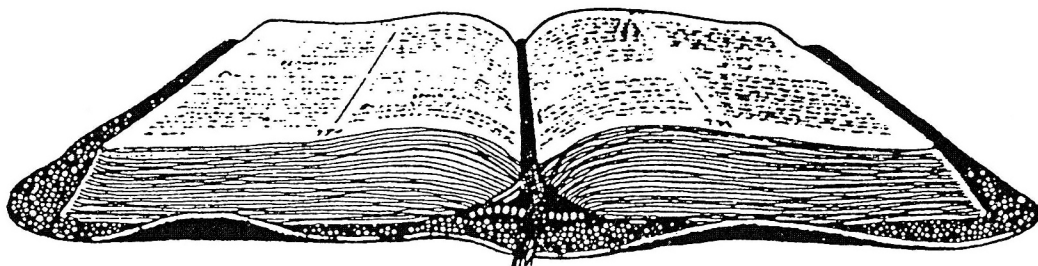


# DISPENSATIONALISM

Key

to the

Scriptures



Manfred E. Kober, Th. D.

Join us, Sept. 25 & 26, for our 2015

Montana

Regular

Baptist

Fellowship

# State Bible Conference



hosted by the:

First Baptist Church  
of Columbia Falls

with Dr. Manfred Kober

Conference Theme:

## Dispensations: Key to the Scriptures

**Friday** - - - - - **Sept. 25**

4:00 pm - Session 1 - - - - - *"Why Do They Love to Hate Dispensionalists"*

5:30 pm - Evening Meal at the Church (please sign up or call First Baptist at 406-892-3729)

7:00 pm - Session 2 - - - - - *"God's Glorious Plan for the Ages"*

8:30 pm - - - - - MRBF Business Meeting

**Saturday** - - - - - **Sept. 26**

8:30 am - - - - - Continental Breakfast at the Church

9:00 am - - - - - LBBB Camp Business Meeting

10:30 am - Session 3 - - *"The Most Misunderstood Aspects of Dispensionalism"*

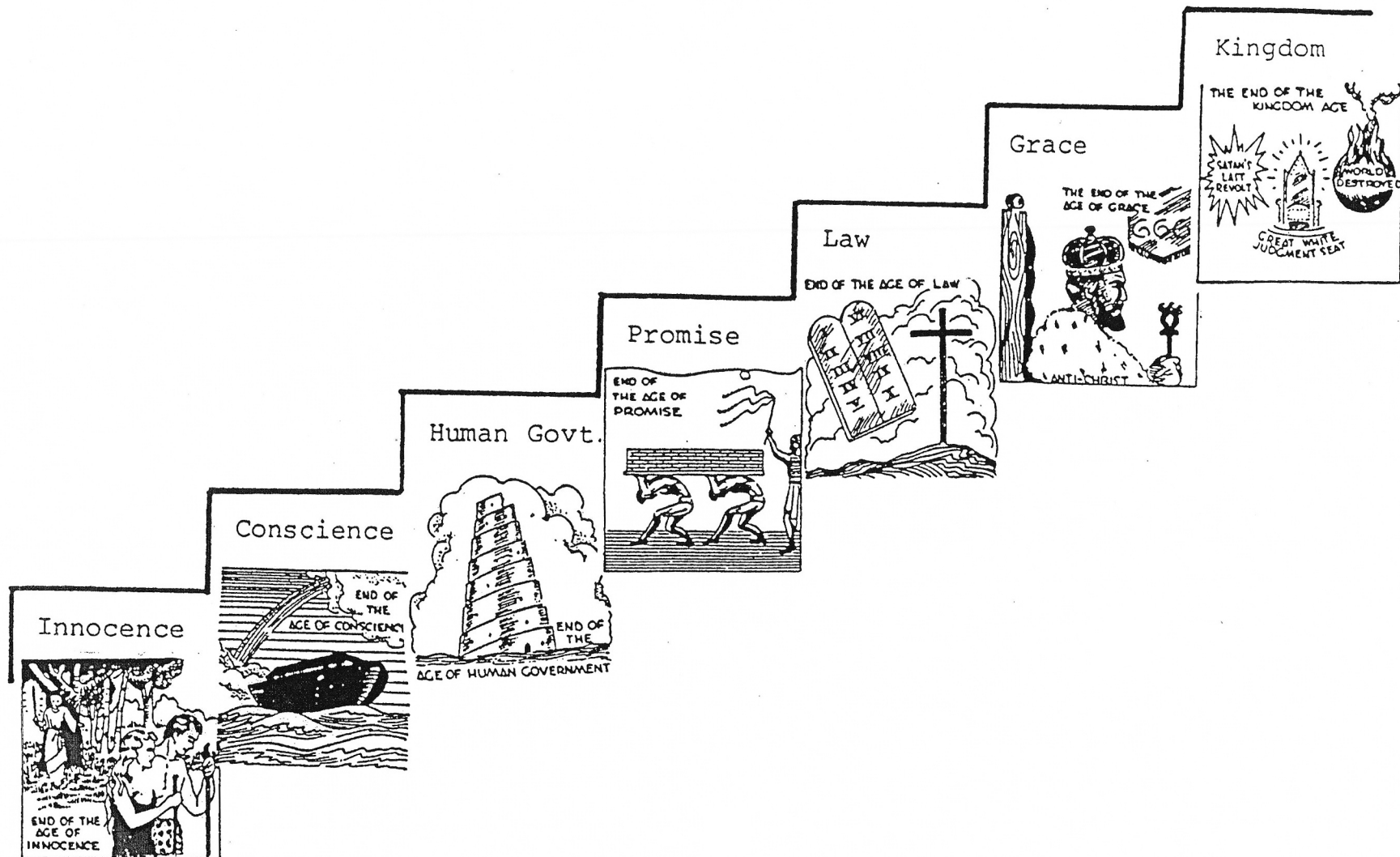
12:00 pm - - - - - Lunch break (on your own)

1:30 pm - Session 4 - - - - - *"The Dangerous Delusions of Covenant Theology"*

A nursery and children's ministry (through grade 3) will be provided for sessions 2, 3 & 4.



# THE DISPENSATIONS



# DISPENSATIONALISM: Why They Love to Hate Us

## 1A. Opposition to dispensationalism:

It would be possible to estimate the number of objections that have been launched against a system which actually has opened the eyes of lay people to the meaning of the Scriptures, especially to the prophetic Word, more than a dispensational understanding of the Bible. Below are listed a few of the major objections.

### 1b. Dispensationalism is recent:

Since the study of dispensationalism was popularized only within the last 100 years, it cannot possibly be true. In fact, Covenant Theology is more recent than dispensationalism because it is a Post-Reformation development and in its present form emerged later than a dispensational understanding of the Scriptures.

If dispensationalism can be attacked simply because it is new, then Covenant Theology is equally flawed. As Ryrie points out:



After all, nearly every antidispenational writer attempts to make something of the relative recency of systematized dispensationalism. Those who are of the Reformed tradition always attempt to imply that dispensationalism is a mere infant compared to the ancient and wise man of covenant theology. . . If lack of antiquity is detrimental and refinement is disallowed for dispensationalism, then by the same two criteria covenant theology is discredited. And if these matters are basically nonessential for covenant theology, then they are likewise irrelevant in the critique of dispensationalism.

