

An Evaluation of the Dispensations as Part of the Development of a Dispensational Philosophy of History in the Progress of Revelation

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Worldview?

The word *worldview* comes from the German word *Weltanschauung* which can be translated “a view of the world.” Here are some definitions of *worldview*:

Robert Harris: “A worldview is a comprehensive and unifying way of looking at all of life, a means of bringing coherent meaning to one’s experiences, thoughts, feelings, and so on.”¹

Ronald Nash: “A worldview is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality.”²

James Olthuis: “A worldview (or vision of life) is a framework or set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world and our calling and future in it...It is the integrative and interpretive framework by which order and disorder are judged, the standard by which reality is managed and pursued.”³

All people possess a worldview whether they realize it or not. There are many secular worldviews (atheism, agnosticism, evolution) as well as religious worldviews (Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu). The secular view of history begins with the big bang origin of the universe and includes the origin of life from non-living chemicals (abiogenesis). Darwin argued for biological evolution in his book *The Origin of Species*. He also advocated the evolution of man from common ancestors with apes (hominids) in his book *The Descent of Man*. These views clash with the Biblical worldview of origins.⁴

¹ Robert Harris, *The Integration of Faith and Learning: A Worldview Approach* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2004), 77.

² Ronald Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 16.

³ James Olthuis, “On Worldviews,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 14.2 (1985): 155.

⁴ See my journal article arguing for the historicity of Adam: “Adam: Man or Myth?” *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 15.1 (Spring 2011), 24-67.

The Bible as Propositional Revelation in the Biblical Worldview

Christians view the Bible as the source of truth and the foundation of the Biblical worldview. Jesus prayed for his disciples and said, “Sanctify them through your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17). We believe that the word of God is absolute TRUTH. Truth consists of propositional statements that correspond with reality.

What is propositional revelation? Carl Henry writes: “We mean by propositional revelation that God supernaturally communicated his revelation to chosen spokesmen in the express form of cognitive truths, and that the inspired prophetic-apostolic proclamation reliably articulates these truths in sentences that are not internally contradictory...The inspired Scriptures contain a body of divinely given information actually expressed or capable of being expressed in propositions. In brief, the Bible is a propositional revelation of the unchanging truth of God”⁵

All truth is God’s truth. Truth in whatever academic discipline (theology, philosophy, history, sciences, languages, music and the arts) comes from God.⁶

The Bible as Progressive Revelation in the Biblical Worldview

Dispensationalists recognize the importance of progressive revelation and seek to study OT texts (including OT prophecies) in their contexts. Dispensationalists do not read NT truth back into OT texts. Dispensationalists recognize progressive revelation as essential in their grammatical-historical hermeneutic. The Bible (made up of 66 books = 39 OT books and 27 NT books) was written by about 40 human authors over a period of 1500 years (1445 B.C. to A.D. 95). The Bible records real events that happened in world history. Genesis 1-11 record the historical events of creation, the Fall of man, the global flood and God’s confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel. Genesis 12-50 record the true stories of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. God delivered Israel out of slavery in Egypt in the historical Exodus. King David existed and King Solomon had the first temple built on the temple mount in Jerusalem.⁷ The four canonical gospels record the virgin birth of Jesus, his life, teaching, miracles, his death on the cross, his burial and his bodily resurrection from the dead.⁸ The book of Acts records these historical events: the ascension of Jesus to heaven, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the growth of the early church, and the missionary journeys of Paul throughout the Roman empire.

⁵ Carl Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* 3:457.

⁶ Some books to help us develop the Biblical worldview: (1) John MacArthur, general editor. *Think Biblically: Recovering a Christian Worldview* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003). (2) W. Gary Phillips, William Brown, and John Stonestreet, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview* (Sheffield Publishing Company, 2008). (3) Douglas Huffman, ed. *Christian Contours: How a Biblical Worldview Shapes the Mind and Heart* (Kregel Academic, 2011).

⁷ See my arguments for the historicity of Old Testament people and events: “The Battle for Old Testament History and Archaeology,” *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 13.2 (Fall 2009), 24-55.

⁸ See my article: “The Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” *Bible and Spade* 29.1 (Winter 2016), 10-21.

Dispensationalism as a Philosophy of History

Dispensationalists believe that God is sovereign and that He has a plan for the ages. God as King rules the world in different ways at different times in history. World history can be divided into dispensations. Ramesh Richard has explained Premillennialism as a Philosophy of History.⁹

Ryrie gives this summary: “Dispensationalism views the world as a household run by God. In his household-world God is dispensing or administering its affairs according to his own will and in various stages of revelation in the passage of time.”¹⁰

Tim LaHaye and Tommy Ice write: “Dispensationalism views the world and history as a household run by God. In this household world God is dispensing or administering affairs according to His own will and in various stages of revelation with the passage of time. These various stages, known as dispensations, can be seen as distinguishably different economies in the outworking of God’s plan for the ages. Understanding these differing economies is essential to a proper interpretation of God’s revelations within those various economies. It’s important to point out up front that the dispensations have nothing to do with how people are saved from sin.”¹¹

The Definition of a Dispensation

What is a dispensation? Dispensationalists give different definitions of the word and concept.

Ryrie states that “a dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose.”¹² This short definition does not explain man’s stewardship responsibilities or explain how dispensations are related to world history.

Scofield gives this definition: “A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.”¹³ Ryrie argues against the view of dispensation as a period of time. Ryrie says that it should be viewed as a “stewardship arrangement”¹⁴ but Ryrie does not use these words in his definition of a dispensation. Ryrie also views the dispensations as specific periods of time as he agrees with Scofield in his listing of the chronological sequence of seven dispensations in world history.

⁹ Ramesh Richard, “Premillennialism as a Philosophy of History. Part 1: Non-Christian Interpretations of History” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138:549 (January 1981), 13-21; “Premillennialism as a Philosophy of History. Part 2: Elements of a Biblical Philosophy of History” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138:550 (April 1981), 108-117; “Premillennialism as a Philosophy of History. Part 3: The Premillennial Interpretation of History” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138:551 (July 1981), 203-211.

¹⁰ Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 28.

¹¹ Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, *Charting the End Times* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), 81.

¹² Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 28.

¹³ *New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford, 1959), 5.

¹⁴ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 28.

Lewis Sperry Chafer gives this definition of a dispensation: “A dispensation is a specific, divine economy, a commitment from God to man of a responsibility to discharge that which God has appointed him.”¹⁵ This definition does not relate the word dispensation to a specific period of time in world history and does not emphasize the test and disobedience of man found in each dispensation. But Chafer also lists seven dispensations in world history.

Here is my definition of a dispensation: A dispensation is God’s distinctive method of governing people during a time period of human history in which God gives new revelation, tests man’s obedience to the revelation, judges man’s disobedience but saves man by his grace for God’s glory. This definition of a dispensation accurately reflects the idea of administration or economy (defined as a method of governing people) but it also relates the word to a period of time in world history.

The Names and Number of Dispensations

Dispensationalists differ in their view of the names and number of dispensations. Many scholars believe that dispensationalism started with Darby but William Watson has demonstrated that dispensationalism was in existence before Darby.¹⁶ Bock and Blaising also recognize various dispensational schemes before Darby.¹⁷ The following is a select list of dispensationalists and their lists of dispensations in God’s plan for the ages.

Darby (1808-1882) lists eight dispensations:

- (1) Paraisaical State
- (2) Conscience
- (3) Noah
- (4) Abraham
- (5) Israel – 1. Law. 2. Priest 3. Kings
- (6) Gentiles
- (7) Spirit/Christian Church
- (8) Millennium.

Scofield (1843-1921) lists seven dispensations in *The New Scofield Reference Bible*:

- (1) Innocence (Genesis 1:28),
- (2) Conscience or Moral Responsibility (Genesis 3:7),
- (3) Human Government (Genesis 8:15),
- (4) Promise (Genesis 12:1),
- (5) Law (Exodus 19:1),
- (6) Church (Acts 2:1),
- (7) Kingdom (Revelation 20:4).¹⁸

¹⁵ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1947), 7:122.

¹⁶ William Watson, *Dispensationalism Before Darby* (Lampion Press, 2015).

¹⁷ Bock and Blaising, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 118-119.

¹⁸ *New Scofield Reference Bible*, 3 (footnote 3).

Chafer (1871-1952) lists seven dispensations in his *Systematic Theology*¹⁹

- (1) The Dispensation of Innocence (creation to fall of Adam)
- (2) The Dispensation of Conscience (Adam's fall to the flood),
- (3) The Dispensation of Human Government (The flood to the call of Abraham),
- (4) The Dispensation of Promise (Call of Abraham to the giving the Mosaic Law at Sinai),
- (5) The Dispensation of the Law (giving of the Law and its acceptance by Israel at Sinai and ended with the death of Christ) Chafer writes: "A very brief portion of that age (probably seven years which Christ declared would be shortened – Matt.24:21, 22), which is Daniel's seventieth week (Dan.9:24-27), yet remains to run its course."
- (6) The Dispensation of Grace (death of Christ until his return to receive His Bride). Chafer writes "As stated above, a brief period follows the removal of the Church from the earth, which period is not related to the present era and is not characterized by a demonstration of divine grace, but rather by God's judgments upon a Christ rejecting world. This age is also a period in which man is tested under grace."²⁰
- (7) The Dispensation of Kingdom Rule (second advent of Christ for a 1000 years and ends with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth). Critique- ends with judgment of unbelievers who follow Satan and surround Jerusalem

Charles Ryrie (1925-2016) lists seven dispensations in his book *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995)

- (1)The Dispensation of Innocency (Genesis 1:28-3:6). Ryrie writes that the word innocent is too neutral as he argues that Adam "was not created merely innocent but with positive holiness that enabled him to have face to face communication with God." He writes that Adam's moral condition was that of "unconfirmed creaturely holiness."
- (2)The Dispensation of Conscience (Genesis 4:1-8:14)
- (3)The Dispensation of Civil Government (Genesis 8:15-11:9)
- (4)The Dispensation of Promise or Patriarchal Rule (Genesis 11:10-Exodus 18:27)
- (5)The Dispensation of the Mosaic Law (Exodus 19:1-Acts 1:26)
- (6)The Dispensation of Grace (Acts 2:1-Revelation 19:21)
- (7)The Dispensation of the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-10)

Bock and Blaising list four dispensations in their book *Progressive Dispensationalism*²¹

- (1)Patriarchal – to Sinai
- (2)Mosaic to Messiah's Ascension
- (3)Ecclesial to Messiah's Return
- (4)Zionic: 1. Millennial. 2. Eternal.

¹⁹ Chafer, *Systematic Theology* 1:40-41.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton: A BridgePoint Book, 1993), 123. Notice that Blaising and Bock do not distinguish a pre-Fall dispensation from a post-Fall dispensation. They view the Mosaic dispensation as continuing to the ascension of Christ rather than ending with Christ's death on the cross. Also they view the eternal kingdom beginning with the millennium and going on into the eternal state as one dispensation. They view the dispensations as continuing forever in the future eternal state.

