Tribulation period, Christ will return to the earth with His saints to establish His kingdom on earth (Jude 1:14,15).
5. The Rapture will take place before the Tribulation.
- a. Every injunction to watch for the return of the Lord tells us to be ready for His coming, not to watch for the Tribulation.
 - b. The Tribulation is not a concern of the Church. It is known as “Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7).
 - c. The Church is not appointed to the wrath of God but to salvation (I Thessalonians 5:9).
 - d. In studying the book of the Revelation, we find that the church spoken of in chapters 1-3 is not referred to again until chapter 19. It will not be on earth during the period of the Tribulation.
 - e. Since the Tribulation is to come on Israel and on the world, the Church, not being of the world, has no part in this judgment.
 - f. In many passages of the Scripture we note Christ either coming with the Church or for the Church (saints). He cannot come with His saints until He has come for His saints. This indicates that the Church will be taken away and then brought back with Him when He comes to set up His kingdom (Zechariah 14:5; Colossians 3:4; I Thessalonians 4:14; Jude 1:14).
 - g. Types also bear the fact that the Rapture must take place before the Tribulation: (1) Joseph, a type of Christ, received a Gentile bride before the seven years of tribulation came upon Egypt and Israel; (2) Moses, also a type of Christ, received his Gentile bride before the period of tribulation in Egypt; (3) Enoch, a type of the Church, was taken up and raptured before the judgment of the flood.
 - h. The saints of God will already have passed from death to life, and after their examination and chastening at the Judgment Seat of Christ, there will be no further judgment for them. They will, therefore, be saved from the wrath to come (Romans 1:18; 5:9; I Thessalonians 1:10).
 - i. The Spirit of God, which, through the Church, hinders the Devil from having complete power, must be removed before the Evil One can be revealed (II Thessalonians 2:7,8). This does not mean that the Holy Spirit will be removed altogether from the world, but He will be taken away as a hindering power and will operate only in the salvation of souls.

- j. We are told to watch and pray, that we might escape that day (Luke 21:34-36). God does not ask us to pray for something which He does not intend to give us.
- k. It is implied that God will deliver us (II Peter 2:9).
- l. We are told that we are the children of light rather than children of darkness. Darkness is a type of the “night” of Tribulation. If we of the Grace Age are “not of the night,” then we cannot live in the Tribulation period (I Thessalonians 5:1-5).
- m. The Lord has definitely committed Himself to keep the Church out of the Tribulation (Revelation 3:10).

Anyone who has this hope of the Second Coming of Christ and the Rapture of the Church should certainly purify himself and prepare himself for His Coming (I John 3:2,3).

The Tribulation

The word “Tribulation” is used to describe a period of seven years which comes between the Dispensation of the Church and the Dispensation of the Kingdom. This period is designated as the time for the purification of Israel. God will once more deal with Israel as people and eventually as a nation. The Gentile nations will be directly affected by this same judgment. The Church, however, will be gone during this time. It will be with Christ.

The Fact of the Tribulation

Many passages of Scripture deal with this subject (see Jeremiah 30:4-7; Ezekiel 20:34-38; 22:19-22; Daniel 12:1; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:1-3). Christ Himself, in the New Testament, gives a clear outline of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:19-22). We find in Revelation 6 -19 a detailed outline as to what will occur during this period of time.

It is well to note that the Tribulation period is divided into two distinct parts. As a whole, it is called “the Tribulation.” The last half of the period, however, is known by such terms as “the Great Tribulation,” “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” “the passing under the rod,” “the melting pot,” “the time of trouble for His people,” and “the great and terrible day of the Lord.” Many other phrases in Scripture show the reality of this period.

The Time and Duration of the Tribulation

In Daniel 9:20-27 God reveals to us that He will deal with His people, Israel, through a period of 70 weeks, or 70 periods of 7 years each.

This 70 week period was to begin at the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem. The whole time from “the going forth of the commandment to restore” “unto the Messiah,” meaning

the triumphal entry of Christ, is 69 weeks of years, or 483 years. Israel rejected its Messiah, and God's "clock" for Israel stopped running. God then turned His attention to the Body of Christ, His Church. The Church Age is parenthetical between the 60th and 70th week, called "the Tribulation," after the Church has been raptured and the Church Age is ended (Romans 11:25; II Thessalonians 2:7,8). This final period of 7 years will be a trial of great trial and tribulation on the earth. The Antichrist will be in power (II Thessalonians 2). It is God's final attempt to purify His people, Israel.

The Character of the Tribulation

A general outline of the character of the Tribulation period is given in Matthew 24:9-22, and a detailed outline of the happenings of these 7 years is presented in Revelation 6 – 19. This period is divided into two sections of three and one half years each. The last half is so severe that it is known as "the Great Tribulation." Remember also that there are three distinct methods which God uses in testing men during this seven year period. First, God permits man to judge himself through the scientific devices which he has invented. The horrors of war are seen, which in themselves become a part of Tribulation period. God then permits Satan literally to run loose for a period of time, and He tests men through Satan's devices. God Himself finally pours out His own wrath on men. This three-fold division of the testing of men is fairly well described in the three divisions of seven tests each – the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and finally the seven vials of God's wrath. The following is a bare outline of the happenings of this seven-year period of tribulation, as shown to us in the Book of the Revelation.

