

DISPENSATIONS AND REVELATIONS

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE – PART 4

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets...”

~ Hebrews 1:1

1. Introduction to Dispensations

- a. The right heart: Let God be true, and every man a liar – Rom 3:4
- b. The right book: Take the words in your Bible literally.
- c. The right questions: What is God doing? What has he instructed?
- d. The right context: God spoke at sundry times and divers manners - Hebrews 1:1-2
- e. God has given many dispensations and revelations in the Bible, what are they?
- f. Before learning what God instructs *to you*, know all his instructions.
- g. You'll find what he said, the way he said it, and when he said it varies.

2. Finding the Context

- a. Context means “together with the text”, don't rip it out of context.
- b. Proof texting is taking it out of context to prove a point. Famous ex. Matt 7:1
- c. Instead of allegorical, spiritual, proof texting we need literal, doctrinal, contexting.
- d. Get the context: compare scripture with scripture (paragraph, chapter, book, Bible)
- e. Cross references are extremely important, but they must also be dispensational
- f. Ask: What is God doing? What has he instructed? - Luke 9:3, 22:35-36

3. Notice the Timing

- a. God reveals progressively over time and to teach us the mystery of his will
- b. Past, present, and future can be different – Eph 2:1-7
- c. *“immediately”, “in those days”, “then”, “henceforth”, “But now”,* before and after
- d. Matt 24:3, 6, 15-16, 21, 29-30; Heb 2:8, Jer 33:14-15, 1 Pet 1:10-11, Col 1:25-26
- e. How long before Paul went to Jerusalem? – Acts 9:19-26, Gal 1:16-18
- f. The time of vengeance or salvation? – Isa 61:2, Luke 2:14/12:51; John 12:31/47
- g. Was Acts 2 the beginning of the church? – Acts 2:17 “last days”, also Heb 1:2, 2:4

4. Identifying Dispensations

- a. What God says can significantly change his operation with us / our response to him
- b. We can understand administration changes with our own government.
- c. Peter asks, ***is it time*** to restore the kingdom to Israel – Acts 1:6
- d. A dispensation to Paul affects the gospel and God's operation Eph 3:1-6, 1Cor 9:17
- e. Describing the condition of man from Adam to Moses - Rom 5:12-14
- f. The law entered for offence to abound, then grace abounded more - Rom 5:20-21
- g. See it again here: The promise - Gal 3:16; law added – 3:17, then faith – 3:21-25
- h. The law is a shadow of things to come (NT), the body is now – Heb 8:4-8, Col 2:17
- i. In time past circumcision, but now a new creature in Christ - Eph 2:11-15, 19
- j. Dispensational Bible study is contextual Bible study respecting God's changing instructions and manner of operating with humanity.

Miles Coverdale, Prologue to his 1535 version of the Bible

“Now will I exhort thee, whosoever thou art that readest scripture, if thou find ought therein that thou understandest not, or that appeareth to be repugnant, give no temerarious nor hasty judgment thereof; but ascribe it to thine own ignorance, not to the scriptures. Think that thou understandest it not, or that it hath some other meaning, or that it is haply overseen of the interpreters, or wrong printed.

Again it shall greatly help thee to understand scripture, if thou mark, not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and unto whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after.”