THE DISPENSATIONS IN THE BIBLE

The Dispensation of Innocence

Time Period: The dispensation of innocence began with the creation of Adam and Eve and ends with the Fall of Man and the judgments on Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:26-3:24). Ussher dated creation to 4004 B.C. Dispensationalists differ on the date of creation Ryrie (Before 6500 B.C.) (Price 4134 B.C.). Biblical young earth creationists agree with the Answers in Genesis statement 6:

We affirm that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 are chronological, enabling us to arrive at an approximate date of creation of the whole universe. We affirm that mankind is essentially as old as the whole creation. While some disagreement exists between young-earth creationists over whether or not these are strict, gap-less genealogies (i.e., no missing names between Adam and Noah and Noah and Abraham), we affirm that Genesis points to a date of creation between about 6,000–10,000 years ago.

We deny that millions of years of history occurred before Adam and Eve. Therefore we deny that the geological record of strata and fossils corresponds to long geological ages before man. We also deny the Big Bang and any other naturalistic theory of the origin and history of the universe. We further deny that the radiometric dating methods, which are claimed to give dates of millions of years, are trustworthy and can be used to overthrow or disregard the Biblical teaching on the age of the creation.

When did the dispensation of innocence begin? When did the dispensation of innocence end? The dispensation of innocence begins with the creation of Adam and Eve (during the sixth day of creation week- Genesis 1:26-2:25)

When did the dispensation of innocence end? The general answer is the Fall of Man (Gen.3). Does the dispensation of innocence end with Genesis 3:7-8 (their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked and they hid from the theophany of God in the garden) or does it end with God's confrontation of the two sinners (Gen.3:8-21) and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden in Eden (Gen.3:22-24)? I would view the dispensation of innocence as extending from Genesis 1:26-3:24. This sets the precedent for having each of the dispensations end with the judgment of God.

How long did the dispensation of innocence last? We know that Adam lived for 930 years and died (Gen.5:5). Adam lived 130 years and then Seth was born (Gen.5:3). It could be that the age of innocence lasted longer than a week or two. I believe that the Fall of Lucifer happened after Genesis 2 and before Genesis 3 as the serpent (a creature) is possessed by Satan (cf. Gen.3:1; Rev.12:9). It could be that the dispensation of innocence lasted for a year or ten years or twenty years. This would give time for the fall of Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-15) prior to the temptation of Eve and the Fall of Man (Gen.3).

Stewards and Stewardship Responsibilities

God gave to Adam and Eve (stewards) the following responsibilities:

- (1) Procreation: be fruitful and multiply (Gen.1:28)
- (2) Geographical distribution: fill the earth (Gen.1:28)
- (3) Stewardship of the earth: subdue the earth (Gen.1:28)
- (4) Rulership over the animal kingdom: Man was given authority over the animals. Man was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Gen.1:28)
- (5) Diet: God told Adam and Eve that they could eat fruits and vegetables (Gen.1:29)
- (6) Work: God told Adam to tend and keep the garden (Gen.2:15).
- (7) Prohibition: God specifically gave the prohibition to Adam: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” (Gen.2:16-17). Adam (as the spiritual head) was to teach his wife the commandment of God.

Man’s Disobedience: The serpent deceived the woman and the woman ate of the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen.3:1-6; cf. 2 Cor.11:3; 1 Tim.2:14). Adam was not deceived (1 Tim.2:14) but deliberately disobeyed God’s command and ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen.3:6). Man’s disobedience led to the following consequences: (1) Guilt. The eyes of Adam and Eve were opened after they sinned and now they saw the world as sinners. (2) Shame: They made coverings for themselves out of fig leaves (Gen.3:7b). (3) Fear: They hid from God among the trees (Gen.3:8). Sin led to a broken relationship with God. (4) Blame: They refused to accept responsibility for their sinful actions. Instead, Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent (Gen.3:11-13).

God’s Judgment: God cursed the serpent by making it crawl on its belly (Gen.3:14). Women would experience labor pains in giving birth to children (Gen.3:15). Marital conflicts would result from a desire to rule (Gen.3:16). God cursed the ground with the result that the work of farming would become difficult for man as the ground produced thorns and thistles (Gen.3:17-18). Death entered the human race because of Adam’s sin (Gen.3:19; Rom.5:12).

God’s Provision for Man’s Salvation: The meta-narrative of the Bible is the story of God’s love and redemption of fallen man. God did not leave Adam and Eve in their sin. God went looking for Adam and Eve and confronted them with their sin (Gen.3:9-13). Then God promised that the seed of the woman would defeat the serpent (Gen.3:15). This is known as the *protoevangelium*- the first mention of the gospel in the Bible. This promise was fulfilled at the cross when the seed of the woman (Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary) crushed the serpent even as the serpent bit his heel (the crucifixion of the Messiah). Paul referenced Christ’s victory on the cross (Col.2:14-15). The writer to the Hebrews wrote that Christ “through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil” (Hebrews 2:14-15). The faith of Adam is seen as he believed God’s promise and named his wife Eve (mother of all living) (Gen.3:20). God then sacrificed some animals and clothed Adam and Eve with “tunics of skin” (Gen.3:21). These sacrificed animals were the first types of Christ – the Lamb of God who takes away our

sins (John 1:29). God then in grace expelled Adam and Eve from the garden in Eden and prevented their return by having a cherubim with a flaming sword prevent anyone to come and eat of the tree of life in their fallen condition (Gen.3:22-24).

The Dispensation of Conscience

Time Period: The dispensation of conscience began with Adam and Eve leaving the garden of Eden (Gen.3:22-24) and ended with the judgment of the global flood (Gen.8:14).

Stewardship Responsibilities

God's warning of Cain after God rejected Cain's offering (Gen.4:6-7)

God's cursing of Cain because of his murder of his brother Abel (Gen.4:9-15)

God's statement regarding not striving with sinful man (Gen.6:3)

God's statement of His plan to destroy sinful man (Gen.6:5-7)

God's command of Noah to build the ark (Gen.6:13-21)

God's command to Noah and his household to enter the ark (Gen.7:1-4)

God's command for Noah to leave the ark (Gen.8:15-17)

Man's Disobedience: Cain murdered his brother and protested his punishment (Gen.4:1-15).

Cain and his descendants built a godless civilization (Gen.4:16-24). "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen.6:8). Sinful man failed the test of conscience.

God's Judgment: As a result of their violence and immorality God judged the world with a global flood (Gen.7-9). The antediluvian generation died in the global flood (Gen.7:21-23).

Jesus described the destruction of the global flood on two occasions. He compared the global flood to the judgment of people when he will return a second time to earth to establish his kingdom. Jesus said, "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and *the flood came and destroyed them all*" (Luke 17:26-27, emphasis added).

In his Olivet Discourse Jesus spoke about Noah, the ark, and the flood, "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know *until the flood came and took them all away*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:38-39, emphasis added). Jesus described the life of the antediluvians as one in which people were living for pleasure. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day that Noah entered the ark. Jesus believed that Noah existed and that he entered the ark. Jesus also believed that the flood was global and destructive. Jesus viewed the flood as a judgment of God as it took them all away (in death). Jesus compared his second coming to the judgment of the flood.

God's Salvation: But God had grace on Noah (Gen.6:8). This is the first mention of the word "grace" in the Bible. God commanded Noah to build an ark to save his family. Noah obeyed God and built the ark and God delivered his family (Noah, his wife, his three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives = 8 people in all and two of every kind of animal which boarded the ark from the destructive global flood which killed sinful men, animals and birds (Gen.6-8; 1 Peter 3:20).

New Testament References to People/Events in the Dispensation of Conscience

The writer to the Hebrews refers to people/events in the dispensation of conscience:

"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks." (Hebrews 11:4)

"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:5-6)

"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Hebrews 11:7)

In Romans 5:13-14 the apostle Paul makes a distinction between a pre-law age and the age of the law. "For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." The dispensation of conscience includes the time from Adam to Noah. During this time sin was in the world but sin was not imputed. Death reigned over the time from Adam to Noah as evidenced by the genealogy in Genesis 5 ("and he died" – Genesis 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31).

The apostle Peter explained some events that happened around the time of the global flood (2 Peter 2:4-5; 3:5-6). The Apostle Peter wrote that God did not spare the angels who sinned. These angels were demons and are to be identified with the sons of God of Genesis 6.

Peter wrote that God did not spare the ancient world and brought a flood on the world of the ungodly. Second Peter 2:4-5 says, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly." God did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly. The universal flood was a judgment from God because of the wickedness of man before the flood (cf. Genesis 6). Only eight people were spared this judgment.

Peter points out that the world that existed perished being flooded with water. Second Peter 3:5-6 says, “For this they willfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.”

Long Lives of the Antediluvians

What are we to make of the ages of these men before the flood? Are these exaggerations or real ages? John Whitcomb writes, “Since each named patriarch begat sons and daughters and the age of fathers at the birth of each is named son ranged from 65 to 500 years before the Flood, the biblical record clearly implies that (1) antediluvians lived typically for centuries, (2) their procreative powers persisted also for centuries, and (3) through the combined effects of long lives and large families, the earth could have been filled with people by the time of the Flood (Gen.1:28; 6:1, 11, 13). This in turn implies that not many thousands of years elapsed between Creation and the Flood or between the Flood and the present.”²²

The Dispensation of Human Government

Time Period: Flood to Tower of Babel. The dispensation of human government began with the giving of the Noahic covenant to Noah and his family and ended with the judgment of the sinful people at the Tower of Babel. (Genesis 8:15-11:9)

Stewards and Stewardship Responsibilities

God made an unconditional covenant with Noah and the animals in which He promised to never judge the world again with a global flood (Gen.8:21; 9:11b). God promised seasons and temperature changes while the world exists (Gen.8:22). God blessed Noah and his sons and told them to have children and fill the earth (Gen.9:1, 7). God permitted man to eat meat, but not blood (Gen.9:2-4).

Why did God forbid people from eating blood? The life is in the blood. The law given to Noah and his family and humans thereafter formed the basis of the Mosaic legislation in Leviticus 17:14. The Israelites were required to eat kosher food. They were to drain the blood from their meat before they ate it. In doing this they were showing respect for life because of the principle of the life being in the blood. The Jerusalem Council also stated that Christians should abstain from eating blood so as not to be a stumbling block to Jews (Acts 15:28-29).

God established capital punishment for murder (Gen.9:5-6). In the Mosaic Law, God differentiated between premeditated murder and accidental death. Premeditated murder was punishable by death. But if a man killed someone accidentally, he could flee to a city of refuge where he would live until the death of the high priest. God gives the reason for capital punishment: “For in the image of God He made man.” Life is sacred to God. Before the flood, violent men ruled the earth. In Genesis 6:13 God told Noah that He was going to put an end to all people because the earth was filled with violence. God destroyed millions of people, but spared Noah and his family. The Noahic Covenant was necessary because man may have wondered if

²² John Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 136.