1. The first half of the Tribulation.

Even during the Tribulation, God is not left without a witness. He will send two men at the beginning of the Tribulation who will be outstanding testimonies for Him (Revelation 11:1-14). However, after half of the Tribulation is passed, God will allow the two witnesses to be put to death by their enemy (v. 7). But, after three and a half days God will restore them to life and take them to Heaven to be with Him. (vv. 9-12).

During the first half of this period of seven years there will be two great testings, which are recorded in Revelation 6:1 – 11:11.

a. The seals

- (1) The final seal is opened. The rider of the white horse is none other than the Antichrist, when he appears in the beginning as the yet uncrowned of at least ten nations. He is the "prince" of Daniel 9:26-27, who makes or confirms a covenant with the Jews for a seven-year period. He uses the white horse in imitation of the true Christ, who will appear later, also upon a white horse. Remember that the Antichrist is Satan incarnate – an imitator of the real Christ.
- (2) The second seal is opened. The red horse speaks of wars and rumors of wars

(Matthew 24:6,7). The possible outcome of this war will be the federation of ten kingdoms.

- (3) The third seal is opened. The black horse is a type of famine, as a result of the great war.
- (4) The fourth seal is opened. The pale horse is a symbol of death following famine and war. Approximately one third of the people of the earth will be killed.
- (5) The fifth seal is opened. We see the martyred beneath the throne of God. No doubt they were martyred because of their testimony concerning the kingdom that Christ is to set up in opposition to the kingdom of the Antichrist (see also Matthew 24:9-24). In these first five seals, we see man permitted to judge himself and to kill one-third of the population of the earth by inventions of his own.
- (6) The sixth seal is opened. Suddenly we see great physical changes occurring on the earth. So great are they that men out of fear will cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them. This is God's answer to man's wrath (Isaiah 13:9-11; Joel 2:30; Matthew 24:29).
- (7) The seventh seal is opened. There is a great silence in heaven, as a calm before the storm. This opens the way for the seven trumpets to be blown to usher in the wrath of Satan. God, however, permits him only to kill a certain number.

b. The trumpets

- (1) The first trumpet is blown. Hail and fire, mingled with blood, fell onto the earth, burning one-third of the trees and the grass (see Joel 2:30,31).
- (2) The second trumpet is blown. A burning mountain, probably a meteor, falls into the sea, killing one-third of the sea life, wrecking one-third of the ships and coloring the sea with the blood of those destroyed.
- (3) The third trumpet is blown. A burning star, possibly another meteor, falls and poisons the streams of fresh water, causing death to all who drink thereof.
- (4) The fourth trumpet is blown. The third part of the sun and the moon and stars is smitten, causing the loss of one-third of the light (see Luke 21:25,26).
- (5) The fifth trumpet is blown. The first woe is seen. The bottomless pit is opened, and locusts, with a sting as of a scorpion, appear. They torment men but they are not permitted to kill them. Only the ungodly will be stung. These monstrosities seem to be the result of demon possession, engineered by Satan. The horrors of this period of time, as described in the Scriptures, are

so great that words cannot be found to describe them satisfactorily. The Lord says that it will be a time such has never has been on the earth.

- (6) The sixth trumpet is blown. The second woe is seen. Four bad angels are seen at the head of a supernatural army of villains, possibly demons which are turned loose, and again one-third of the earth's people are slain.
 - (7) The seventh trumpet is blown. We now have the third woe, which comes in the middle of the seven year period.
2. The middle of the seven years
 - a. Satan is cast out of heaven once and for all (Revelation 12:7-12). This brings great rejoicing in heaven but great travail upon the earth.
 - b. The 144,000 of Israel find refuge from the attack of Satan and are sealed during this time (Revelation 7; 12:13-16).
 - c. The covenant which was confirmed with the Jews by the Antichrist is broken during this interval (Daniel 9:27).
 3. The last half of the Tribulation

The remnant of Israel successfully endures the Great Tribulation (Revelation 12:17). The Antichrist's nature and purpose are completely revealed. He seizes all power. The reason for his success is that he is Satan incarnate in a human being. Now the vials of God's wrath are poured out on rebellious mankind.

- a. The first vial, Grievous sores fall on men who have the "mark of the beast."
- b. The second vial. The sea becomes as the blood of a man, and every creature in the sea perishes.
- c. The third vial. The rivers and the fountains become blood. There is nothing but blood to quench the thirst in that day. Men who have been bloodthirsty have blood to drink.
- d. The fourth vial. Men are scourged with great heat, such as was never known before, and this causes them to blaspheme God more than ever.
- e. The fifth vial. Darkness comes over the whole kingdom of beast and men. They gnaw their tongues because of the pain of the sores caused by the great heat of the sun. (We have had a glimpse of what this may be like as we have seen the horrors of nuclear explosions.) Suffering is intensified in these days.
- f. The sixth vial. The Euphrates River is dried up, so that the eastern hordes may cross the river in preparation for the Battle of Armageddon (see Isaiah

11:15,16).