*(Dispensationalism Today [1965], 179, 183)*

### 2b. Dispensationalism is heretical:

Many times dispensationalism is discussed in books on cults and isms and is couched between sects such as Seventh Day Adventism and Mormonism. Daniel B. Fuller, the son of Charles E. Fuller, reached the conclusion that dispensationalism is “internally inconsistent and unable to harmonize itself with the Biblical data. . .” (*The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism*, unpublished Doctor’s dissertation, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, 1957, 386.)

3b. Dispensationalism is man-made:

Men like John Nelson Darby, the “pope of the Plymouth Brethren” movement is said to have invented dispensationalism. Since the system is a human innovation, it must be wrong. It is easy to discern the falsehood of such an observation because if something is scriptural, no matter when believers discovered it in the written Word, it is true whether the position was held by the early church or not until after the Reformation.

4b. Dispensationalism is dangerous:

Dispensationalism sees the future establishment of a literal kingdom, a suggestion that is branded as a devilish doctrine. One California group is very outspoken in its hatred for those who subscribe to the dispensation of the kingdom:

Those human devils who are teaching that Christ will set up an earthly utopia or Communistic heaven on earth are promoting Communism under the masquerade of the Christian faith. When they are confronted with this issue they only maintain a surly silence and keep right on with their subversion and subterfuge. They desecrate the faith and the American flag with their premillennial Communism. They who hold the faith in unrighteousness are gravediggers (*Christians Awake*, Summer 1972, 2).

According to the folks in California who sent me the above letter, trying to dissuade me from teaching premillennialism, suggest that we are human devils. In a conservative Lutheran publication, *Christian News*, pastor Vernon Harley wrote a column on the millennium and the danger which a belief in Christ’s reign on earth poses:

Among many fantasies with which some Christians delude themselves and even endanger their salvation is the idea of a millennium, that is, a literal 1000 years in which Christ is to reign here on earth. There are many ways in which this idea varies, some thinking of the millennium as occurring before the Second Coming of Christ; others have it after the Second Advent. Some think of this as being a period of general peace and good will here on earth preceding the Day of Judgment; others seem to expect a visible appearance of Christ here on earth at which time He is to bring about a general conversion of the Jews and rule with His church over the nations. As a result, the eyes of many are directed toward Israeli in our time, now that the Israelites again have returned to Palestine as rulers of the promised land.

Our Lutheran Confessions reject every type of Millennialism, or Chiliasm, as it is also called. So does our **Brief Statement**, and primarily because such ideas, contrary to Scripture, direct men’s faith and hopes to a future glory here on earth, and often even to a second chance for repentance and

salvation, rather than to point them to the return of Christ for Judgment and the end of the world (June 14, 1971 -- see the entire column at the end of this outline).

5b. Dispensationalists are antinomian:



R. C. Sproul, the president of Ligonier Ministries, seems to be the spokesman for Covenant Theology. In the forward of a book by John Gerstner (*Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, 1991), he writes the following, "The dispensational system of theology is inherently and inescapably antinomian. . .Dispensationalism should be discarded as being a serious deviation from Biblical Christianity."

In a taped sermon delivered by R. C. Sproul at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Orlando, Florida, in June 1994 entitled "Only One Gospel," he likewise accuses dispensationalists of antinomianism: "I believe that [Charles] Ryrie teaches unvarnished antinomianism and another gospel, and is under the anathema of God."

It would be difficult to think of a single theologian in the dispensational camp who is that harsh in his critique of Covenant Theology. Can anybody cite a statement from Lewis Sperry Chafer, John F. Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, Charles Ryrie, Alva J. McClain or John Whitcomb that labels Covenant Theology as a heretical system under the curse of God, endangering men's salvation?

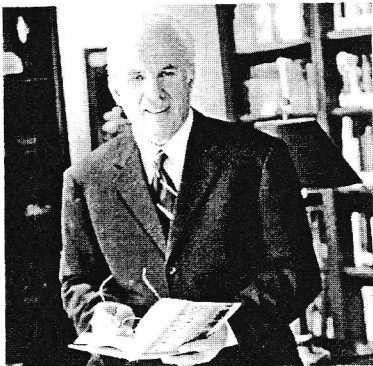
6b. Dispensationalism is erroneous:

1c. Dispensationalism is accused of teaching two ways of salvation. The Old Testament saints are said to be saved by offering sacrifices; New Testament saints are saved by trusting in Christ. In fact Dr. Charles C. Ryrie in his classic book *Dispensationalism* refutes this false charge, though it is constantly repeated.

2c. Dispensationalism is accused of totally disregarding the Sermon on the Mount, relegating it to the Kingdom Age. John MacArthur thinks that "traditionally, dispensationalism says, 'The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) has nothing to do with us, so we don't need to worry about it'"(teaching tape GC 70-16, "Bible Questions and Answers").

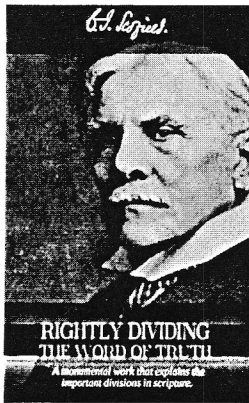
Has he not read the section in Ryrie's book on "Dispensationalism and the Sermon on the Mount"? or J. Dwight Pentecost? or John F. Walvoord's treatment of it in their studies in Matthew?

What is especially disconcerting to dispensationalists is that John MacArthur claims to be a dispensationalist, saying "dispensationalism is a fundamentally correct system of understanding God's program through the





ages.” And yet he has some very critical things to say about dispensationalism:



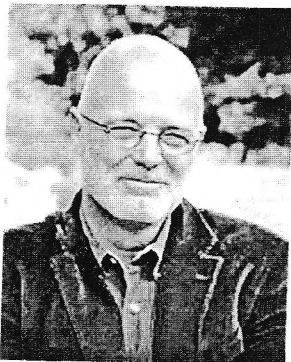
There is a tendency, however, for dispensationalists to get carried away with compartmentalizing truth to the point that they can make unbiblical distinctions. An almost obsessive desire to categorize everything neatly has led various dispensationalist interpreters to draw hard lines not only between the church and Israel, but also between salvation and discipleship, the church and the kingdom, Christ's preaching and the apostolic messages, faith and repentance and the age of law and grace (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, 25).

Has MacArthur not read C. I. Scofield's *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*?

7b. Dispensationalism is deadly:

In an April 2009 article in *Sojourner's* magazine by emerging church leader, Brian McLaren, McLaren targets fundamentalists in a most vicious manner. The title of his article is, "Four Points Toward Peace in the Middle East." Below are listed the first two points. And it should be noticed that there might be peace in the Middle East if it were not for the dispensationalists:

1. The equal rights of both Jewish and Palestinian people to security, equity, and prosperity, and the equal responsibilities of both groups to seek, not just good for "their own," but the common good of all.
2. The need to confront the terrible, deadly, distorted, yet popular theologies associated with Christian Zionism and deterministic dispensationalism. These systems of belief—so common among my fellow evangelical Christians—too often lead people to act as if Jewish people have God-given rights but Palestinians do not. They use a discredited hermeneutic (way of interpreting the Bible) to imply that God shows favoritism—that God is concerned for justice for one group of people and not for others. They create bigotry and prejudice against Muslims in general ... and in particular against Palestinians, many of whom are Muslim but many of whom are Christian too. These doctrinal formulations often use a bogus end-of-the-world scenario to create a kind of death-wish for World War III, which—unless it is confronted more robustly by the rest of us—could too easily create a self-fulfilling prophecy.