God held a cheap view of life since God destroyed all the people in the world with a global flood except Noah and his family. God instituted capital punishment to show that He values life and desires that man value it too.

The sign of the Noahic covenant was the rainbow (Gen.9:12-17). Isaiah reminded the nation of Israel that God is faithful in keeping the Noahic Covenant: “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me, For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, who has mercy on you” (Isaiah 54:9-10).

Man’s Disobedience: Human government became corrupt. Nimrod built his kingdom including Babylon. (Gen.10:8-10; Jer.5:15) (Josephus, Antiquities 1.1.c4.53; 118.4.57). The people rebelled against God and built the tower of Babel in disobedience to God’s command to fill the earth (Gen.11:1-4; cf. Gen.9:1).

God’s Judgment: God judged the sinful people at Babel by confusing their languages and the people scattered (Gen.11:9). The table of nations reveals the different people groups that came from the descendants of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth (Gen.10). This scattering of the people happened in the days of Peleg (Gen.11:16). Ussher believed that this event happened five years after the birth of Peleg (2242 B.C.). Ryrie placed the date for the Tower of Babel judgment at 4800 B.C. (Price 2230 B.C.) (Down 2201 B.C.).

The Dispensation of Promise

Time period: The dispensation of promise began with the call and promise made to Abram and ended with the nation of Israel coming to Mount Sinai (Genesis 12:1-Exodus 18:27). The word “promise” comes from the promise God made with Abram in the land of Ur of the Chaldees (Gen.12:1-3). God confirmed the promise of a land, seed and blessing for Abraham and his descendants in the unconditional Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 15).

Man’s Test: Abram’s faith in the promise was tested while he lived in the promised land. Famine in the land led Abram to go to Egypt for food. Abram’s servants and Lot’s servants fought over the good grazing land. The Canaanites were living in the promised land at that time. The promised land did not belong to Abram. The only land that Abram possessed was the cave at Machpelah which he purchased to bury his wife Sarah. Abram was old and had to wait 25 years for God to bless him with the promised Son Isaac. Isaac’s faith was tested concerning the promise as well as Jacob.

Man’s Disobedience: Abram disobeyed God on several occasions. Abram lied about Sarah being his wife when he went down to Egypt and the promise was endangered when the pharaoh of Egypt took Sarah into his harem. Abram took Hagar as his concubine and had a son named Ishmael. Isaac failed as well during this time as he lied about his wife Rebekah being his sister and put her in danger with Abimelech (Gen.26). Jacob deceived his father Isaac into receiving the blessing. He struggled with deceit most of his life. The family went down to Egypt and settled there. As a result they became slaves of pharaoh.

God's Judgment: God judged his people and the Israelites were enslaved for 430 years in Egypt.

God's Salvation: Abram believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen.15:6). Dispensationalists do not believe in two ways of salvation as covenant theologians claim. We believe that Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith alone. Paul wrote, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Rom.4:16). God delivered Israel out of Egypt after sending the 10 plagues. The Passover is a picture of our salvation. The Israelites placed the blood of the sacrificial lamb on their doorposts and the death angel passed over their homes. Their faith in God led to their deliverance.

The Dispensation of the Mosaic Law

Time Period: Giving of Law at Mt. Sinai to death of Jesus on the cross (Exodus 19:1-Acts 1:26). The dispensation of law started with the giving of the law to Moses and Israel at Mt. Sinai and came to an end with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Stewards: The nation of Israel

Man's Test: God gave Moses and the nation of Israel the ten commandments and other laws to govern their lives. The Mosaic law was a suzerain-vassal treaty.²³ The law promised blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience. Rather than divide the Mosaic Law into moral, civil and ceremonial laws (613 commandments), it is best to view the Mosaic Law as a unit.

Disobedience: Israel and its leaders (prophets, priests and kings) broke the law of God. While Moses received the ten commandments on Mt. Sinai the Israelites led by Aaron made and worshipped the golden calf. Throughout the period of the Judges the Israelites worshipped Baal and Asherah. King David was guilty of adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (2 Sam.11) and deserved the death penalty. But God had mercy and forgave King David of his sins (see Psalm 51). King Ahab led Israel to worship Baal and Asherah.

God's Judgment on Israel: God judged Israel as the Assyrians came in 722 B.C. and took Israel into captivity. In 605, 597 and 586 B.C. the Babylonians invaded Judah and took the Jews into captivity. The Jews experienced captivity in Babylon for 70 years.

Salvation: Paul points out in Romans that the law could never save. Paul wrote, "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Paul wrote, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16).

²³ See William Barrick, "The Mosaic Covenant" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 10.2 (Fall 1999), 213-232.

Jesus and the Mosaic Law

In the fullness of time God sent his son (Jesus) born of a woman and born under the law to redeem those who were under the law (Gal.4:4). Jesus said that he did not come to destroy but to fulfill the Law and Prophets (Matthew 5:17). Jesus explained the meaning of several Mosaic laws in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Jesus obeyed the law completely and fulfilled the Messianic prophecies in the Torah.²⁴ Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins (1 Cor.15:1-11). The Mosaic law including the sacrificial system found its fulfillment with the death of Jesus on the cross. Romans 10:4 says “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Progressive Revelation: All 39 books of the Old Testament were written during the dispensation of law (see the appendices for a possible chronological order of writing of the books of the Old Testament (Hebrew Tanak).

The Dispensation of Grace

Time Period: The dispensation of grace began at Pentecost (Acts 2) with the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church and it will end with the Rapture of the Church (Acts 2:1-Revelation 3:22). The early church grew as the gospel was preached throughout the Roman empire (the book of Acts). The New Testament (all 27 books) was written for the Church during the dispensation of grace.

Paul describes the dispensation of grace as the “dispensation of the mystery which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). One of the purposes of this dispensation is “to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:10-11).

Stewards and Stewardship Responsibilities: The Church has been given the Great Commandment and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). But these are not the only commandments given to the Church. There are many imperatives in the gospels and epistles that Christians are commanded to obey.

The risen Christ gave the Great Commission to his disciples. He told them to go and make disciples of all ethnic groups. They were to accomplish this mission preaching the gospel, baptizing new converts and teaching the converts to obey the commands of Christ (Mt.28:16-20). The risen Jesus told his disciples that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and rise from the dead and that repentance and forgiveness was to be preached in his name to all nations (Luke 24:46-48). Paul stated that the gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, was buried, was raised to life and was seen (1 Cor.15:1-11). Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph.2:8-9). Traditional dispensationalists believe that salvation has always been by grace through faith in all dispensations but the content of the gospel that was

²⁴ In my paper “The Messiah in the Torah,” *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Biblical Authority* 1.2 (Spring 2021), 154-179.

believed was different. In the age of grace the gospel is all about Jesus Christ, his death on the cross for our sins, his burial and resurrection from the dead.

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church

Traditional dispensationalists believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will return in the air and rapture his Church to heaven before the tribulation period. At the Rapture the Lord Jesus Christ will personally come down from heaven. A shout will be given. An archangel will speak. And a trumpet will blow. The souls of Christians who have died will return with Jesus and be reunited with their bodies and the dead Christians will experience a resurrection. Christians who are alive will receive glorified bodies. Then collectively in a moment of time the Church will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air. Jesus will then take his Church to heaven (John 14:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58).

The Rapture of the Church is imminent. It could happen at any moment. No sign must occur before the Rapture of the Church. The apostle Paul believed that the Rapture could have happened in his lifetime. In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 he says “we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord.” Paul included himself with the use of “we.”

The Rapture is the blessed hope of the Church and not of Israel (Titus 2:12-13). The Rapture is a mystery (a truth not revealed in the Old Testament but revealed in the New Testament—cf. 1 Cor.15:51). Christians are to wait for Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Traditional dispensationalists believe that the coming wrath refers to the wrath of the tribulation period. The wrath of God refers to all of the judgments of the seven year tribulation period and not just to the bowl judgments at the end of the tribulation. An evidence of that fact is that unbelievers will cry to God to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb during the first half of the tribulation period (cf. Rev.6:16-17).

Paul argues that Christians will not be surprised by the Day of the Lord. Unbelievers will not escape the Day of the Lord (1 Thess.5:3). Christians are not appointed to wrath (1 Thess.5:9). The Thessalonian Christians thought that they were in the Day of the Lord because they were experiencing persecution and trials. Paul had to write a second letter to the Thessalonians and tell them that they were not in the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord will not come until three events take place: (1) the rebellion (the apostasy which will occur after the Rapture), (2) the revelation of the man of sin (the Antichrist), and (3) the removal of the Restraint (a reference to the Holy Spirit who restrains evil today through the church). At the Rapture all Christians will be removed from the earth. Unbelievers will be left behind to enter the tribulation period.

Revelation 3:10 is a promise that the church will be kept from the time of the tribulation period. The hour of testing refers to the tribulation period. The purpose of the tribulation period is to test those who dwell on the earth. This is a technical phrase in Revelation to refer to unbelievers (Rev.6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8). There is no mention of the church in Revelation 4-18.

How should we live in light of the imminent Rapture? We should wait expectantly for Christ to return for his church (1 Thess.1:9-10). We should work hard for the Lord (1 Cor.15:58). We

should witness to lost people (Acts 1:6-8). We should live pure lives (1 John 3:2-3). We should put on the armor of light (Rom.13:11-12).

God's Judgment: During the age of grace the wrath of God is upon those who reject the Creator God (Romans 1:18-32) and reject Jesus (John 3:36). Christians who disobey Christ experience judgment including physical sickness and premature death (1 Corinthians 11:30; James 5:13-20; 1 John 5:16). All Christians will be evaluated at the Bema – the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

Dispensationalists do not believe in one general judgment where believers are admitted to heaven and unbelievers are dismissed to hell. Dispensationalists recognize different judgments for different groups of people at different times in the future.

All Christians will be judged by Jesus Christ at the Bema or Judgment Seat of Christ which happens after the Rapture (1 Corinthians 3:9-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). The judgment seat of Christ is an evaluation of the life and service of Christians by Jesus Christ to determine their rewards or loss of rewards based upon their faithfulness in serving Him. It is not designed to determine their salvation or to punish them for sins committed on earth. Christians will receive crowns for their service and godly character. The incorruptible crown will be given to Christians who live disciplined lives (1 Cor.9:25). The crown of rejoicing will be given to Christians for faithful witnessing (1 Thess.2:19). The crown of life will be given to Christians who love Jesus as they endure trials (James 1:12). The crown of righteousness will be given to those who love Christ's appearing (2 Tim.4:8). The crown of glory will be given to faithful pastors (1 Pet.5:4). All Christians will receive some praise from God (1 Cor.4:5). Some Christians will suffer loss of rewards (1 Cor.3:15).