- g. The seventh vial. There is a great earthquake and hailstorm, with hailstones weighing as much as 100 pounds. This reminds us of how the blasphemer of the Old Testament was to be stoned according to the law of God. Here God Himself comes and stones him with stones from the heavens.
4. The seven dooms and the Battle of Armageddon

With the coming of Christ and His heavenly army, we have the Great Battle of Armageddon and its results (Revelation 19).

- a. The doom of Babylon (Revelation 17,18).
 - (1) The destruction of Gentile world powers (Daniel 2:35; 36,44,45).
 - (2) The destruction of the last form of apostate Christendom (Revelation 3:14-18; 18:1-8).
 - (3) Judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 13:24-27).
- b. The doom of the beast (Antichrist). He is cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).
- c. The doom of the false prophet. He is cast into the lake of fire (v. 20).
- d. The doom of the kings of the earth. They are slain, and the fowls of the air gather for a great feast (v. 21).
- e. The doom of Gog and Magog (20:7-9).
- f. The doom of Satan. He is bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years (vv. 1-3). This definitely ends the Tribulation period. After the thousand years, Satan is loosed for a short time (Revelation 20).
- g. The doom of the unbelieving dead (vv. 11-15).

The Dispensation of the Church (or Grace) Part 2

The Holy Spirit in the Church Age

The Church Age is sometimes called the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and with good reason. Whereas in the Old Testament the unity of the Godhead is stressed, in the New Testament the work of each member of the Trinity is given in detail. We will be stronger Christians for having studied this enriching and vital phase of Bible truth.

Before we can fully understand and appreciate the ministry of the Holy Spirit during the Dispensation of the Church, we must become acquainted with Him as a person. If the Holy Spirit were not a person, He would be a thing – a mere influence which we could use at will. If we recognize the fact that the Spirit is a person and a member of the Godhead, our attitude toward Him would be completely changed.

Let us ask ourselves some questions: is the Holy Spirit worthy of our adoration, our faith and our love? Is the Holy Spirit to receive us and use us, or are we to receive the Holy Spirit, that we might use Him? Should we seek to have more of the Holy Spirit, or should He have more of us? If we are to have more of the Holy Spirit, we are likely to become proud. If the Holy Spirit has more of us, we will be humble. If we know Him as a person, our lives will be transformed.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has the characteristics, or attributes, of a person. The marks of a personality are intellect, emotion and will. Too often we confuse the personality (the ego) with the physical body. That body which you possess is merely the house in which you, the person, live. After death and until the resurrection, you, the personality, will live without a body. Our study will reveal that the Holy Spirit is just as much a personality as are God the Father and God the Son.

The Holy Spirit has knowledge (I Corinthians 2:10,11). The Holy Spirit not only illumines our minds and gives us power to understand, He Himself knows the truth and reveals the truth in us and to us.

The Holy Spirit has a will (I Corinthians 12:11). The Holy Spirit is not just an influence or a force which we may use as we desire, but He has a will of His own, and He desires to use us.

The Holy Spirit has a mind (Romans 8:27). He does merely empower our minds, but He has a mind, and He thinks for Himself.

The Holy Spirit has the capacity for love (15:30). Not only does He influence us to love, but He Himself loves us. John 3:16 tells us that “God so loved.” In Philippians 2:5-8 we find a description of the Saviour’s love. But the Scriptures, as a whole, indicate that the Holy Spirit also loves us, for He so patiently seeks us while we are in sin. He broods over us, and finally He transforms us into the image of His Son. If God the Father had not so loved the world, if the Son had not so loved you that He came to the world, and if the Holy Spirit had not so loved you that He sought you, pleaded with you and transformed you, where would you be in the spiritual realm today?

The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). The Holy Spirit sees, feels and knows our every act, thought, word and deed. He can definitely be grieved. If you recognize the Holy Spirit to be a person, your reaction to Him will be different. An illustration might be drawn from everyday life. A child has a different relationship to his parents than he does

to electricity. The parents plan and work for the child, and the child cooperates with his parents by receiving and responding. If the child wants light, he just turns on the switch, and the power of electricity is at his disposal. The Holy Spirit is more than a force, power or influence. He is an infinite Person, and as a Person, He has force, power and influence.

The Holy Spirit employs the attributes of a personality.

The Holy Spirit searches (I Corinthians 2:10). In other words, He is not just an illuminating force; He Himself searches out the truth and then reveals it to us.