If you hold to a deterministic-dispensationalist or Zionist theology, I sincerely hope you will rethink your view. I grew up with these views as well, and have become thoroughly convinced that they are not only

biblically unfaithful but also, in too many cases, morally and ethically harmful. I know that rethinking these things can make your life more difficult—friends, church members, and even family members may reject you, for example. But think back to the 1950s and 1960s: Wasn't it necessary for many Christians to have the courage to differ when racism was acceptable and even justified in most American churches? Wouldn't you want to have the same moral courage today you would have wanted to have back then? -- (Note part of the original article appended to this outline).

## **2A. THE ORIGIN OF DISPENSATIONALISM:**

- 1b. Pierre Poiret (1647-1719)  
The roots of dispensationalism can be found in *The Divine Economy*, a 6-volume work originally written in 1687 and then published again in 1713.
- 2b. Isaac Watts (167-1748), Famed son writer and theologian, subscribed to seven dispensations very similar to those held by C. I. Scofield.
- 3b. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), who did much to recover the New Testament truth of the church and God's program for the church and Israel.
- 4b. C. I. Scofield and the *Scofield Bible*.

It is very interesting to note a number of the main opponents of dispensationalism give testimony to the fact that they came to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ through a dispensationalist. John Gerstner pays tribute to the spiritual help given to him by dispensationalists and so does Brian McLaren.



# *Christian News*



June 14, 1971

## **The Millennium**

**By Vernon Harley**



Among the many fantasies with which some Christians delude themselves and even endanger their salvation is the idea of a millennium, that is, a literal 1000 years in which Christ is to reign here on earth. There are many ways in which this idea varies, some thinking of the millennium as occurring before the Second Coming of Christ; others have it after the Second Advent. Some think of this as being a period of general peace and good will here on earth preceding the Day of Judgment; others seem to expect a visible appearance of Christ here on earth at which time He is to bring about a general conversion of the Jews and rule with His church over the nations. As a result, the eyes of many are directed toward Israel in our time, now that the Israelites again have returned to Palestine as rulers of the promised land.

Our Lutheran Confessions reject every type of Millenialism, or Chillasm, as it is also called. So does our **Brief Statement**, and primarily because such ideas, contrary to Scripture, direct men's faith and hopes to a future glory here on earth, and often even to a second chance for repentance and salvation, rather than to point them to the return of Christ for Judgment and the end of the world.

# Four Points Toward Peace in the Middle East

by [Brian McLaren](#) [1] 04-16-2009 | 2:30pm



photo by Ryan Rodrick Beiler

[6]I've written [a lot on Palestine and Gaza](#) [7] in recent years. Any of us who travel (or read) know that peace in the world can't be separated from peace in Israel -- peace for Jews, and peace for Muslim and Christian Palestinians. There is probably no single issue more important to helping Muslims and Christians and Jews live in peace world-wide than resolving the crisis of peace in Israel.

In the coming months, I hope that more and more of us -- especially those of us from evangelical backgrounds -- will start speaking out on this subject, addressing four key issues with courage, passion, and persistence:

1. The equal rights of both Jewish and Palestinian people to security, equity, and prosperity, and the equal responsibilities of both groups to seek, not just good for "their own," but the common good of all.
2. The need to confront the terrible, deadly, distorted, yet popular theologies associated with Christian Zionism and deterministic dispensationalism. These systems of belief -- so common among my fellow evangelical Christians -- too often lead people to act as if Jewish people have God-given rights but Palestinians do not. They use a discredited hermeneutic (way of interpreting the Bible) to imply that God shows favoritism -- that God is concerned for justice for one group of people and not for others. They create bigotry and prejudice against Muslims in general ... and in particular against Palestinians, many of whom are Muslim but many of whom are Christian too. These doctrinal formulations often use a bogus end-of-the-world scenario to create a kind of death-wish for World War III, which -- unless it is confronted more robustly by the rest of us -- could too easily create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you hold to a deterministic-dispensationalist or Zionist theology, I sincerely hope you will rethink your view. I grew up with these views as well, and have become thoroughly convinced that they are not only biblically unfaithful but also, in too many cases, morally and ethically harmful. I know that rethinking these things can make your life more difficult -- friends, church members, and even family members may reject you, for example. But think back to the 1950s and 1960s: Wasn't it necessary for many Christians to have the courage to differ when racism was acceptable and even justified in most American churches? Wouldn't you want to have the same moral courage today you would have wanted to have back then?

If you are unwilling to reconsider your commitment to deterministic-dispensationalist or Zionist theology, I hope you will at least try to avoid extremist tendencies by your colleagues who share these beliefs, so you can be faithful to the scriptures that tell us [God is not a respecter of persons](#) [8], that God shows no partiality (try James 2, for example), that God cares about "the least of these," and that love never rejoices in evil. If you are open and willing to rethink your views, here are three books I'd encourage you to read:



# Israel and Dispensationalism

By Greg Loren Durand  
(1995)

Many Christians believe that there are three separate bodies in the world today: the Church, Israel, and the Gentiles. The Bible, however, is clear that God has had only one people throughout redemptive history which He has adopted as His Church (as they are called in the New Testament), or as the people of God (as they are called in the Old Testament). The modern distinction that is made between the Christian Church and Israel is, by and large, the product of the Dispensational system which originated in the last century with J.N. Darby and C.I. Scofield. It is perpetuated today in the writings of Hal Lindsey, Dave Hunt, and in such evangelical movements as the Calvary Chapels. Dispensationalists center their interpretation of biblical prophecy around modern Israel and look forward to a time in the near future when the Church will be "raptured" out of the world and God will resume His historical dealings with the physical descendants of Abraham. Supposedly, with the advent of a world leader known as "Antichrist," the Jews will recognize Jesus as their Messiah and will repent of their rebellion and return to the worship of Yahweh. This, however, will not constitute their salvation in the Christian sense of the word, for the Jewish temple will then be rebuilt and the sacrificial system will be reinstated. At the end of a seven-year period commonly referred to as the "Great Tribulation," Jesus will return once again to earth and set up an earthly throne in Jerusalem. This is referred to as the "millennial reign" of Christ, for it is said to last one thousand years.

Many would be shocked to hear that such an elaborate eschatological system has no basis whatsoever in the Scriptures (properly interpreted), and instead rests upon very questionable, and at times even heretical, presuppositions regarding redemptive history. First of all, there is not one verse that can be cited from the Bible that teaches that Jesus will sit upon an earthly throne in Jerusalem. Also, the teaching that this reign will be limited to one thousand years is drawn from a strained interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10 (the only biblical passage that even mentions a millennium). However, the gravest error of the Dispensational system is its underlying premise that God deals with Christians and the nation of Israel in completely different ways, and that Jews may be reconciled to God apart from the Gospel of Christ. Paul specifically addressed this alleged distinction when he wrote that "*both Jews and Greeks [Gentiles]... are all under sin*" (Romans 3:9). He went on to say:

*"Therefore by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the Law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:20-24).*

Furthermore, in Romans 8:5, Paul separated mankind into two classes of people-- those "*who live according to the flesh*" (the unregenerate) and those who "*live according to the Spirit*" (the regenerate). Members of the former group are said to be "*enmity against God*" (verse 7), and therefore "*cannot please God*" (verse 8). The latter are those whom God had chosen to save "*before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4), and are pleasing to God solely on the basis of the fact that they have been reckoned by Him as being "*in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3). This same concept is seen in slightly different terms in Paul's distinction between those "*in Adam*" and those "*in Christ*" found in Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:22.