The Seven Year Tribulation Period (Revelation 4-19)

Ryrie states that the tribulation with its many judgments is from the dispensational viewpoint the end of the economy of grace.²⁵ Other dispensationalists view the tribulation period as a separate dispensation since the church is removed and God is working with the nation of Israel again.²⁶ The tribulation period is a period of seven years when God will judge the world for its rejection of the gospel of grace and prepare Israel for the coming of Messiah Jesus. The tribulation period is the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy recorded in Daniel 9:24-27. During the tribulation period God will use 144,000 Jewish witnesses (12,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel) and 2 special Jewish witnesses to preach the gospel of the kingdom. God will save not only Jews but also Gentiles during the tribulation period as a result of their witness. The church is not mentioned in Revelation 4-19. The church will be in heaven during this time.

²⁵ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 51.

²⁶ Mal Couch, "The Relationship Between the Dispensations and Covenants" *Conservative Theological Journal* (December 1998), 411-412. Couch also writes, "The Tribulation seems to be a test for mankind. With all the terror, men do not repent of the works of their hands (Rev.10:20). They rejoice over the death of the two witnesses (11:10), seem willing to worship the Beast (13:12), blaspheme God because of their pains and sores (16:11), drink willingly the wine of the passion of the Harlot's immorality (18:3) and seem to be well due the final great stroke of wrath that fall upon them from Jesus Himself (14:14-20)" (Ibid., 427).

The First Half of the Tribulation Period

The tribulation period will begin when the Antichrist signs a covenant with Israel for seven years (Dan.9:27). People will say peace and safety (1 Thess.5:1-3). The apostate church will be organized (Rev.17). A ten nation western power will emerge (Dan.2:41; 7:7; Rev.17:13).

The first six seal judgments (Rev.6) will occur in the first half of the tribulation period: (1) Antichrist will come proclaiming peace, (2) war will break out, (3) famine, (4) disease will lead to the deaths of a quarter of the world's population, (5) tribulation saints will be martyred, and (6) earthquake and falling meteors will impact the earth (Rev.6). Two Jewish witnesses will minister in the first half, be killed and then raised to life and ascend to heaven (Rev.11:3-14).

The Middle of the Tribulation Period

In the middle of the tribulation period Satan will be cast out of heaven to earth (Rev.12:7-13). The trumpet judgments will occur (Rev.8-9). The apostate church will be destroyed by the Antichrist (Rev.17:13). The armies of Egypt and Syria will invade Israel but they will be defeated by the Antichrist and his armies (Dan.11:36-12:1). Antichrist will become the ruler of the world (Rev.13:1-10). He will stop the sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem (Dan.9:27; Lk.21:20). Antichrist will then go into the temple and declare himself to be God (2 Thess.2:4; Matt.24:15). The False Prophet will make an image of Antichrist and demand that the world worship Him by receiving the mark or number of the beast (Rev.13:11-18).

The Second Half of the Tribulation Period

During the last half of the tribulation period, the Antichrist will persecute Israel and the tribulation saints (Dan.12:1; Rev.13:7; Mt.24:21). The Jews will flee to the wilderness and they will be protected by God (Rev.12:13-17). Three angels will proclaim special messages (Rev.14:6-13). The seven bowl (vial) judgments will be poured out on the earth (Rev.16). The kings from the east will meet Antichrist's army at Armageddon (Dan.11:44; Rev.16:12; Zeph.3:8; Zech.12:2-3, 14:1-2). The sign of the son of man will appear in heaven (Mt.24:30). The Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords with the armies of heaven which include the Church (Rev.19:11-16). The Jews will believe in Jesus as their Messiah (Zech.12:10). The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev.19:20; 2 Thess.1:7-8; 2:8-9). Christ will destroy the Gentile armies with a word at Armageddon (Rev.19:21). Christ will deliver the righteous remnant of Israel (Isa.11:11-12; 34:6). Christ will judge the Jewish survivors of the tribulation period (Ezek.20:34-38; Mal.3:2-5). Christ will judge individual Gentile survivors of the tribulation period (Matt.25:31-46; Joel 3:1-12). The Old Testament saints and tribulation martyrs will be resurrected (Job 19:25-27; Dan.12:2, 13; Rev.20:4). Satan will be bound and thrown into an abyss for 1000 years (Rev.20:1-3).

The Second Coming of Christ to Earth in Power and Great Glory

At his second coming Jesus Christ will come back to earth riding on a white horse to defeat the Antichrist and the armies of the world who oppose him at the battle of Armageddon (Revelation

19:11-21). The second coming of Jesus Christ will be visible and glorious. He will come back with his holy angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God (2 Thess.1:7-8).

The OT prophets could see the second coming of Messiah to the earth and the events associated with the Glorious Appearing. The prophet Zechariah predicted that the Jews will mourn when see Christ returning (Zech.12:10). All Israel will then be saved (Isaiah 59:20-21; Romans 11:25-27) and the New Covenant promise predicted by Jeremiah will be applied to saved Jews who trust Yeshua as their Messiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The prophet Zechariah predicted that the Lord would go and fight against the nations who do battle against Jerusalem and “in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives will be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south (Zech.14:3-4).

Resurrection of Old Testament Saints and Tribulation Martyrs

The resurrection of two groups of believers will happen at the second coming of Christ to earth at the end of the seven year tribulation period. (1) The Resurrection of Old Testament Saints. Old Testament saints will be resurrected at the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. The angel told Daniel that he would rise to his inheritance at the end of the days (Dan.12:13). (2) The Resurrection of Tribulation Martyrs. Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected at the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. Revelation 20:4 says “And I saw thrones and they sat on them and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

Judgment of the Sheep and Goats

Gentile survivors of the tribulation period will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ after his second coming to earth and before the millennial kingdom (Matthew 25:31-46). The sheep (Gentiles saved during the tribulation period) will be permitted to enter the millennial kingdom in their physical bodies. The goats (unbelieving Gentiles) will be condemned to hell.

The Dispensation of the Kingdom

Time Period: The millennial kingdom of Christ will begin when King Jesus sits on the Davidic throne and rules Israel and the world from Jerusalem. The dispensation of the kingdom will last 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-6).

Christ’s Government: The dispensation of the kingdom is a period of 1000 years which occurs after the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. The Lord Jesus Christ will rule over Israel and the nations with a rod of iron as he sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Zech. 9:10-15; 14:16-17). David will be Christ’s regent over Jerusalem (Jer.30:9; Ezek.34:24). The twelve apostles will sit on thrones and rule over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). The Church will reign with Christ as Christians rule over cities in the millennial kingdom (Luke 19:11-27).

What is the purpose of this dispensation of the kingdom? Jesus Christ will fulfill the Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenants for Israel. Christ will rule the world in righteousness with a rod of iron (Rev.19:15). Jesus will reward Christians and tribulation martyrs with positions of authority in the kingdom as they will rule over cities. Jesus will redeem creation from the curse of sin (Romans 8:19-22). Paul wrote “that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him” (Ephesians 1:10). One reason why the dispensation of the fullness of times refers to the millennial kingdom and not the eternal state because Paul references things in heaven and on earth (not the new heavens and new earth). The victory that Christ achieved on the cross over Satan will be revealed to all on this planet earth. Paul wrote that when Christ has put all of his enemies under his feet (Satan, unbelievers, kings, and death) then he will submit the kingdom to God (the Father) so God might be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:24-25).

In the Davidic covenant God promised David a house (dynasty), throne (right to rule) and a kingdom (nation to rule).²⁷ The Davidic covenant is related to the Abrahamic covenant in that it explains the seed promise. The covenant is eternal as indicated by the word “forever” in 2 Samuel 7:13. Psalm 89 indicates that it was a covenant and oath that God made with David and his descendants. In the Davidic covenant some promises were made to David that were fulfilled during David’s lifetime. God promised to make David’s name great (2 Sam.7:9). God promised that David and Israel would experience rest from his enemies (2 Sam.7:11). The Davidic covenant contains some conditional aspects of blessing. The Davidic king who disobeyed would be removed from the throne as a discipline but this does not mean that the Davidic descendants would lose their right to rule.

The throne of David has been vacant since the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C. Jesus Christ is the rightful heir to the Davidic throne. Jesus Christ is the physical descendant of David and the Davidic king who has the right to rule Israel (Mt.1; Lk.3). Jesus is the Messiah but he is not currently sitting on the throne of David. He is currently seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Eph.1:19-23).

Progressive dispensationalists agree with Covenant theologians who think that the Davidic throne is in heaven today. Bock writes “the reign and rule of our great Messiah, the promised Son of David, has begun, highlighted by the executive and mediatorial outpouring of many divine blessings of His grace.”²⁸ But if Christ’s reign has begun, it is not a reign of peace, since there are still wars and rumors of wars. Jesus is the Davidic king, but he sits on the Father’s throne and not the Davidic throne (Rev.3:21). The Davidic kingdom is still future and will be established with the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth (Dan.7:13-14; Psalm 2).

There are several problems with Bock’s view that Jesus is ruling on David’s throne in heaven today. First, the Davidic throne was located in Jerusalem. Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would be “called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David.

²⁷ See Michael Grisanti, “The Davidic Covenant” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 10.2 (Fall 1999), 233-250.

²⁸ Darrell Bock, “Covenants in Progressive Dispensationalism,” in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 202-203.

And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). The risen Jesus did not reign over Israel from Jerusalem after his death and resurrection. The disciples asked Jesus after his resurrection if he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). Jesus did not say that he was going to heaven to sit on the Davidic throne. He said that it was not for them to know the times or seasons. The risen Jesus implied that the kingdom for Israel was postponed.

Second, when Jesus ascended into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. Jesus distinguished between the Father’s throne and his throne in the letter to church at Philadelphia. The risen ascended Jesus said, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne” (Rev.3:21). The throne of God in heaven is a separate throne from the Davidic throne on earth.

Third, Jesus will not sit on the throne of David until he returns a second time to reign as King over Israel and the world in the millennial kingdom. Jesus predicted that “in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory” that the disciples who followed him would also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). Since this event is still future, Jesus could not be seated on David’s throne. Jesus predicted that when the Son of Man comes in his glory that he would sit on his throne in heavenly glory (Matthew 25:31).

What are some blessings of the kingdom? There will be peace in the world (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Zechariah 9:10), joy and feasting (Zech.8:19; 10:7; Jer.30:19), full knowledge of the Lord (Is.11:9; Habakkuk 2:14), the removal of the curse on creation (Iss.11:6-8), long life spans (Is.65:20), economic prosperity (Micah 4:4; Joel 2:24; Amos 9:13), increase of light (Is.4:5; 24:23; 30:26), and a unified language and worship (Zeph.3:9; Is.45:23; Zech.14:16).

The Judgments After the Millennial Kingdom and Before the Eternal State

After spending 1000 years in the abyss, Satan will be released from his prison (Rev.20:7). Satan will deceive the nations and lead a final rebellion against the saints living in Jerusalem (Rev.20:8). Fire will come out of heaven and destroy the unbelievers (Rev.20:9). Satan (and his demons) will then be judged and thrown into the lake of fire (Rev.20:10). All dead unbelievers of all ages will be resurrected (John 5:28-29; Rev.20:12) and will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment. This judgment will determine degrees of punishment for unbelievers. All unbelievers will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev.20:11-15). The present heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire (2 Pet.3:12).