The Holy Spirit prays (Romans 8:26, 27; Galatians 4:6). He not only influences us to pray, but He Himself cries out in prayer within us. Every believer actually has two persons of the Godhead praying for him – Jesus, who has experienced all things (Hebrews 4:6), and the Holy Spirit, who knows our immediate needs, because He lives within us.

The Holy Spirit testifies (John 15:26, 27). The Holy Spirit not only helps us to testify, He also testifies concerning God, the Word and so on. Then we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can testify to others.

The Holy Spirit is a teacher (John 14:26; 16:12-14). The Holy Spirit not only influences us to seek God's way, He takes us by the hand, leads us into all truth and teaches us the things we ought to know.

The Holy Spirit has power and authority to command (Acts 16:6, 7). He definitely plans, and then He commands concerning the work of God and of Christ.

The Holy Spirit calls and appoints men to office (Acts 13:2-4). In a general command of God, we are all told to "go." The Holy Spirit personally gives individuals a definite call and an appointment for the Lord's service. Illustrations of this are found in Acts 1:24; 20:28 and Galatians 1:1.

The Holy Spirit baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12, 13). He literally places us in the Body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit imparts gifts for service (vv. 7-11). He divides and gives gifts to all Christians.

The Holy Spirit guides and empowers in all service for Christ (Zechariah 4:6).

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has all four of the divine attributes of God.

Eternality (Hebrews 9:14). Only God has this characteristic. Only He is from everlasting to everlasting. The Holy Spirit is God.

Omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10). The Holy Spirit is not limited to one place or one time,

but He is present everywhere. This is true only of God.

Omniscience (John 14:26). He knows all things. Nothing is unknown to Him, from eternity to eternity. This can only be said of the eternal God.

Omnipotence (Luke 1:35). He has all power. Nothing is impossible with the Holy Spirit. He has power for anything and everything. This can be attributed only to God.

The Holy Spirit performed three of the distinctive works ascribed to deity. They cannot originate with any other person, being or power.

Creation (Genesis 1:1-3). In Genesis, the act of creating never has any other subject but God. No one else can create. The Holy Spirit, as God, was active in the work of creation.

Life (John 3:3-6). The creating and giving of life is possible only with the eternal God. This act is also attributed to the Holy Spirit, showing that He is the infinite God.

Authorship of the Bible (II Peter 1:21). The authorship of the Bible is attributed to the Holy Spirit. This book could not of been written merely by human beings. It is the work of the Eternal God, but its authorship is attributed to the Holy Spirit. We must, therefore, conclude that the Holy Spirit is infinite and that He is God.

The name "Holy Spirit" is used on an equal basis with "God the Father" and "Jesus the Son" (see Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14). The three persons of the Godhead are frequently found together.

The Holy Spirit is definitely called God (Acts 5:3, 4). In verse 3, Peter tells Ananias and Sapphira that they had lied to the Holy Spirit, and in verse 5 he says, "unto God." The name "Holy Spirit" is synonymous with "God."

The Holy Spirit is a distinct Person in the Godhead (Luke 3:21, 22; John 14:16).

The Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and to the Son, and yet He is God (John 14:26; 16:13, 14). In a similar way, Christ sought not His own glory but subordinated Himself to the Father (John 7:18).

It must be understood that each of the three persons (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) is God. In the ministry of reconciling men, however, the Son subordinates Himself to the Father, and the Holy Spirit subordinates Himself the Father and the Son.

The Knowledge of the Holy Spirit is Revealed Progressively

The work and purpose of God is not revealed to man at one time. As the need appears the revelation is given.

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is spoken of as coming upon whom He wills, without any reference to the condition of the person. He acts as a free sovereign, coming upon

men when He wishes to do so. There seemed to be no conditions with which men must comply before the Spirit was received, as is the case today.

During His earthly life, Christ taught the disciples that they must receive the Spirit through prayer to the Father (Luke 11:13).

At the close of His earthly ministry, Christ promised that He would pray to the Father and that in answer to His prayer, the Comforter would come and would abide with believers (John 14:14-16).

During the evening of the resurrection day, Jesus found His disciples in the upper room and breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). During evening, He instructed to wait before beginning their ministry until the Holy Spirit Himself should literally come upon them (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:80). This seemed to be the "earnest" of what was to come. After Christ was gone to the Father, the Holy Spirit would be glorified in person.

When the Day of Pentecost was come, the Spirit came upon the whole body of believers (Acts 2:1-4). This was a definite manifestation of the appearance of the third person of the Trinity, as when Christ Himself came 33 years earlier. This step in the coming of the Holy Spirit is not to be repeated. All prophecy pointed to Pentecost as the day of His coming.

Indications that are after Pentecost, and as long as the gospel was preached only to the Jews, the Spirit was imparted to the Jews who believed as a special sign to them (Acts 8:17; 9:17).

When Peter opened the door of the gospel to the Gentiles, as seen in Acts 10, the Holy Spirit, without delay or any other condition than that the recipients have faith in Christ as Saviour, came upon all who were present (Acts 10:44; 11:5-18). This is the standard procedure for the balance of the Church Age. (The Bible lists only one exception – Acts 19:6).