In Galatians 3:26-29 and Romans 9:6-8, Paul denied that physical descent from Abraham and physical circumcision would save anyone, and stated that the true descendants of Abraham were those who "*are Christ's*" via spiritual regeneration. Consequently, we must reject the concept promoted by Dispensationalism that there are two separate people of God-- the Christian Church and the nation of Israel. The covenantal privilege that national Israel enjoyed as the chosen people of God was ended when the Jewish leaders "*fill[ed] up... the measure of [their] fathers' guilt*" (Matthew 23:32) by rejecting and crucifying their own Messiah. Jesus was very explicit in stating that the "house" of Israel was left "desolate" (Matthew 23:37-39), and that the Kingdom would be taken from the Jews as a people and given to another people (Matthew 8:10-12, 21:33-45, etc.).

The Reformed view is that God "divorced" national Israel and "married" spiritual Israel, which is the Church made up of people "*from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*" (Revelation 5:9). Henceforth, the Church, not the nation of Israel, is referred to as the "*Israel of God*" (Galatians 6:16), the "*house of God*" (Hebrews 10:21), "*a holy temple*" (Ephesians 2:21), the "*new Jerusalem*" (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2), and "*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [and] His own special people*" (I Peter 2:9).

# GOD'S GLORIOUS PLAN FOR THE AGES

## 1A. THE DEFINITION OF DISPENSATIONALISM

### 1b. The definition of "dispensation":

It would be difficult to improve on Ryrie's definition, "A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose" (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 29).

### 2b. The etymology of the word:

#### 1c. *Dispensatio*, the Latin term

"To weigh or dispense"

#### 2c. *Oikonomia*, the Greek term

*Oikos* = house; *Nomos* = law

The Greek term, *oikonomia*, thus means "the managing of a household"

### 3b. The usage of Scripture:

#### 1c. The general usage:

#### 1d. The usage of the word dispensation:

The various forms of the word *dispensation* are used in the New Testament twenty times. The verb *oikonomēo* is used once in Luke 16:2 where it is translated "to be a steward." The noun *oikonomos* is used ten times (Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; Gal. 4:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10), and in all instances it is translated "steward" except "chamberlain" in Romans 16:23. The noun *oikonomia* is used nine times (Luke 16:2, 3, 4). In these instances it is translated variously ("stewardship," "dispensation," "edifying"). The Authorized Version of Ephesians 3:9 has "fellowship" (*koinonia*) whereas the American Standard Version has "dispensation" (Ryrie, 25).

#### 2d. The Lucan passage Luke 16:1ff

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a **steward**; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

<sup>2</sup> And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy **stewardship**; for thou mayest be no longer **steward**.

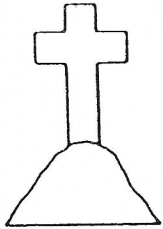
<sup>3</sup> Then the **steward** said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the **stewardship**: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

3d. The inference from the usage:

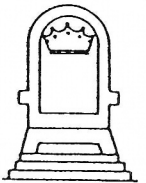
- 1e. A stewardship involves two parties.
- 2e. A stewardship involves an obligation of one party to the other.
- 3e. A stewardship involves accountability.

2c. The specific usage of the word dispensation:

Interestingly, the Bible uses the term dispensation exactly as we would use it in reference to three distinct dispensations.



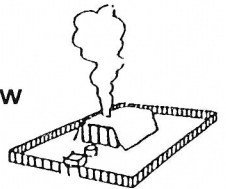
1d. Ephesians 1:10—**“Dispensation of the fullness of time”**  
That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:



2d. Ephesians 3:2—**“Dispensation of the grace of God”**  
If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3d. Colossians 1:25-26—“I am . . . a minister, according to the dispensation of God”  
Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;  
<sup>26</sup> Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Paul implies a prior dispensation, i.e., **the dispensation of law**



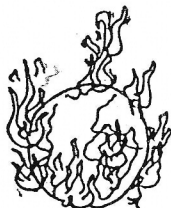
## 2A. THE DISTINCTIVES OF A DISPENSATION:

1b. The characteristics of a dispensation:

1c. Primary characteristics:

- 1d. God’s change in governmental relationship:  
God initiates a new stewardship on earth.
- 2d. A new responsibility for man:  
Man receives new obligations as a steward.
- 3d. God’s revelation to that end:  
Before God can expect man to function under his new responsibility, added revelation is necessary.

## 2c. Secondary characteristics:



- 1d. Divine test:  
Each dispensation is a test to see whether man under whatever circumstances can please God.
- 2d. Human failure:  
Invariably man falls short of God's expectations.
- 3d. Eventual judgment:  
Each dispensation concludes with a divine judgment.
- 4d. Divine Grace:  
God's justice is tempered by His love and despite miserable human failure and inevitable judgment, God manifests His grace.

2b. The *sine qua non* of a dispensationalist:

## 1c. Negatively: A dispensationalist is not one who

- 1d. Uses the word "dispensation."
- 2d. Subscribes to a certain number of dispensations.
- 3d. Believes in a premillennial return of Christ.

## 2c. Positively: A dispensationalist is one who

- 1d. Consistently distinguishes Israel and the Church.

A dispensationalist sees two eternal purposes of God, expressed in His dealings with Israel and the Church. Israel is always Israel; the Church is the Church, not spiritual Israel.

- 2d. Uses literal hermeneutics:

Dispensationalism practices consistent literal interpretation of the Bible.

- 3d. Sees the underlying purpose of God as His glory.

God's overall purpose in the universe is to manifest His glory through salvation and other means. (This is Ryrie's *sine qua non*, opposed by the "progressive dispensationalists.")

## 3b. The number of dispensations:

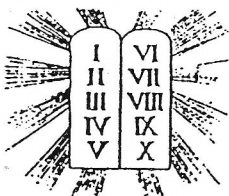
## 1c. The importance of the number:

The number and names of dispensations are of relatively minor importance. It is possible to have between 3 to 8 dispensations. Covenant theologians only see the Old and the New dispensation.



## 2c. The inference from Scripture:

## 1d. The New Testament refers to three dispensations:



1e. The millennium: Eph. 1:10

2e. Grace: Eph. 3:2

3e. Law: Col. 1:25-26



These three dispensations, Law, Grace and Kingdom are the subject of extensive Scripture.

## 2d. The Old Testament implies five dispensations:

1e. A dispensation before the fall: Man's life under innocence.

2e. A dispensation after the fall: Man's life under conscience, offering sacrifices.

3e. A dispensation after the Flood:

In Gen. 9:10-17, four new features for man's stewardship

1f. The fear of man upon animals, v. 2.

2f. The eating of meat, v. 3.

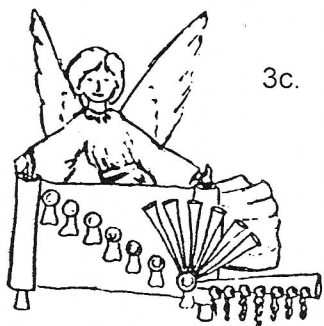
3f. Capital punishment, v. 6

4f. A promise of never causing another flood, vv. 8-17.

4e. A dispensation beginning with Abraham, involving a covenant of promise.

5e. A dispensation commencing at Mt. Sinai with the giving of the Mosaic Law.

## 3c. The inconclusiveness of some periods:



## 1d. Should the tribulation be a separate dispensation?

The tribulation is probably not a separate dispensation, but the climactic judgment concluding grace. The 70 weeks of Daniel began about 1,000 years after the law was given and are completed during the tribulation, but are not necessarily the same as the dispensation of the Law.

## 2d. Should the eternal state be a separate dispensation?

It seems that when temporal history ends, so do God's stewardship arrangements with men.