The Eternal State: The New Heavens and New Earth (Revelation 21-22)

Is the Eternal State a Dispensation?

God will create a new heavens and a new earth (Rev.21-22) Is this an eighth dispensation? I do not believe that it is. The eternal state does not have a test for man. Tests are over. This is the beginning of eternity. The New Jerusalem will descend from heaven to rest on the new earth (Rev.21:22). There will not be a temple in the New Jerusalem. But Jesus will reign as King of

Kings from the throne of God. The tree of life will be there and believers from all ages will live forever in the holy city of New Jerusalem.

Distinctions of Millennium and Eternal State

Millennium	Eternal State
In the old heavens and earth	New heavens and earth (Rev.21:1)
Earth has seas	New earth has no sea (Rev.21:1)
Jesus reigns from Jerusalem	Jesus reigns from New Jerusalem
Sun exists	No sun (Rev.21:23; 22:5)
Length: 1000 years	Length: Forever and ever (Rev.22:5)
Preceded by Tribulation	Preceded by GWT Judgment
Rebellion of unbelievers at end	No unbelievers in New Jerusalem
Sin exists (but Satan is in abyss)	No sin
Death – sinner will die at 100 years old (Is.65:20)	No death (Rev.21:4)
Christ rules with rod of iron (Ps.2:6-8)	No rod of iron needed (Rev.21:8)
Satan bound in the abyss (Rev.20:2)	Satan is in lake of fire (Rev.20:10)

The fact that there is no sea in the eternal state does not prove that the sea is evil. There is no sun or moon in the eternal state. And most today do not view the sun and moon as evil.

THE DISPENSATIONS IN THE BIBLICAL TIMELINE

*This timeline is based on Bishop Ussher's chronology with a 4004 B.C. creation date.

Dispensation of Innocence

4004 Adam from Creation to the Fall (Gen.1:26-3:24)

Dispensation of Conscience

4004-3074 Adam after the Fall to his death (Gen.4:1-5:5)
 Births and Sacrifices of Cain and Abel (Gen.4:1-7)
 Murder of Abel by Cain (Gen.4:8-15)
 Descendants of Cain (Gen.4:16-24)

3874-2962 Seth and Sethites call on name of the Lord (Gen.5:3-8)

3769-2864 Enosh (Gen.5:6-11)

3679-2769 Cainan (Gen.5:9-14)

3609-2714 Mahalalel (Gen.5:12-17)

3544-2582 Jared (Gen.5:15-20)

3382-3017 Enoch walks by faith and is raptured before the flood (Gen.5:18-24). Jude v.14
 Indicates Enoch is the seventh from Adam. This shows no gaps in the genealogy from Adam to Enoch.

3317-2348 Methuselah lives 969 years (oldest man) and dies in year of flood (Gen.5:21-27)

3130-2353 Lamech – he died before his father Methuselah died (Gen.5:25-31)

3074 Death of Adam (Gen.5:5)

3017 Enoch is taken to heaven without dying (Gen.5:24)

- 2962 Death of Seth (Gen.5:8)
- 2948 Birth of Noah (Gen.5:28-29)
- 2468 Noah is given 120 years to build the ark (Gen.6:3)
- 2353 Death of Lamech (Gen.5:31)
- 2348 Global Flood. Noah was 600 years old when the flood came (Gen.7:6)

Dispensation of Human Government

- 2346 Birth of Arphaxad (Gen.11:10)
- 2311 Birth of Salah (Gen.11:12)
- 2295 Birth of Terah (Gen.11:24)
- 2247 Birth of Peleg (Gen.11:16)
- 2242 Tower of Babel (Gen.11)
- 2234 Nimrod builds Babel (Gen.10:8-10; Jer.5:15)
- 2188 Mizraim led group into Egypt (Gen.10:13)- begin Egyptian dynasties
- 2185 Birth of Serug (Gen.11:20)
- 2165 Birth of Abram in Ur (Gen.11:26)

Dispensation of Promise

- 2091 God called Abram to leave Ur (Gen.12:1-3)
- 2090 Abram enters Canaan (Gen.12:4)
- 2089 Abram went to Egypt because of famine in Canaan (Gen.12:10-20)
- 2081 Abram's marriage to Hagar (Gen.16:3)
- 2080 Birth of Ishmael (Gen.16:15-16)
- 2067 Reaffirmation of covenant to Abraham (Gen.17:1)
- 2066 Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.19:24)
- Abram's Lie to Abimelech (Gen.20)
- Birth of Isaac (Gen.21:2)
- 2066-1886 Life of Isaac
- 2050 Abraham offered Isaac (Gen.22)
- 2029 Death of Sarah (Gen.23:2)
- Abram sends Eliezar to Nahor to get bride for Isaac (Gen.24)
- 2026 Isaac married Rebekah (Gen.25:20)
- 2006 Births of Esau and Jacob (Gen.25)
- 2006-1859 Life of Jacob
- 1991 Death of Abraham (Gen.25:7)
- 1987 Death of Heber (Gen.11:17; 14:13)
- 1943 Death of Ishmael (Gen.25:17)
- Isaac and Abimelech's conflict over Rebekah (Gen.26)
- Isaac's conflict with the Philistines over a well (Gen.26)
- 1930 Jacob's journey to Haran after deceiving Isaac for blessing (Gen.28:2)
- 1930-1916 Jacob works as a shepherd for Laban (Gen.29)
- Jacob's marriages
- 1918 Birth of Judah to Leah (Gen.29:35)
- 1915/1914 Birth of Joseph to Rachel (Gen.30:23)
- 1915-1805 Life of Joseph
- 1910 End of Jacob's stay with Laban (Gen.31:41)

1909	Jacob's arrival at Shechem (Gen.33:18)
1902	Rape of Dinah (Gen.34:1-2)
1898	Jacob renews covenant at Bethel (Gen.35)
1897	Selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt (Gen.37:2)
1888	Joseph imprisoned in Egypt (Gen.39:20; 41:1)
1886	Death of Isaac (Gen.35:28)
1886	Joseph promoted to second in command in Egypt (Gen.41:39-40)
1879	Beginning of seven year famine in Egypt (Gen.41:54)
1878	Brothers first visit to Egypt (Gen.42:1-2)
1877	Brothers second visit to Egypt (Gen.43:1; 45:6, 11)
1876	Jacob takes his family to Egypt (Gen.46:5-6; 47:9; Exodus 12:40; Gal.3:17)
1859	Death of Jacob (Gen.47:28)
1806	Death of Joseph in Egypt
1446	Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12)

Dispensation of the Mosaic Law

1445	Moses receives the Law from God at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19-20)
1406	Israel enters promised land; Fall of Jericho (Joshua 6)
1385-1377	Cushan-rishathaim and Mesopotamians oppresses Israel (Judges 3:8)
1377-1337	Othniel of Judah delivers Israel and judges Israel for 40 years (Judges 3:9-11)
1337-1319	Eglon and Moabites oppress Israel (Judges 3:12-14)
1319-1239	Ehud of Benjamin delivers Israel (Judges 3:15-30)
1259-1239	Jabin and Canaanites oppress Israel (Judges 4:2-3)
1239-1199	Deborah of Ephraim and Barak deliver Israel for 40 years (Judges 4:4-5:31)
1199-1192	Oreb,Zeeb,Zebah,Zalmunna and Midianites oppress Israel (Judges 6:1-6)
1192-1152	Gideon of Manasseh delivers Israel (Judges 6:7-8:35)
1152-1149	Civil war of Abimelech (Judges 9)
1149-1126	Tola of Issachar judges Israel (Judges 10:1-2)
1126-1104	Jair of Gildead judges Israel (Judges 10:3-6)
1104-1086	Ammonites oppress Israel for 18 years (Judges 10:7-9)
1086-1080	Jephthah of Gilead delivers Israel and judges for 6 years (Judges 10:10-12:7)
1080-1072	Ibzan of Judah judges Israel for 8 years (Judges 12:8-10)
1072-1062	Elon of Zebulun judges Israel for 10 years (Judges 12:11-12)
1062-1055	Abdon of Ephraim judges Israel for 7 years (Judges 12:13-15)
1115-1075	Philistines oppress Israel for 40 years (Judges 13:1)
1085	Birth of Samuel
1075-1055	Samson of Dan delivers Israel for 20 years (Judges 13:2-16:31)
1050	Saul becomes King of Israel (1 Sam.9-10)
1010	David becomes King of Israel (2 Sam.2)
991	Birth of Solomon
970	Death of King David; Solomon becomes King of Israel
959	Solomon's Temple completed
931-910	King Jeroboam I of Israel (1 Kings 11:26-14:20) – reigns 22 years (bad)
931-913	King Rehoboam of Judah (1 Kings 11:42-14:31) – reigns 17 years (bad)
930	Death of King Solomon
925	King Shishak of Egypt defeats Rehoboam at Jerusalem (1 Kings 14:25-28;