Certain facts are true of every believer who is "born again." First, this birth is by the Spirit (John 3:3-6; I John 5:10). Then the believer is indwelt by the Spirit, whose presence makes the believer's body the Temple of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-15; I Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 4:6; I John 2:27). It is also said that the believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:1-13) and the believer is sealed unto the day of redemption (the Rapture) by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

The Holy Spirit at Work

The Holy Spirit is that person of the Trinity who is present with us at all times and who is the operating head or director of all the work of the Godhead in behalf of man. He is the one who makes God real to us, forms Christ in us and eventually will bring us to Christ. His work is varied.

He is the convicting power (John 16:8-11).

He convicts man of his sins (Acts 2:36-47). Man's heart is deceitful. Man always has a better estimate of himself than God has of him. We can often see others' faults but not our own. Christians sometimes try by argument to persuade sinners of their sin. If the Word of God is given to the unsaved one, the Holy Spirit can use it to convict him of sin. God uses men, but the power to convict comes from the Holy Spirit Himself.

He convicts men of the sin of unbelief (John 3:18). This is no doubt the hardest sin of which to convict men. The Scriptures say, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

He convicts men "of unrighteousness" (John 16:8). Most people are self satisfied, feeling that their righteousness is sufficient. But the Holy Spirit convicts men that his righteousness is insufficient and that God offers His righteousness in exchange for faith. Christ is our righteousness (Romans 3:21, 22).

The Holy Spirit convicts men "of judgment" (John 16:8). He convicts men that the devil has already been judged by the death of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:14) and that he will come to a terrible end. Then man is convicted of the judgment that will come upon him if he rejects the offer of reconciliation offered to him by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts man that Christ has already borne judgment and that he need not go through it, if he will receive the gift of eternal life.

The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus (John 15:26,27; Acts 5:32). Christ can only become real to us only when the Holy Spirit reveals Him to us and testifies concerning Him in our spirits (1 John 3:24).

The Holy Spirit works in the regeneration of man. Regeneration is the impartation of spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead (Titus 3:5). This is impossible, humanly speaking, but it is the work of the Holy Spirit to those who would believe. The Holy Spirit gives life to the Word that has been planted, just as water causes seed to sprout and grow in the soil. The Word, planted in the hearts of men, gives to them eternal life by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit sets men free from the power of sin. After the Holy Spirit has regenerated the soul, He places within man a desire to overcome the power of sin and to live a godly life. Man finds himself too weak, so the Holy Spirit undertakes to give him power over sin and to live a godly life (Romans 8:2). Recall Paul's experience related in Romans 7:15 – 8:4. In the seventh chapter he speaks of the conflict between the two natures, and he uses the personal pronoun "I" at least 27 times in these verses. The Holy Spirit is not acknowledged at all. In the eighth chapter he speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in behalf of man. The pronoun "I" is only used twice, while the Holy Spirit is mentioned many times throughout the chapter.

The Holy Spirit also forms Christ in us: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"

(Ephesians 3:17). This does not mean that He is just a visitor; it means that He is made to become our very life, and we are filled to the very fullness of God. We become settled and rooted in Christ by union with Him, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. We are thus able to be victorious over the tests and trials which otherwise would overcome us (II Corinthians 10:13).

The Threefold Secret of the Work of the Holy Spirit

Regarding the secret of His incoming (regeneration and baptism), first of all, we must recognize the fact that the new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit in us (John 3:3-6). This is accomplished by His regenerating power (Titus 3:5,6), by His entering into one's life (Romans 8:9-11; I Corinthians 3:16). When man is born again, the Holy Spirit enters his heart and forms Christ in him, and thus Christ actually becomes his life. He who does not have the Spirit of God within him is not a child of God.

The secret of His indwelling (infilling)

It is one thing to receive the Holy Spirit and another thing to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When we confess our sins and believe, the Holy Spirit enters our lives. When we surrender our lives and believe, the Holy Spirit takes possession of us (John 4:14; 7:37-39).

After we have been born again and the Holy Spirit has taken His place on the throne of our hearts, a real struggle for the control of our behavior begins (Galatians 5:17).

It is our duty to surrender our bodies to Him (Romans 6:16, 13; 12:1). The Holy Spirit may not be able to fill our lives completely, but this is only because we fail to surrender our all to Him. Surrender may be compared to rooming in a ten-room house as opposed to purchasing the same house. As a roomer, you may enter only one or two rooms. You do not have access to *all* of the rooms unless it is your house and you take possession of all of it. The Holy Spirit may have entered your life, but He has not filled it until you have surrendered every part of it to Him. There is no need for us to wait for the Holy Spirit to take possession. He is waiting for every Christian to give obedience to God and to let Him take complete possession.

The secret of His out flowing (John 7:37-39).