### 3A. THE BENEFITS OF DISPENSATIONALISM:

- 1b. It answers the need for biblical distinction:

Everyone faces problems in practicing some kind of consistent interpretation. Every expositor needs to account for the differences between the Old Testament economy and this dispensation in areas such as:

1. The inheritance of the land.
2. The keeping of the Passover and Sabbath.
3. Animal sacrifices.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said that one is a dispensationalist, whether he realizes it or not, if one does not claim or practice the above.

- 2b. It answers the need for a philosophy of history:

- 1c. Dispensationalism recognizes progressive revelation.
- 2c. Dispensationalism provides a unifying factor to history. Whatever God does is for His glory, that is, it serves a doxological purpose.
- 3c. Dispensationalism provides for a goal of human history, the millennium.

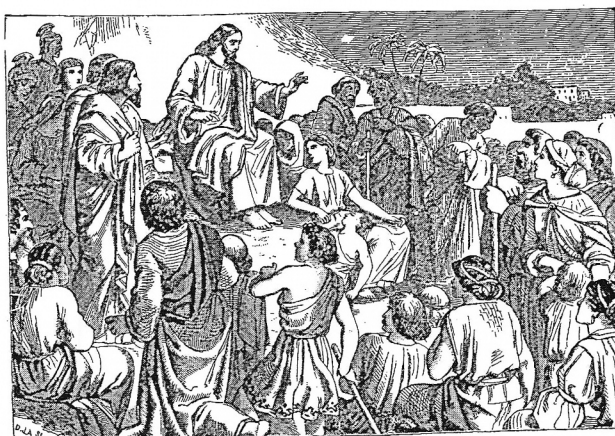
- 3b. It provides a consistent procedure in hermeneutics:

- 1c. The two Great Commissions: Matthew 10; Matthew 28

In Matthew 10, Christ demands the disciples not to preach to the Gentiles or Samaritans. In Matthew 28, He commands the same disciples to go and disciple all nations. Only a dispensational distinction will help solved the apparent discrepancy.

- 2c. The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5-7

Certain commandments in this passage cannot possibly be practiced literally in the Church Age, such as turning the other cheek and giving to anyone who asks of us. Seeing that part of the Sermon on the Mount applies to the Kingdom Age relieves apparent hermeneutical tensions.



#### 4A. THE DETAILING OF THE DISPENSATIONS:

1b. The listing of the dispensations:

- |     |                                 |                                     |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1c. | <b><i>Innocence:</i></b>        | Creation to Fall                    |
| 2c. | <b><i>Conscience:</i></b>       | Fall to Flood                       |
| 3c. | <b><i>Human Government:</i></b> | Flood to the call of Abraham        |
| 4c. | <b><i>Promise:</i></b>          | Call of Abraham to Mount Sinai      |
| 5c. | <b><i>Law:</i></b>              | Mount Sinai to the Cross            |
| 6c. | <b><i>Grace:</i></b>            | Pentecost to Rapture                |
| 7c. | <b><i>Kingdom:</i></b>          | Second Advent to Great White Throne |

2b. The features of each dispensation:

- 1c. The beginning:
- 2c. Related Scriptures:
- 3c. The state of man:
- 4c. Human responsibility:
- 5c. Human failure:
- 6c. Divine judgment:
- 7c. Divine grace:
- 8c. Divine covenant:

3b. Concluding general observations:

- 1c. Innocence has devoted only 37 verses to it.
- 2c. Law and grace have the most Scripture relating to them.
- 3c. It is best to see seven dispensations.
- 4c. Our GARBC fellowship is the largest dispensational group in the USA.

**XVIII. Israel**

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37.

(General Association of Regular Baptist Churches 1988 Church Directory, p. 16, pages 13-16 "Articles of Faith")

**XIX. Rapture and Subsequent Events**

We believe in the premillennial return of Christ, an event which can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20, 21; Rev. 3:10.

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom. Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29, 30; Rev. 20:1-4, 6.

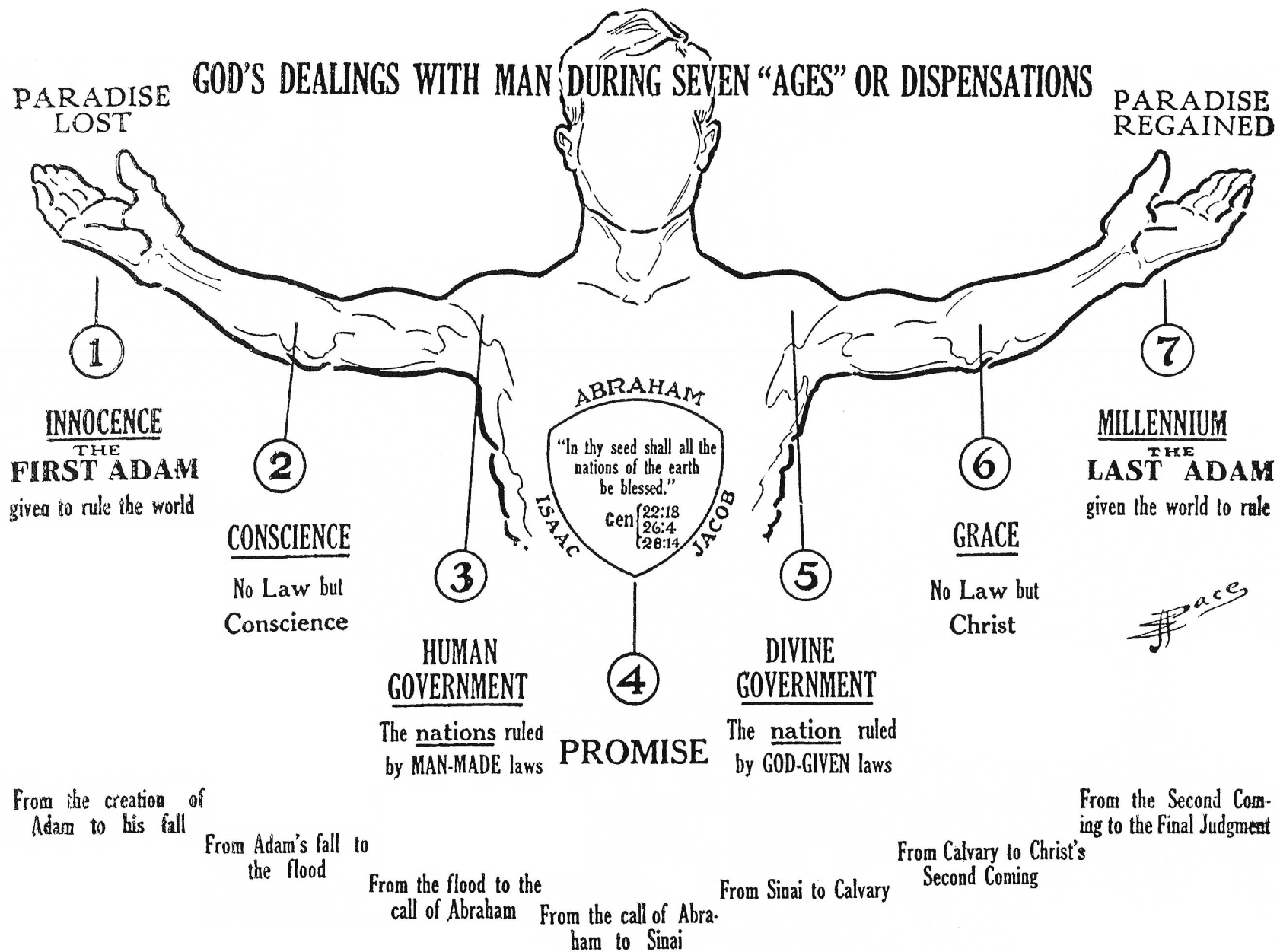
This writer recalls Dr. John F. Walvoord repeatedly observing in his classes that when he went held meetings in churches and his ministry was in a Regular Baptist church, he could always be sure he was among dispensational friends. He observed that the GARBC is the only fellowship of churches where the churches are consistently dispensational.