- 2 Chr.12:2-12
- 925 Rezon of Syria defeats Jeroboam of Israel
- 913-911 King Abijah of Judah (1 Kings 14:31-15:8) – reigns 3 years (bad)
- 912 Abijah of Judah defeats Jeroboam of Israel at Mt. Zemaraim (2 Chron.13:2-20)
- 911-870 King Asa of Judah (1 Kings 15:8-24) – reigns 41 years (good)
- 910-909 King Nadab of Israel (1 Kings 15:25-28) – reigns 2 years (bad)
- 909 Philistia defeats Nadab of Israel to gain back lost territory (1 Kings 15:27)
- 909-886 King Baasha of Israel (1 Kings 15:27-16:7) – reigns 24 years (bad)
- 900 Asa of Judah defeats Zera of Ethiopia at Mareshah (2 Chron.14:9-15)
- 895 Asa of Judah defeats Baasha of Israel at Ramah (1 Kings 15:16-17)
- 890 Benhadad of Syria defeats Baasha of Israel (1 Kings 15:20; 2 Chron.16:4-5)
- 886-885 King Elah of Israel (1 Kings 16:6-14) – reigns 2 years (bad)
- 885 King Zimri of Israel (1 Kings 16:9-20) – reigns 7 days (bad)
- 885 Omri of Israel defeats Zimri of Israel in a civil war (1 Kings 16:17-18)
- 885-874 King Omri of Israel (1 Kings 16:15-28) – reigns 12 years (bad)
- 881 Omri of Israel defeats Tibni of Israel in a civil war (1 Kings 16:22)
- 877 Omri of Israel defeats Moab
- 874-853 King Ahab of Israel (1 Kings 16:28-22:40) – reigns 22 years (bad)
- 874 Elijah begins prophetic ministry
- 873-848 King Jehoshaphat of Judah (1 Kings 22:41-50) – reigns 25 years (good)
- 853 Benhadad I of Syria defeats Jehoshaphat of Judah at Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:29-37)
- 853 Jehoshaphat of Judah defeats Edom, Moab, Ammon at En-gedi (2 Chron.20:1)
- 853-852 King Ahaziah of Israel (1 Kings 22:40-2 Kings 1:18) – reigns 2 years (bad)
- 848-841 King Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings 8:16-24) – reigns 8 years (bad)
- 852-841 King Jehoram (Joram) of Israel (2 Kings 1:17-9:26) – reigns 12 years (bad)
- 850 Moab defeats Jehoram of Israel (2 Kings 3:4-27)
- 850 Moab defeats Jehoshaphat of Judah (2 Kings 3:4-27)
- 845 Jehoram of Israel defeats Benhadad I of Syria (2 Kings 6:8)
- 845 Jehoram of Israel defeats Benhadad I of Syria in Samaria (2 Kings 6:24-7:8)
- 845 Edom defeats Joram of Judah (2 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron.21:8-10)
- 845 Libnah defeats Joram of Judah (2 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron.21:10)
- 842 Philistia, Arabia defeat Joram of Judah at Jerusalem (2 Chron.21:16-17)
- 841 King Ahaziah of Judah (2 Kings 8:24-9:29) – reigns 1 year (bad)
- 841 Hazael of Syria defeats Jehoram of Israel at Ramoth-gilead (2 Kings 8:28-29)
- 841 Hazael of Syria defeats Ahaziah of Judah at Ramoth-gilead (2 Chron.22:5-6)
- 841-835 Queen Athaliah of Judah (2 Kings 11:1-20)- reigns 6 years (bad)
- 841-814 King Jehu of Israel (2 Kings 9:1-10:36) – reigns 28 years (bad)
- 835-796 King Joash of Judah (2 Kings 11:1-12:21) – reigns 40 years (good)
- 820 Hazael of Syria defeats Jehu of Israel (2 Kings 10:32-33)
- 814-798 King Jehoahaz of Israel (2 Kings 13:1-9)- reigns 17 years (bad)
- 810 Hazael of Syria defeats Jehoahaz of Israel (2 Kings 13:3-7, 22)
- 798-782 King Jehoash (Joash) of Israel (2 Kings 13:10-14:16)- reigns 16 years (bad)
- 798 Jehoash of Israel defeats Benhadad II of Syria (2 Kings 13:25)
- 796-767 King Amaziah of Judah (2 Kings 14:1-20)- reigns 29 years (good)
- 796 Hazael of Syria defeats Joash of Judah (2 Kings 12:18; 2 Chron.24:23-24)

- 795 Jehoash of Israel defeats Benhadad II of Syria (2 Kings 13:25)
- 794 Amaziah of Judah defeats Edom at Valley of Salt (2 Kings 14:7; 2 Chr.25:11-13)
- 793-753 King Jeroboam II of Israel (2 Kings 14:23-29) – reigned 41 years (bad)
- 793 Jehoash of Israel defeats Benhadad II of Syria (2 Kings 13:25)
- 792-740 King Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah (2 Kings 21; 15:1-7) – reigned 52 years (good)
- 790 Jehoash of Israel defeats Amaziah of Judah at Beth-shemesh (2 Kings 13:12; 14:11-13)
- 785 Uzziah of Judah defeats Philistia and Arabia (2 Chron.26:6-7)
- 780 Jeroboam II of Israel defeats Benhadad II of Syria (2 Kings 14:25-28)
- 753-752 King Zechariah of Israel (2 Kings 14:29-15:12) – reigned 6 months (bad)
- 752 King Shallum of Israel
- 750-732 King Jotham of Judah
- 746-737 King Menahem of Israel
- 738 Jotham of Judah defeats Ammon (2 Chron.27:5)
- 736-735 King Pekahiah of Israel
- 735-716 King Ahaz of Judah
- 735 Ahaz of Judah defeats Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria (2 Kings 15:37; 16:5-6)
- 735 Edom defeats Ahaz of Judah (2 Chron.28:17)
- 735 Philistia defeats Ahaz of Judah (2 Chron.28:18)
- 734-731 King Pekah of Israel
- 733 Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria defeats Pekah of Israel (2 Kings 15:29)
- 733 Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria defeats Ahaz of Judah(2 Chron.28:20)
- 730-722 King Hoshea of Israel
- 722 Shalmaneser V of Assyria takes Hoshea and Israel into captivity (2 Kings 17:4-6)
- 716-687 King Hezekiah of Judah
- 715 Hezekiah of Judah defeats Philistia (2 Kings 18:8)
- 701 God defeats Sennacherib of Assyria at Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13-19:27; 2 Chr.32:1-23)
- 697-643 King Manasseh of Judah
- 650 Ashurbanipal of Assyria defeats Manasseh of Judah (2 Chron.33:11)
- 643-641 King Amon of Judah
- 641-609 King Josiah of Judah
- 609 Pharaoh Neco of Egypt defeats Josiah of Judah at Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29; 2 Chr.35:20f)
- 609 King Jehoahaz of Judah
- 609-598 King Jehoiakim of Judah
- 607 Jehoiakim of Judah fought Moab and Syria (2 Kings 24:2)
- 605 Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeats Jehoiakim of Judah at Jerusalem (2 Chron.36:6)
- Daniel is taken captive to Babylon (Daniel 1)
- 598-597 King Jehoiachin of Judah
- 597 King Jehoiachin taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:10-12)
- 596-586 King Zedekiah of Judah
- 593 Ezekiel's chariot vision (Ezek.1:1-3)
- 592 Ezekiel's temple vision (Ezek.8:1)
- 591 Ezekiel's discourse with elders (Ezek.20:1)

- 588 Second siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1; Ezek.24:1)
- 587 Judgment on Tyre (Ezek.26:1)
- 586 Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonians defeat Zedekiah of Judah at Jerusalem (2 Kings 25)
- Destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple (2 Kings 25; 2 Chron.36:13-21)
- 539-530 King Cyrus of Persia
- 539 Fall of Babylon; Darius the Mede is ruler of Babylon
- 538 Daniel prayed and was given prophecy of 70 Weeks (Dan 9)
- 539 Cyrus decree for Jews to return to land of Israel (2 Chron 36:21-23; Ezra 1; 6:3-5)
- 538 Zerubbabel led first return of Jews to Israel (Ezra 1-6)
- 538-458 Zerubbabel (Sheshbazzar) ruled Israel as governor
- 537 Altar set up and celebration of Feast of Trumpets (Ezra 3:1-7)
- 536 Foundation of second temple was laid (Ezra 3:8-13)
- 536 Work on temple stopped
- 530-521 King Cambyses of Persia
- 521-486 King Darius of Persia (Ezra 4-6)
- 520 Ministry of prophet Haggai; Haggai prophesied to the Jews in Judah after the Babylonian exile during the reign of Persian King Darius I (Ezra 5-6) Haggai wrote the book of Haggai. Work on second temple resumed
- 520-518 Zechariah prophesied during the reigns of Persian kings Darius I and Xerxes and wrote the book of Zechariah (Ezra 5-6)
- 486-465 King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) of Persia (Esther 1-10)
- 465-424 King Artaxerxes of Persia (Ezra 7-10)
- 458 Ezra led second return of Jews to Israel (Ezra 7-10)
- 450 Malachi prophesied to the Jews during the reigns of Persian kings Artaxerxes and Darius II (cf. Nehemiah 13)
- 445 Nehemiah led third return of Jews to Israel (Nehemiah 1-13)
- 444 The Wall of Jerusalem is rebuilt
- 333 Alexander the Great led Greece to conquer Persia
- 250 Septuagint written in Alexandria, Egypt
- 196BC-AD68 Dead Sea Scrolls in Qumran
- 167 Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the abomination (offers pig on altar in Jerusalem)
- 167-63 Hasmonean period
- 166-160 Judas Maccabees leads Jews to fight the Syrians
- 165 Judas and Maccabees liberate Jerusalem; Feast of Hannukah
- 63 Pompey and Romans conquer Jerusalem
- 44 Julius Caesar is assassinated on the Ides of March
- 37 Octavian appoints Herod to be king of Israel
- 36 Herod takes Jerusalem
- 30BC-AD14 Augustus Caesar rules as Roman Emperor
- 19 Herod begins renovation of second temple
- 30 or 33 Death, Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ

Dispensation of Grace = the Church Age (from Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church)

- 33 The Birth of the Church (Acts 2)
- 34 Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9)
- 45 Epistle of James (first NT book)
- 47-48 Paul's First Missionary Journey (Jones A.D. 45) (Boyer A.D. 47-48)
Cyprus (Acts 13:2-12) (Hoehner, April A.D. 48)
Mark left Barnabas and Paul in Perga (Acts 13:13) (Hoehner, July A.D. 48)
Galatians
- 49 Jews forced to leave Rome by order of Roman Emperor Claudius (Acts 18:2)
- 49 Jerusalem Council – before Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:1-35)
- 49-52 Paul's Second Missionary Journey
- 51 1 Thessalonians
- 51 2 Thessalonians
- 52-57 Paul's Third Missionary Journey
- 56 1 Corinthians
- 56 2 Corinthians
- 57 Romans
- 58-60 Paul imprisoned in Caesarea Maritima (Acts 22-26)
- 60 Gospel According to Luke
- 61-62 Paul's First Roman Imprisonment
- 61 Ephesians
- 61 Colossians
- 61 Philemon
- 62 Philippians
- 62 Death of James (half brother of Jesus)
- 62-67 Paul's Release – Period Between Imprisonments
- 62-63 1 Timothy
- 63 Titus
- 63-64 1 Peter
- 64 Burning of Rome – during reign of Roman Emperor Nero
- 64-67 Hebrews – written before A.D. 70
- 66 2 Peter – last epistle of Peter
- 67 Paul's Second Roman Imprisonment
- 67 2 Timothy – last epistle of Paul written from Rome
- 67 Paul's Martyrdom
- 70 The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple
- 79-81 Titus is Roman Emperor
- 81-96 Domitian is Roman Emperor
- 85 Gospel According to John
- 90 1 John, 2 John, 3 John written by John in Ephesus
- 95 Book of Revelation written by John on the island of Patmos (Rev.1)

THE OLD TESTAMENT

All of the Old Testament books were written during the Dispensation of the Mosaic Law.

Genesis (1445-1405 B.C.) is the book of beginnings. Genesis reveals the origins of the universe, man, woman, marriage, sin, death, the nations. Genesis focuses on the origin of the nation of Israel as God gave his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons (Scofield 1450-1410 B.C.) (MacArthur 1450-1405 B.C.) (Benware 1425 B.C.)

Exodus (1445-1405 B.C.) is the book of Israel's exit from Egypt. The LORD (YHWH) delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt through the leadership of Moses and led them to Mount Sinai where God gave Moses the law to guide them in life and instructions to build the tabernacle as a place for God to manifest His glory and presence to the nation and for the nation to worship Him (Scofield 1450-1410 B.C.) (MacArthur 1445-1405 B.C.) (Benware 1425 B.C.)