When the Spirit enters, man is regenerated. When He takes possession, man becomes empowered, and the result is an overflowing or an out flowing of the "water of life." Furthermore, the fruit of the Spirit will characterize such a life (Galatians 5:22, 23). It is true that this fruit may differ in outward expression. This can be seen in the difference of ministry between two great men – John, the beloved apostle, and Paul, another of the great apostles.

There is diversity of gifts. The outward manifestation of them will, of course, be different (I Corinthians 12:4-31). These gifts are given man in order that he might be fit for the service which he is called on to do. Is "speaking in tongues" the evidence of one's possessing the Holy Spirit? Speaking in tongues is one of the many gifts of the Holy

Spirit. In Acts 2:4-11, speaking in tongues was seen to be speaking in other languages. Indications are that this gift of the Holy Spirit is not given prominence during the balance of this dispensation after the death of the apostles (I Corinthians 1:22; 13:8; 14:22). It is not a sign to us today that the Holy Spirit has been received.

The results of the filling of the Holy Spirit are power (Acts 1:8), knowledge (John 14:26) and fruitfulness (John 15:2-7).

The Dispensation of the Kingdom

This dispensation is the 1000-year period of time which follows the judgment of the Gentiles or nations. All of the preceding dispensations have been cut short because of sin. Even the seventh is followed by judgment of sin, because sin is still present and must be judged.

It is God's plan to set up a visible kingdom on this earth. The first statement to this effect is made in Genesis 1:26. While we, with our finite minds, are not always able to understand the progress of God's program, nevertheless, we recognize that God is the eternal Sovereign, and all things will be accomplished according to His program and plan and His time.

God revealed through whom this kingdom would be established when He called Abraham to be the father of a people through whom the king would come. These people will reign throughout the kingdom period.

God promised that the seed of David will sit on the throne in the kingdom forever (II Samuel 7:12-17).

Israel was not worthy of this kingdom in its day. The people forfeited their right to it temporarily by their sin and affiliation with the Gentile world. In 606 B.C., God permitted the Gentiles to become the prominent nations, and at that time began what the Scriptures call "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). This will end with the sudden appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ and the setting up of His kingdom.

The Kingdom at Hand

John the Baptist First Preached That the Kingdom of God Was at Hand

Not only did John the Baptist preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, Jesus also preached it, as did the 12 and later the 70. All of this was according to the foreknowledge and plan of God. Things were not right for the final setting up of this kingdom at the first appearing of Jesus Christ. The Jewish people, who are the principle characters in this kingdom, must first go through a cleansing process, and the Gentile powers must come to their unhappy end (see Luke 21:24).

There is a difference between The Kingdom of Heaven and The Kingdom of God

The theme of the Scriptures is kings and kingdoms. The two major kingdoms are called the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God occurs 70 times and kingdom of heaven occurs 33 times in the Bible. These two kingdoms have some similarities, but they are two separate kingdoms. As God and heaven are not the same (Gen. 1:1), so the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are not the same. God is a Spirit (John 4:24) and heaven is a place (John 14:2). **The kingdom of God usually refers to a spiritual kingdom that operates within man** (Luke 14:21; Rom. 14:17), but occasionally it is associated with the kingdom on earth (Luke 9:27; Gal. 5:21). **The kingdom of heaven is a literal, physical, earthly kingdom that has been placed under the authority of many.** Both kingdoms will be together in the millennial kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:33; Rev. 11:15).

Both kingdoms were present with Adam, but the kingdom of God was forfeited as a result of the fall of man. The OT records the history of the kingdom of heaven, while the NT records the history of the kingdom of God. In the OT God commanded the Jews to literally fight for an earthly kingdom (Deut. 7:1-8; I Sam. 15:3), but in the NT this is forbidden (2 Cor. 10:3-6). The death sentence was ordered for apostates in the OT (Deut. 13), but a spiritual sword is used to rebuke and separate from heretics in the NT (2 Thess. 3:6, 14; Titus 3:10-11).

The dominion over the kingdom of heaven was passed from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob and to the nation of Israel. It was officially taken from Judah under the reign of Jeconiah (Jer. 22:24-30). The control over the earthly kingdoms belongs to Satan and he gives it to the Gentiles with the limitations that God places over him (Dan. 4:34-37; 2 Cor. 4:4). The first worldwide ruler was Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Ezek. 26:7; Dan. 2:37). This period of time is called the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24; Rom. 11:25; Rev. 11:2, 15) and it covers the last 600 years of the OT through the end of the Tribulation. All earthly kingdom builders are bloody killers (Matt. 2:16-18; 11:12-14; Mark 10:42; Luke 22:25).

The greatest doctrine of the 1611 Authorized King James Bible is when the main Person of the Bible is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:25-27; Rev. 19:11-16). The first four books of the New Testament focus upon the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. Matthew focused on the King of the Jews (Matt. 2:2). Mark focused on the servant of the Lord (Mark 10:45). Luke concentrated on the humanity of Jesus (Luke 19:10) and John concentrated on the deity of the Saviour of mankind (John 20:30-31).