**FBBC's statement of faith:****Dispensations**

We believe that the dispensations are not ways of salvation, which has always been by grace through faith, but are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on earth through humanity under varying responsibilities; that changes in dispensational dealings depend upon changed situations in which humanity is found in relation to God due to human failures and God's judgments; that, though several dispensations cover the entirety of human history, only three of these are the subject of extended revelation in Scripture; that these three (Mosaic Law, Grace, and millennial Kingdom) are distinct and are not to be intermingled or confused.

<http://www.faith.edu/about-faith/position-statements/doctrinal-statement> 2015

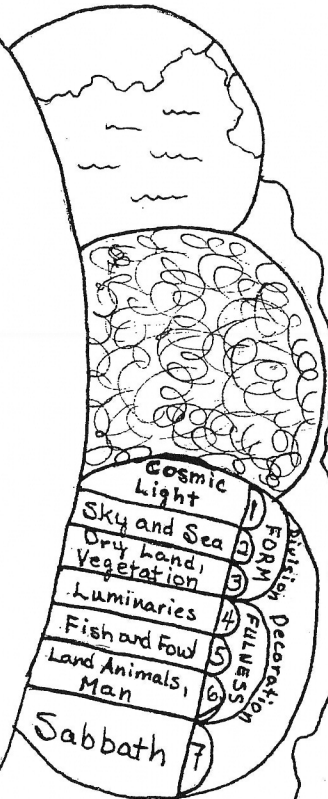




GOD'S  
PLAN  
OF THE  
AGES  
OR  
THE DISTINGUISHABLE  
ECONOMIES  
IN THE  
OUTWORKING  
OF GOD'S  
PURPOSE

1. THE ETERNAL GOD  
Deut. 33:27
2. THE ETERNAL SON  
John 1:1-2
3. THE ETERNAL SPIRIT  
Heb. 13:14
4. THE ETERNAL PURPOSE  
Eph. 4:11

**ETERNITY**



THE ORIGINAL EARTH  
John 1:3  
Col. 1:16-17  
Heb. 11:3  
DATELESS

THE CHAOTIC EARTH  
Is. 14:9-14  
Is. 45:18  
Eze. 28:12-15

THE RESTORED EARTH  
Gen. 1:1-2:25

THE PRESENT EARTH

Judgment.....

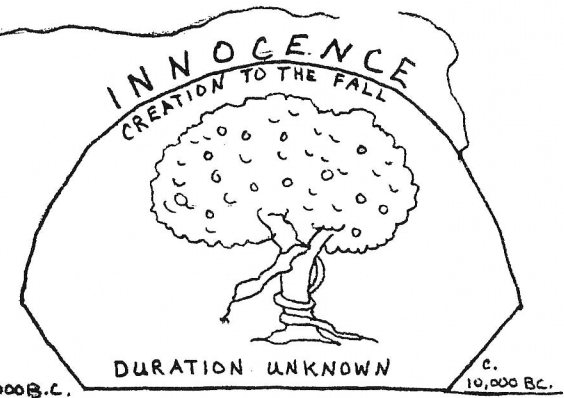
Scripture.....

Persons.....

Responsibility....

Failure.....

Grace.....



EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN

GEN. 1:26-3:6

Adam and Eve

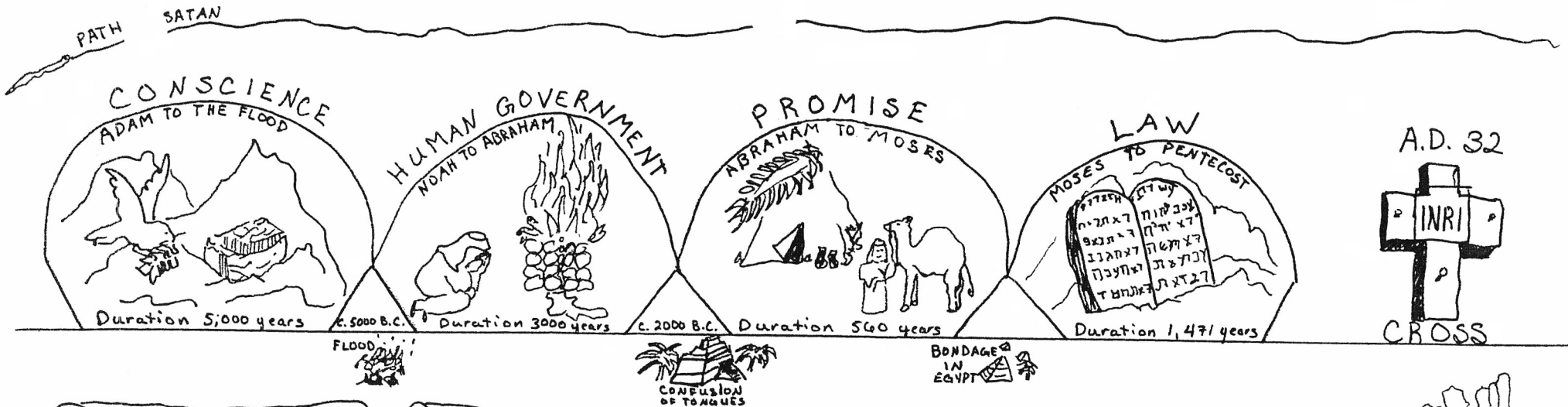
Populate and subdue the earth  
Dress and keep the Garden  
Desist from eating of the Tree  
of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

They doubted God's word,  
goodness, judgment, and motive,  
and ate of the forbidden tree.

Promised Redeemer, Coats  
of skin, Long life, Supply of  
needs, Separation from Tree of Life.

EDENIC COVENANT  
GEN. 1:28-30; 2:15-17





GEN. 3:7-8:19

Adam, Eve, Seth, Noah, and Enoch

Life under a curse.  
Conscience as a rule of life.  
Blood Sacrifices

Failure to live up to conscience.  
Universal wickedness

Salvation of some  
Preservation of Noah  
Long suffering before judgment

**ADAMIC COVENANT**  
GEN. 3:14-19

GEN. 8:20-11:9

Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth

Renewed command to multiply and have dominion.  
Essence of government established involving organization and legislation.

Noah's drunkenness, Ham's irreverence  
Failure of human government to curb sin.

The seed of the woman  
Preservation of a godly remnant

**NOAHIC COVENANT**  
Gen. 8:20-9:17

GEN. 11:10-EX.19:9

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph

Faith in the material, spiritual, and social promises of God

Abraham's delay, doubt, and descent into Egypt. Isaac's doubt. Jacob's deceit. Israel's murmurings.

A deliverer was promised.  
Victory over enemies was given.  
Unconditional promises renewed.

**ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**  
Gen. 12:1-3

EX.19:9 - JOHN 21:25

Moses, Joshua, Judges, Kings, and Prophets

Israel is to obey a detailed system of works comprised of 613 commandments.