Leviticus (1445-1405 B.C.) is the book of Israel's worship as it reveals how the people and priests were to offer sacrifices and observe feasts as they served a holy God. (Scofield 1450-1410 B.C.) (MacArthur 1445-1405 B.C.) (Benware 1444 B.C.)

Numbers (1445-1405 B.C.) is the book of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness as God led Israel through the desert to the promised land of Canaan. (MacArthur 1445-1405 B.C.) (Benware 1406 B.C.)

Deuteronomy (1445-1405 B.C.) is the book of covenant renewal as Moses traces Israel's history from the exodus up to the land of Canaan and emphasizes that God will bless Israel if they obey the covenant but will curse them if they disobey the covenant. (MacArthur 1445-1405 B.C.) (Benware 1405 B.C.)

Joshua (1405-1385 B.C.) is the book of Israel's conquest of Canaan which shows how Israel under Joshua conquered the land of Canaan and then divided the land up as an inheritance for the twelve tribes of Israel. (MacArthur 1405-1385 B.C.) (Benware 1390 B.C.)

Judges (1043-1000 B.C.) is the book of Israel's failure in Canaan. When Israel disobeyed God by worshipping Baal and other idols God disciplined Israel with the invasion of Gentile nations. When Israel cried out to God for deliverance God sent judges who led the nation to defeat the Gentile invaders. But Israel continued to repeat the cycle of sin as each man did what was right in his own eyes. (MacArthur 1043 B.C. by Samuel) (Benware 1000 B.C. by Samuel)

Ruth (1030-1000 B.C.) is the book of the kinsman redeemer as Ruth (a Moabite) follows Naomi back to Israel and works in the fields of Boaz (the kinsman redeemer) near Bethlehem in Judah. Boaz and Ruth are married and become the great grandparents of King David. The events of the book of Ruth happen during the times of the judges. (MacArthur 1030-1010 B.C. by Samuel?) (Benware 1000 B.C. by possibly Samuel)

1 Samuel (975-722 B.C.) is the book of transition from judges to kings as it shows how Samuel (the last judge of Israel) anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel. King Saul disobeys the law

and is rejected as king by the Lord (MacArthur 931-722 B.C. by anonymous) (Benware 975 B.C. by Samuel, Nathan and Gad cf. 1 Chronicles 29:29).

2 Samuel (975-722 B.C.) is the book of the rise and fall of King David. The first half of the book records the rise of David but then King David commits adultery with Bathsheba and has her husband Uriah killed in battle. The second half of the book records the problems in David's family as a result of his sin including the death of his son Absalom. (MacArthur 931-722 B.C. by Anonymous) (Benware 975 B.C. by Nathan and Gad)

Psalms (1500 -500 B.C.) is the book of praise that reveals God as Creator and King of the universe who is worthy of our trust and praise. The first psalm was written by Moses sometime during the wilderness wanderings (Psalm 90). (MacArthur 1410-450 B.C.) (Benware – 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C. from the time of Moses to the postexilic times. Most psalms written in a hundred year period from 1030-930 B.C.)

Song of Songs (971-960 B.C.) is the book of marital love which celebrates the physical union of a man and wife in marriage (MacArthur 971-965 B.C. by Solomon) (Benware 960 B.C. by Solomon – early in his reign as king)

Job (971-960 B.C.??) is the book of suffering which reveals that the suffering saint must trust the sovereign Creator God during times of trial (MacArthur – Unknown Date of Writing and Author) (Benware – the setting is the days of the patriarchs but the book could have been written later up to the time of King Solomon)

Proverbs (971-950 B.C.) is the book of wisdom that shows us how to live life skillfully and successfully for God (MacArthur 971-686 B.C. by Solomon and others) (Benware 950 B.C. by Solomon)

Ecclesiastes (940-931 B.C.) is the book of searching for significance as Solomon tried to find the meaning of life in pursuing wealth, work and pleasure. Solomon discovered that true significance in life comes from obeying God and keeping his commandments (MacArthur 940-931 B.C. by Solomon) (Benware shortly before 931 B.C. by Solomon)

1 Kings (600-538 B.C.) is the book of division as it shows how the united kingdom of Solomon was divided into the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah). God blessed the kings that obeyed His covenant and judged the kings who disobeyed his covenant (MacArthur 561-538 B.C. by Anonymous) (Benware 600-575 B.C. by Jeremiah?)

2 Kings (600-538 B.C.) is the book of deportation as it shows how Israel fell to Assyria in 722 B.C. and Judah fell to Babylon in 586 B.C. The tale of two kingdoms shows that disobedience leads to deportation. The kings of Israel were all wicked as they led Israel to worship Baal and other idols. Some kings of Judah were good and others wicked. Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonians to conquer Jerusalem and destroy Solomon's temple in 586 B.C. (MacArthur 561-538 B.C. by Anonymous) (Benware 600-575 B.C. by Jeremiah?)

OT Prophetic books

The OT prophetic books are divided into two groups: Major prophets (Isaiah-Daniel) and Minor prophets (Hosea-Malachi). The word “Major” refers to the fact that these are longer books (in length) than the minor prophetic books.

Another division of the prophetic books relates to Israel’s history.

The Pre-Exilic Prophetic books (Isaiah-Lamentations, Hosea-Zephaniah). The pre-exilic prophets had a ministry to Israel and Judah before the Babylonians came and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C.

The Exilic Prophets (Ezekiel and Daniel). The exilic prophets ministered to the Jews while they were in captivity in Babylon for 70 years (586-516 B.C.).

The Post-Exilic Prophets (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi). The post-exilic prophets ministered to the Jews who returned from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and the second temple.

Pre-Exilic Prophetic books written before the Babylonian Exile (before 586 B.C.)

Obadiah (850-840 B.C.) is the book of Edom’s doom that shows God will judge Edom because Edom rejoiced when Jerusalem fell to the Philistines and Arabians. Obadiah prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of kings Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash (2 Kings 8-12) (MacArthur 850-840 B.C.) (Ice 850-840 B.C.) (Benware 845 B.C. by Obadiah – earliest of the prophetic books)

Joel (835-796 B.C.) is the book of the day of the Lord reveals that judgment will come upon Israel in the future that would be greater than the locust plague that they experienced recently. Joel prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reign of king Joash (2 Kings 12; 830-820 B.C.) (MacArthur 835-796 B.C. by Joel) (Ice 835-800 B.C.) (Benware 830 B.C. by Joel)

Jonah (780-760 B.C.) is the book of the prodigal prophet which reveals that God has a compassionate concern for Gentile nations (Assyria) and Israel should too. Jonah prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14: 780-760 B.C.) (MacArthur 775 B.C. by Jonah) (Ice 780-775 B.C. by Jonah) (Benware 780 B.C. by Jonah during the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel)

Amos (760-750 B.C.) is the book of the roaring Lion (a reference to the LORD) which shows that God is about to judge prosperous Israel because of its social sins. Amos prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14; 755-750 B.C.) (MacArthur 750 B.C.) (Ice 750 B.C.) (Benware 760 B.C. by Amos)

Hosea (750-710 B.C.) is the book of Israel’s unfaithfulness shows that God is faithful to his adulterous people Israel (they were involved with worshipping idols) just as Hosea is faithful to his adulterous wife Gomer. Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reigns

of these kings of Israel: Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea (2 Kings 14-17) (MacArthur 750-710 B.C.) (Ice 750-710 B.C.) (Benware 750 B.C.)

Micah (740-710 B.C.) is the book of God's court case against Judah which shows that God's kingdom requires high social standards and a just Ruler. Micah prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of the following kings: Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (2 Kings 15-20) (MacArthur 735-710 B.C.) (Ice 740-710 B.C.) (Benware 735 B.C.)

Isaiah (740-680 B.C.) is the book of the Lord's salvation shows that a holy God will not tolerate sin in his people so He will send his Messiah who will suffer for their sins and return to reign over them. Isaiah prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of these kings: Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh (2 Kings 15-21) (MacArthur 700-681 B.C.) (Ice 740-680 B.C.) (Benware 740 B.C. by Isaiah)

Nahum (650 B.C.) – The book of Nineveh's fall describes how God will judge the capital of Assyria because of her cruelty and immorality. Nahum prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of these kings: Manasseh, Amon and Josiah (2 Kings 21-23) (MacArthur 650 B.C.) (Ice 650 B.C. by Nahum) (Benware 650 B.C.)

Zephaniah (635-625 B.C.) – The book of the day of the Lord reveals that God is in control of the world. God will wipe Jerusalem clean as one wipes a dirty dish. Zephaniah prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 22-23). (MacArthur 635-625 B.C.) (Ice 635-625 B.C.) (Benware 635 B.C.)

Habakkuk (615-605 B.C.) – The book of theodicy (why God permits evil in the world) reveals that the just should live by faith in the face of the soon approaching invasion by Babylon. Habakkuk prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of these kings: Josiah, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim (2 Kings 22-24) (MacArthur 615-605 B.C.) (Ice 615-605 B.C.) (Benware 609 B.C.)

Jeremiah (626-570 B.C.) – The book of the weeping prophet reveals Jeremiah's ministry to Judah right before its fall to Babylon and shows how God will someday bless Israel with a new covenant. Jeremiah prophesied to the southern kingdom of Judah during the reigns of these kings: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah (2 Kings 22-25) (MacArthur 586-570 B.C.) (Ice 610-570 B.C.) (Benware 626-586 B.C.)

Exilic Prophetic Books Written during the Babylonian Captivity

Lamentations (586 B.C.) – The book of the fall of Jerusalem is a song lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. with a hope of the future based on God's faithfulness. Jeremiah wrote Lamentations during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (2 Kings 25) (MacArthur 586 B.C.) (Ice 586 B.C.) (Benware 586 B.C.)

Ezekiel (590-570 B.C.) – the book of the glory of the LORD shows that the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity are necessary measures for the God of glory to correct his idolatrous

people and to prepare them to return and establish a new temple. Ezekiel prophesied during the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah and during the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 25) (MacArthur 590-570 B.C.) (Ice 590-570 B.C.) (Benware 570 B.C.)

Daniel (605-530 B.C.) – the book of God’s superior kingdom gives a panoramic view of Israel’s history during the times of the Gentiles from Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians until Messiah returns a second time to establish his kingdom on earth. Daniel prophesied during the 70 year Babylonian Captivity (2 Kings 23-25; Ezra 1-4) (MacArthur 536-530 B.C.) (Ice 560-530 B.C.) (Benware 605-536 B.C.)

Post-Exilic Prophetic and History Books Written after the Babylonian Exile (586-516 B.C.)

Haggai (520 B.C.) - is a book of rebuke as Haggai rebuked the returning Jews for not completing the second temple. Haggai prophesied to the Jews in Judah after the Babylonian exile during the reign of Persian king Darius I (Ezra 5-6) (MacArthur 520 B.C.) (Ice 520 B.C.) (Benware 520 B.C.)