These books constitute a transition from the Old Testament in the New Testament. **The three main transitional books are Matthew, Acts and Hebrews.** These books are dangerous to rest upon for doctrinal issues. The book of Matthew operated

under the Mosaic Law until the death of Christ (Matt. 27:50; Heb. 9:16-17). The Lord prophesied that both kingdoms were at hand, but this was conditional upon the acceptance of the Messiah by the people of Israel (Matt. 11:12-14; 17:10-13). The Messiah was rejected and crucified. During the crucifixion the Saviour petitioned the Father to forgive the Jews. The LORD answered that prayer and gave the Jews another opportunity to receive their Messiah in the book of Acts. As the book of Deuteronomy refers to a second giving of the Law so the book of Acts refers to the second opportunity for the Jews to accept their Messiah (Acts 2:36; 3:14; 4:10-12; 7:51-53). The Jews as a whole rejected the Messiah again; therefore, the book of Acts records the transition from the Jews to the Gentiles (Acts 28:25-28). The book of Acts also records the transitions from Israel to the church, from Peter to Paul, and from Jerusalem to Antioch.

The Apostle Paul records the doctrines for the Body of Christ (Rom. 11:13; 2 Cor. 11:2), which is made up of born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The primary ministry of the Lord was Jewish (Matt. 10:5-6; Rom. 15:8), but the primary ministry of Paul was to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:16). The saved Gentiles primarily make up the Body of Christ. After God resurrects the born again believers in Christ during the Rapture (I Thess. 4:13-18), God will commence with the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel because there is one remaining week to fulfill (Dan. 9:24-27).

The book of Hebrews records the doctrines for the people during the Seventieth Week of Daniel's prophecy. This is called the last days because it is the final days of the dominion of the Devil and the Gentiles over the kingdoms of the world. Hebrews is a transitional book that is opposite of the book of Acts. Everything reverts back under the Mosaic Covenant, but it has been amended by the doctrines of Hebrews. The amendments of the sacrifices of the Law will be necessary because the penalty of sin has been paid by the sinless blood of the sinless Lamb of God (John 1:29; Heb. 9:10; I John 1:7; Rev. 12:11).

The book of Revelation reveals the judgment of God upon the nation of Israel for their sin of rejecting and crucifying their Messiah (Matt. 27:25; John 1:9-11). The loving Messiah is revealed in the book of Revelation as the Judge of the universe (Heb. 12:23-29; James 5:9). The Lord Jesus Christ will judge NT saints for their service at the Judgment Seat of Christ in heaven (Rom. 14:10-12; I Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10-12; 2 Tim. 4:1) and the nation of Israel on earth during the Tribulation. The King of kings will conquer and judge the kingdoms of the world at the end of the Tribulation (Joel 2-3; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 11:15). The Lord Jesus will be crowned the King over the whole earth and He will rule the universe from Jerusalem for 1,000 years (Isa. 11:9; Jer. 23:5-6; Hab. 2:14; Zech. 9:9; Rev. 20:1-6).

The Kingdom Manifested

The Kingdom of Heaven (or From Heaven) Will Last 1000 Years (Revelation 20)

The Four Great World Kingdoms Will Be Crushed

The final federation of nations, as well, will be crushed at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ and the setting up of His Kingdom (Daniel 2; Revelation 19). The Tribulation period, discussed in lesson 7, will precede the establishment of this kingdom. During this period God will purify and cleanse Israel and establish them as His people (Zechariah 13, 14).

All the Nations (Gentiles) of the Earth Will Be Judged at This Time (Matthew 25:31-46)

When Christ returns to earth at the end of the Tribulation, He will judge the (Gentile) nations. Those persons who are believers will enter the millennium, but those who are unbelievers will be sentenced to everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Its Government Will Be Divinely Ordered

1. The government of this kingdom will be a theocracy; that is, Christ will be the Governor, or King of kings (Luke 1:30-33). God's first established form of government over Israel was a theocracy. Moses was His first personal representative; Joshua, His second, and so on. Eventually Israel deteriorated from this form of government and established its own monarchy.
2. Christ promised a certain group of His disciples that they would not die until they had seen the kingdom. He accomplished this by giving them a picture of it. A preview of the manner in which this kingdom will operate is seen in the Transfiguration (Mark 9:1-14). Christ Himself was there in His glorified body, as He will be during the millennial kingdom. Elijah and Moses, also in glorified bodies, stood by Him, typifying the returned Israel, who will, in resurrected bodies, stand in their place during the Kingdom Age. The three disciples are typical of that part of Israel which, in their natural bodies, will assist in the reigning work of the kingdom. The mixed multitude in the valley typifies the mixed multitude who will be living during the Kingdom Age.
3. There will be at least 12 thrones, and the 12 apostles will be ruling the 12 tribes of Israel from those thrones.
4. Those believers who died before the Church began will rule in glorified bodies and will, therefore, be untriumphant (Isaiah 40:31).
5. The Church, as the Bride of Christ, will be at His side, probably assisting in the spiritual phase of the kingdom (Revelation 3:21; 20:6).