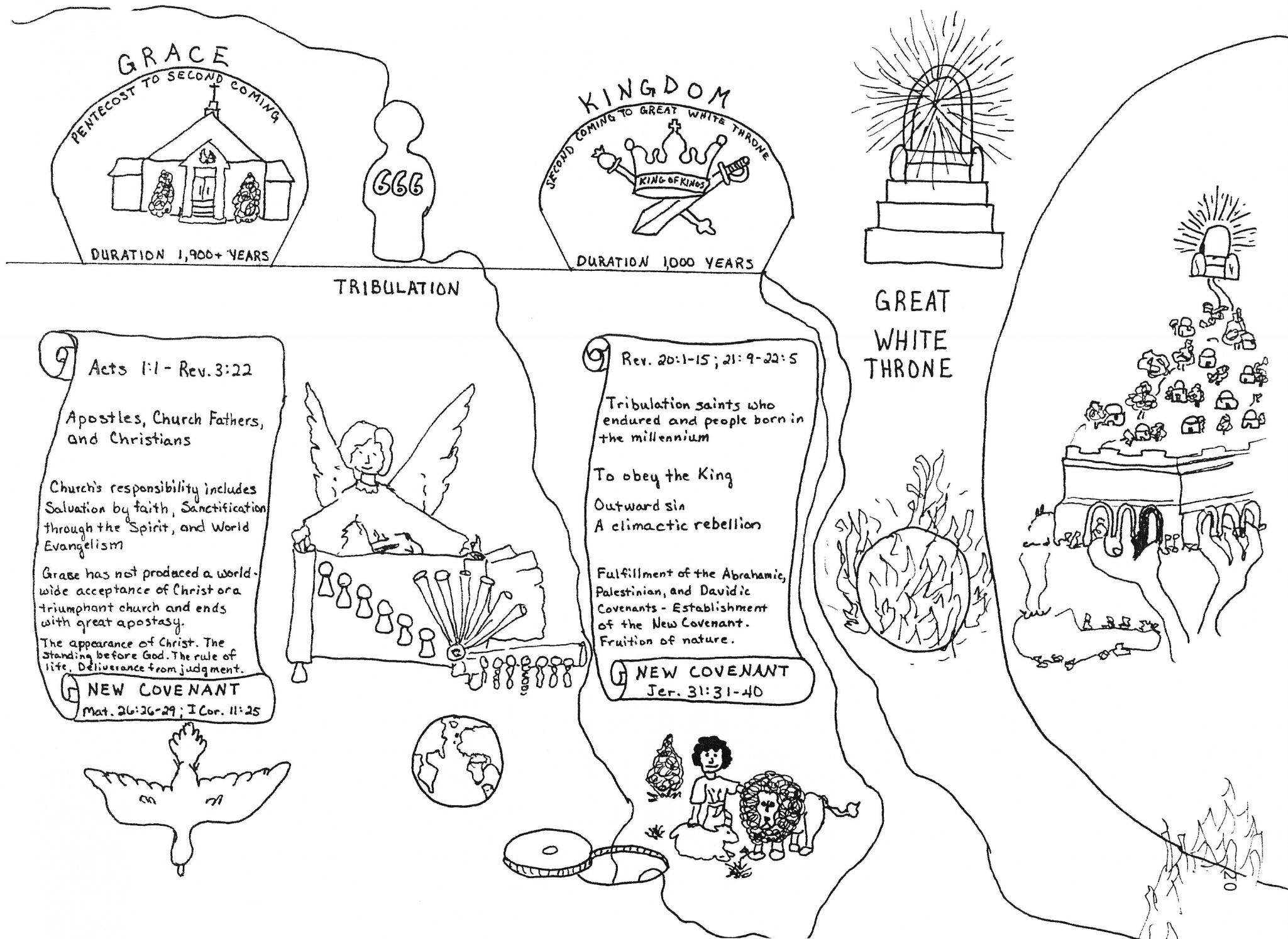
The entire Old Testament is a record of failure, culminating in the crucifixion.

Sacrifices provided a way of restoration. God raised up deliverers. The nation is preserved. Millennium promised.

**MOSAIC COVENANT**  
EX.19:5-31:18

JERUSALEM DESTROYED  
A.D. 70







## THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD ASPECT OF DISPENSATIONALISM:

### THE CESSATION OF THE MOSAIC LAW AND THE CONTENT OF THE LAW OF CHRIST

#### 1A. THE DISPENSATION OF LAW: ITS CESSATION

1b. The dispensation ended at the cross:

1c. Rom. 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

2c. Gal. 3:19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

3c. Gal. 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

4c. 2 Cor. 3:11-14 Or if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

<sup>12</sup> Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

<sup>13</sup> And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

<sup>14</sup> But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

5c. Heb. 7:11-12 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

<sup>12</sup> For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

2b. Five propositions of the Mosaic Law:

1c. It was given as a union and not divided as commandments, ordinances, judgments.

1d. All parts are equally important: Ex. 20; 21; 25

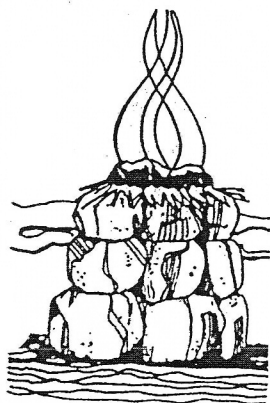
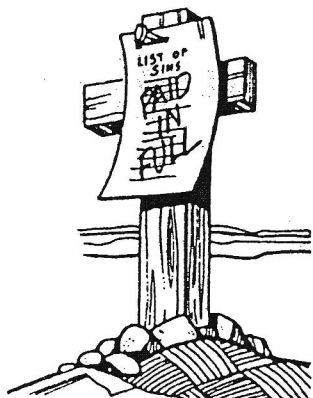
2d. Breaking the law in one point means the breaking of all: James 2:10

3d. Penalties are equally severe:

1e. Commandments: breaking the Sabbath: **death**: Nu. 15:32

2e. Ordinances: Nadab and Abihu offering strange fires: **death**: Lev. 10:1-7

3e. Judgments: Ex. 21-24: **death**: Jer. 25:11



The land rest was not kept for 490 years, therefore, God gave the land rest during the Babylonian captivity with ensuing death for many.

2c. It was given to Israel, not to Gentiles.

1d. O.T. proof: Lev. 26:43 between God and the children of Israel.

2d. N.T. proof: Rom. 2:14 Gentiles which have not the Law.  
Rom. 9:4 to Israel is the giving of the Law.  
Eph. 2:12 the Gentiles are strangers to the Law.

3c. All of the Law is done away: All 613 commandments.

There are 365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments.

1d. The Ten Commandments are especially mentioned: 2 Cor. 3:6, 7-11.

2d. A different priesthood necessitates a different law: Heb. 7:11-12.

4c. In spite of this, the Law has a right use: to show a standard from God, to demonstrate His righteous demands.

1d. The Law is useful for the unsaved: 1 Tim. 1:9  
The Law was made for the unrighteous; it was to point the ungodly to Christ, Gal. 3:19-25.

2d. The Law is useful for the saved: to show what God thinks about things. As all Scripture is profitable, so is the Law.

5c. The Law has a real abuse:

1d. When it is used as a means of salvation:

1e. Rom. 3:20 by deeds of law no flesh will be justified.

2e. Acts 13:39 man could not be justified by the Law of Moses.