Zechariah (520-470 B.C.) - is a book of Messianic prophecies which gives encouragement to the returning Jewish exiles to rebuild the temple for soon the Messiah would come to Israel. Zechariah prophesied during the reigns of Persian kings Darius I and Xerxes (Ezra 5-6) (MacArthur 480-470 B.C.) (Ice 480-470 B.C.) (Benware 520-518 B.C. cf. Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 – places ministry of Zechariah alongside that of Haggai)

1 Chronicles (450-430 B.C.) is the book of temple preparations. Ezra gives the history of David’s rule over Israel centered in the worship of the Lord in Jerusalem. (MacArthur 450-430 B.C.) (Benware 450 B.C.)

2 Chronicles (450-430 B.C.) is the book of rebellions and revivals. Ezra reveals that prayer, repentance and obedience to the Mosaic law lead to revival while disobedience leads to God’s judgment (MacArthur 450-430 B.C.) (Benware 450 B.C.)

Ezra (457-444 B.C.) is the book of the restoration of the temple. Zerubbabel and Ezra led the Jews back to Israel from Babylon to rebuild the temple and restore the worship of the LORD (MacArthur 457-444 B.C.) (Benware 450 B.C.)

Esther (475-331 B.C.) is the book of God’s providence and protection of the Jews. God used beautiful queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai to deliver the Jews from the wicked plot of Haman to exterminate the Jews. The events of the book of Esther fit into the book of Ezra between chapters 6 and 7. The events of the book happen during the reign of Persian king Xerxes I (Ahasuerus is his Hebrew name). (MacArthur 450-331 B.C.) (Benware 475 B.C. possibly by Mordecai- cf. Esther 9:20)

Malachi (433-420 B.C.) – is the book of God’s complaint against the Jews who returned from the Babylonian exile. Malachi prophesied to the Jews during the reigns of Persian kings

Artaxerxes and Darius II (Nehemiah 13; 430-420 B.C.) (MacArthur 433-424 B.C.) (Ice 433-424 B.C.) (Benware 430 B.C.)

Nehemiah (424-400 B.C.) is the book of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Nehemiah led some Jews back to Israel where he led the rebuilding of the broken down wall around Jerusalem in spite of opposition. (MacArthur 424-400 B.C. by Ezra) (Benware 425 B.C. by Nehemiah)

New Testament

All 27 New Testament books were written over a period of fifty years during the Dispensation of Grace (A.D. 45-95).

James – is the book of a faith that works. James was probably the first New Testament book to be written. It was written by James (the half brother of Jesus) (Scofield A.D. 45-50) (Ryrie A.D. 45-50) (MacArthur A.D. 45-49) (Benware A.D. 45 – before the Jerusalem Council in Jerusalem)

Matthew – is the gospel of the King. Matthew is probably the first gospel to be written (according to the church fathers). The theme of the book is that the King is coming. (Scofield – A.D. 50) (Ryrie A.D. 50s or 60s) (MacArthur A.D. 50-60) (Benware A.D. 45-55 from Antioch in Syria before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70)

Mark – is the gospel of the Son of God (Mark 1:1) and Suffering Servant (Mark 10:45). Jesus came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. Scholars debate if Mark was the first gospel or the last of the synoptic gospels to be written. Irenaeus said the book was written after the death of Peter in Rome. (Scofield A.D. 68) (Ryrie A.D. 50s or 60s) (MacArthur (A.D. 50-60) (Benware A.D. 64-68 from Rome)

Journey Epistles of Paul

Galatians (49) – is the book of Christian freedom. Paul wrote Galatians after his first missionary journey probably from Antioch in Syria. Galatians is the first epistle that Paul wrote. (Scofield A.D. 49 or 52) (Ryrie A.D. 49 or 55) (MacArthur A.D. 49-50) (Benware A.D. 48-49 after Paul's first missionary journey from Antioch in Syria)

1 Thessalonians (51) – is the book of the Rapture of the Church. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Greece during his second missionary journey (Scofield A.D. 51) (Ryrie A.D. 51 in Corinth) (MacArthur A.D. 51) (Benware A.D. 51 from Corinth)

2 Thessalonians (51) – is the book of the coming Day of the Lord. Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians from Greece during his second missionary journey (Scofield A.D. 51) (Ryrie A.D. 51 in Corinth) (MacArthur A.D. 51-52) (Benware A.D. 51 from Corinth after 1 Thessalonians)

1 Corinthians (55) – is the book of correction for carnal Christians. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus during his third missionary journey (Scofield A.D. 57) (Ryrie A.D. 55) (MacArthur A.D. 55) (Benware A.D. 54-early A.D. 55 from Ephesus)

2 Corinthians (56) – is the book of the defense of Paul’s apostleship. Paul wrote 2 Corinthians in Macedonia during his third missionary journey (Scofield A.D. 57) (Ryrie A.D. 56) (MacArthur A.D.55-56) (Benware A.D. 55 or 56 from Macedonia)

Romans (57-58) – is the book of God’s righteousness revealed in the gospel. Paul wrote Romans from Corinth during his third missionary journey (Scofield A.D. 57-58) (Ryrie (A.D. 57-58) (MacArthur A.D. 56) (Benware – about A.D. 56 from Corinth)

Prison Epistles of Paul – written during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (A.D. 61-62)

Ephesians (61) – is the epistle of the Universal Church. Paul wrote Ephesians during his first Roman imprisonment (Scofield A.D. 60) (Ryrie A.D. 61) (MacArthur A.D. 60-62) (Benware A.D. 61 from Rome)

Colossians (61) – is the epistle that emphasizes Jesus first. Paul wrote Colossians during his first Roman imprisonment. (Scofield A.D. 60) (Ryrie (A.D. 61) (MacArthur A.D. 60-62) (Benware A.D. 61 from Rome)

Philemon (61) – is the epistle of forgiveness written by Paul during his first Roman imprisonment. Paul wrote Philemon and told him to forgive his runaway slave Onesimus and receive him as a brother in the Lord. (Scofield A.D. 60) (Ryrie A.D. 61) (MacArthur A.D. 60-62) (Benware A.D. 61 from Rome)

Philippians (62) – is the epistle of Christian joy. Paul wrote Philippians during his first Roman imprisonment. (Scofield A.D. 60) (Ryrie A.D. 61) (MacArthur A.D. 60-62) (Benware A.D. 62 from Rome – the last of Paul’s Prison Epistles written during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment)

Two NT Books Written by Luke

Luke – is the gospel of the Son of man who came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Luke probably wrote his gospel when Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea Maritima (Scofield A.D. 60) (Ryrie A.D. 60) (MacArthur A.D. 60-61) (Benware A.D. 58 from Caesarea Maritima during Paul’s two year imprisonment there or from Rome before A.D. 65 and before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70)

Acts – is the book of early church history. Luke wrote Acts which tells the history of the church focusing on the ministries of the apostles Peter (1-12) and Paul (13-28) (Scofield A.D. 60) (Ryrie A.D. 61) (MacArthur A.D. 62) (Benware A.D. 63 after Paul’s two year imprisonment in Rome and before the burning of Rome in A.D. 64 and Paul’s martyrdom in Rome in A.D. 67)

Pastoral Epistles of Paul (1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy) and Some General Epistles

1 Timothy (63-66) – is the epistle of church conduct. Paul wrote three Pastoral epistles. 1 Timothy was written by Paul to Timothy in Ephesus between his first and second Roman

imprisonments (Scofield A.D. 64) (Ryrie A.D. 63-66) (MacArthur A.D. 62-64) (Benware A.D. 62 – while Paul visited churches in Macedonia)

Titus (63-66) – is the epistle of doing good works. Paul wrote to Titus on the island of Crete during his period of release between his first and second Roman imprisonments (Scofield A.D. 65) (Ryrie A.D. 63-66) (MacArthur A.D. 62-64) (Benware A.D. 63 while Paul was at Ephesus. Some say A.D. 66)

1 Peter (A.D. 63-64) – is the epistle which explains how to suffer for Christ. (Scofield A.D. 65) (Ryrie A.D. 63-64) (MacArthur A.D. 64-65) (Benware A.D. 65 from Rome and not Babylon in modern Iraq)

2 Peter (A.D. 66) – is the epistle which challenges Christians to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. (Scofield A.D. 66) (Ryrie A.D. 66) (MacArthur A.D. 67-68) (Benware A.D. 67 from Rome before Peter's death in A.D. 67)

2 Timothy (66-67) – is a Pastoral epistle in which Paul challenges Timothy to be faithful to the finish. This is the last epistle that Paul wrote. Paul wrote 2 Timothy from Rome during his second Roman imprisonment (possibly in the Mamertine prison in Rome). (Scofield A.D. 67) (Ryrie A.D. 67) (MacArthur A.D. 66-67) (Benware A.D. 64 but some say later in A.D. 67)

Hebrews (A.D. 64-69) – is an epistle written to Jewish Christians to encourage them to persevere and run the race God has set before them. Hebrews was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (Scofield A.D. 68; Author unknown) (Ryrie A.D. 64-68; Author unknown) (MacArthur A.D. 67-69; Author unknown) (Benware A.D. 65 to believers in Rome and before A.D. 70)

Jude (A.D. 67) – is an epistle focused on apologetics. Jude (the half brother of Jesus and full brother of James) warned his readers about the false teachers. (Scofield A.D. 68) (Ryrie A.D. 70-80) (MacArthur A.D. 68-70) (Benware – shortly after 2 Peter – late 60s or early 70s)

NT Books Written by the Apostle John

John – is the gospel of the Son of God. The gospel of John is the last canonical gospel written by the apostle John probably from Ephesus. Irenaeus said it was written from Ephesus (Scofield A.D. 85-90) (Ryrie A.D. 85-90) (MacArthur A.D. 80-90) (Benware – A.D. 85-95 – after the synoptic gospels)

1 John (A.D. 90) – is the epistle of fellowship written by the apostle John from Ephesus (Scofield A.D. 90-95) (Ryrie A.D. 90) (MacArthur A.D. 90-95) (Benware – A.D. 85 from Ephesus)

2 John (A.D. 90) – is the epistle of truth and love written from Ephesus by the apostle John (Scofield A.D. 90-95) (Ryrie A.D. 90) (MacArthur A.D. 90-95) (Benware A.D. 85 or 90 from Ephesus)

3 John (A.D.90) – is the epistle of Christian hospitality written from Ephesus by the apostle John (Scofield A.D. 90-95) (Ryrie A.D. 90) (MacArthur A.D. 90-95) (Benware A.D. 90 from Ephesus)

Revelation (A.D.95) – is the book which reveals Jesus as the King of kings who will come a second time at the end of the tribulation period to establish his kingdom on this earth. The book of Revelation is the last book of the New Testament written by the apostle John from the island of Patmos during the reign of Roman emperor Domitian. Irenaeus said that John wrote the book of Revelation toward the end of the reign of Domitian. Domitian died in A.D. 96 so Revelation would have to be around A.D. 95 (Scofield A.D. 95) (Ryrie A.D. 90s) (MacArthur A.D. 94-96) (Benware A.D. 95 from Patmos)

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