The Seat of Government Will Be in Jerusalem

1. Palestine will be divided among the 12 tribes of Israel.
2. A special holy city, 50 miles square, will be erected and will serve as the capital of the world. This will be located near the present Jerusalem.
3. The earth's surface will be changed. The Dead Sea, for instance, will be raised to sea level. The mountains will be leveled, especially in Palestine (Zechariah 14:4, 10, 11).

There Will Be a Temple and Form of Worship

Ezekiel 40 – 48 describes the beautiful temple which will be in existence during the Kingdom Age. There will be no ark, manna, Aaron's rod, mercy seat, candlestick, altar of incense, veil or Passover lamb, for Christ will be there. The lamb and all of the Old Testament types will have their real antitype in Christ Himself.

The Character of the Kingdom

1. Satan will be bound during this time ((Revelation 20:1-3).
2. The land will have been reclaimed and will be highly productive (Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13).
3. The animal kingdom will be completely changed. It may be as it was in the original Garden of Eden (Isaiah 11:6-9).
4. Human life will once more be prolonged, and men will live to be nearly 1000 years of age (65:20).
5. The light, especially in the holy city, will be seven times stronger, for the Lamb Himself will be the light, and the Shekinah glory will radiate from Him (30:26).
6. The Kingdom Age will be the time of the rewarding of those who have been faithful during their Christian life on earth.

The Post-kingdom Era

After the Kingdom Age, Satan will be loosed for a short period of time. Then will come the final judgment of the unsaved dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:7-15), followed by the destruction of the old heaven and the old earth. All evil and sin will be completely removed, and we will ushered into eternity, where there will be no weeping, heartache, sickness or death.

The Ages of the Ages (or Eternity)

Eternity brings into view the new things which have no relationship to the other seven

ages of fallen man. The old order and former things are no more, and in their place is eternal perfection and bliss, lasting forever. Seven is God's number of perfection. Seven dispensations have preceded, and God's program, as far as this sinful earth is concerned, is complete. Eight is God's number for a new beginning, and that is literally what we have before us in this study of eternity. This interminable period is preceded by the doom of Gog and Magog. The doom of Satan and the final judgment of the unbelievers also take place prior to this time (Revelation 20:7-15).

Heaven and Earth Renovated

The renovation of heaven and earth are described in II Peter 3:10-13. The heaven referred to in this passage is probably the first heaven, or the atmospheric heaven. The Scriptures teach us that there are three heavens – the atmospheric heaven, the planetary heaven and the paradise heaven, which is God's abode. Since the atmosphere is the place of Satan's activity, he being the "prince of the power of the air," it will be renovated, as well as this earth on which we live. The words "pass away" (II Peter 3:10) and "passed away" (Revelation 21:1) are translations of the Greek word *pareleusontai*, which refers to a passing from one state to another and does not necessarily involve complete destruction.

We do read in Psalm 104:5 that the foundations of the earth will remain forever and will not be affected by this renovation. All that has been contaminated by sin, both in this earth and in the atmospheric heaven, will be completely cleansed, and there will be a new earth and a new heaven. In this state the earth will remain unchanged forever (Isaiah 66:22). While we need not be dogmatic and insist that the foundation of the earth will remain and that only the surface will be affected by this renovation, it is certain that all that has anything to do with the eternal future of men and angels will be thoroughly made new.

Seven New Things

New Earth (Revelation 21:1)

New Heaven (Revelation 21:1,2)

This most likely refers to the new atmospheric heaven.

New People (Revelation 21:3-5)

They will be those who once lived in the sinful world and have received changed hearts. They will have received new life from Christ, and on this new earth they will also possess a new body. They will be completely new and will never again be able to fall into sin.

New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10-27)

A city now being prepared by God will be brought down from His heaven to this earth. Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them (John 14:2-4). He

referred, no doubt, to this New Jerusalem, which is to come down out of heaven to earth. It will become the capital of the world and probably of the whole universe. Christ Himself will be in this New Jerusalem. From there He will rule the earth and also regulate the universe.

New Temple (Revelation 21:22)

New Light (Revelation 21:23-25)

Light will not emanate from the sun, but from God. This will be the Shekinah glory of God, which will be the light whereby men will see and travel upon the new earth.

New Paradise (Revelation 22:1-5)

The new paradise, spoken of in Revelation 22, is for the people who have become the children of God.

A Time of 'No More'

In eternity there will be perfect happiness. Ten times in Revelation 21 God speaks of something that will be no more.

No More Sea (v. 1)

No More Death (v. 4)

No More Sorrow (v. 4)

No More Crying (v.4)

No More Pain (v.4)

No More Temple (made with hands) (v. 22)

No More Sun (v. 23)

No More Moon (v.23)

No More night (v.25)

No More Abomination (v.27)