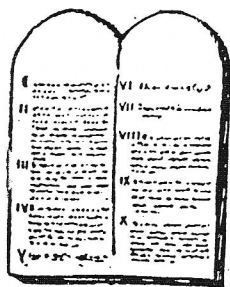
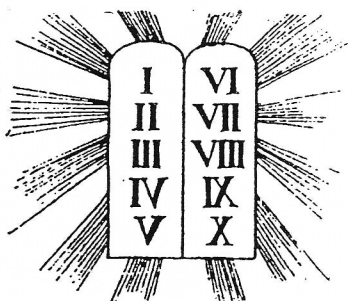
2d. When used as a means of sanctification:

The Law stirred up Paul, did not lead to a sanctified life: Rom. 7.

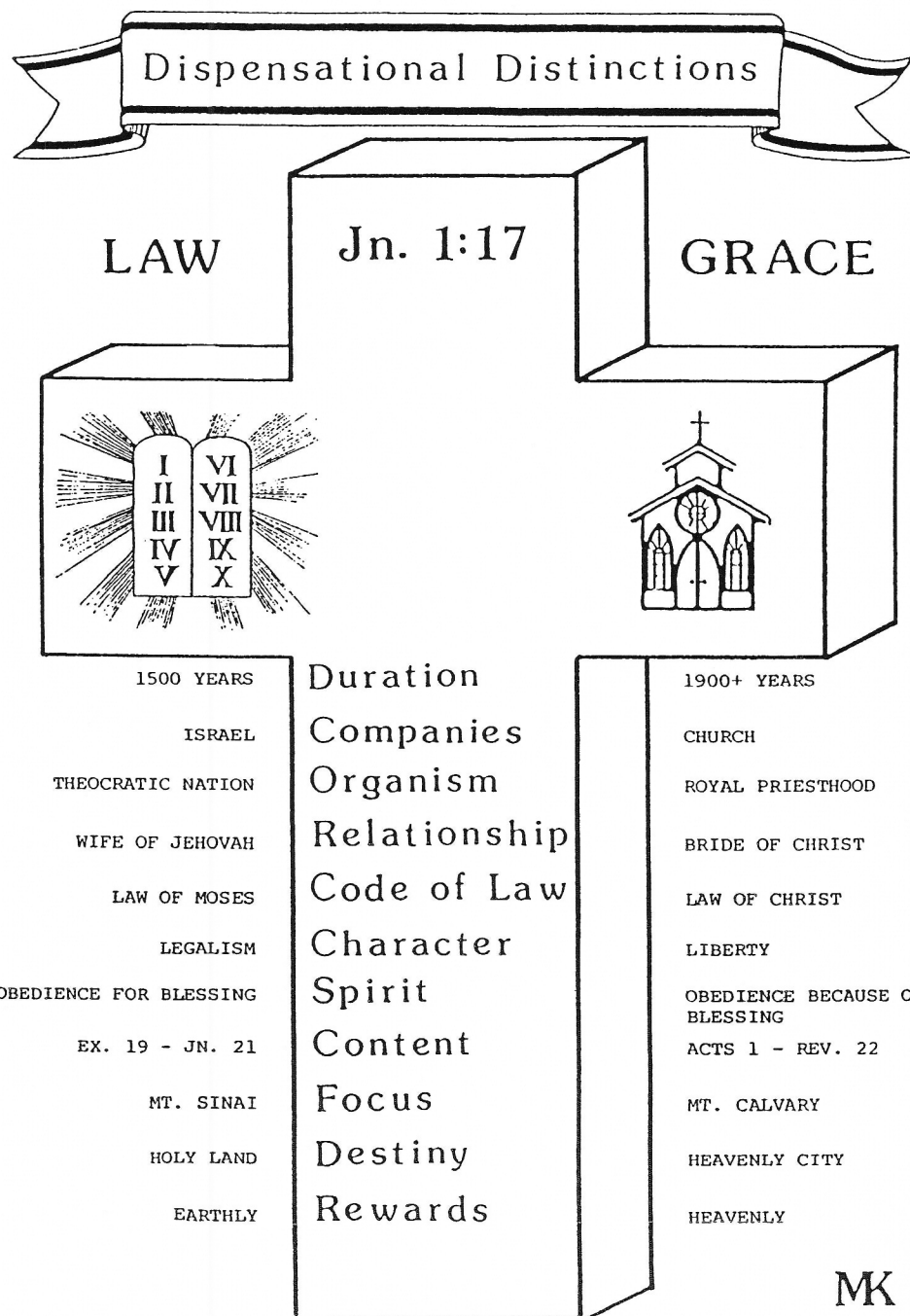
We still have laws, but they are not the same as the Mosaic Law. Some of God's standards are repeated in the N.T., but they are a part of a new code of law. We are under a new priesthood therefore have a new code. The old law, including the Ten Commandments, has been abrogated and is not for the church age believer.

3d. It would be sinful to obey some of the laws today, such as the putting to death of anyone who did not observe the Sabbath day.

SUMMARY:



1. The purpose of the dispensation of the Law was to provide a righteous rule of life and to bring sin into condemnation—it demonstrated that moral, civil and religious law cannot save or sanctify.
2. The Law was not intended for man's salvation under the dispensation of the Law or later.
3. The weakness of the Law:
  - a. The Law could not justify: Rom. 3:20; Gal 2:16
  - b. The Law could not sanctify or perfect: Heb. 7:18-19



## 2A. THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE:

### 1b. The beginning: Day of Pentecost

Some teachings concerning the dispensation of grace are introduced earlier in the Gospels, such as Christ's discourse (John 13-17). In some respects, John is the bridge between Law and Grace.

### 2b. Scripture: Acts 1 through Revelation 3. (The Church is nowhere found after Revelation 3)

### 3b. The state of man:

#### 1c. This age has no specific covenant for man.

#### 1d. Proof that there are no covenants for us:

1e. The Gentiles are strangers from the covenants of promise:  
Eph. 2:12

2e. The covenants pertain to Israel: Rom. 9:4

#### 2d. Two covenants have specific, indirect relation to this age:

#### 1e. The Abrahamic Covenant:



1f. It promises a blessing to all the families of the earth through the gospel which is based upon the seed, Christ: Gen. 12:4; Gal 3:13-16.

2f. It was of grace, unconditional: Rom. 4:1-5.

3f. The imputation of righteousness is effected in all who believe in Jesus Christ: Rom. 4:24-25; Gal. 3:6-9, 22; 2 Cor. 5:21.

4f. The unconditional covenant becomes a pattern for today. Abraham simply believed, so this saving grace is given to us: Rom. 4:23-24; Gal. 3:13-19; cf. Gen. 15:6.

5f. Today is to be declared the period of the gospel of His grace: Tit. 2:11.



#### 2e. The New Covenant:

1f. It is promised to the nation Israel: Jer. 31:31-40.

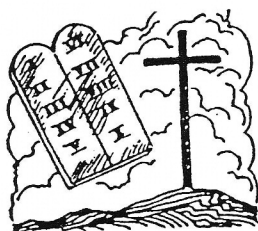
2f. This covenant announced in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., is still in the future as far as Israel is concerned: Rom. 11:25-33.

3f. This is an unconditional, gracious covenant.

4f. The basis of the New Covenant is the sacrifice of our Savior and the Church participates in the blessings of this new covenant: Matt. 26:26-30 "My blood of the new covenant."

#### 2c. This age sees the ultimate display of God's grace:





1d. This is not to say there was no grace in the O.T. under Law. The principal ways in which His grace was revealed are the following:

- 1e. He revealed Himself as the faithful and sufficient God, as the object of faith unto salvation. Any revelation of God is pure grace.
- 2e. He initiated fellowship between Himself and man by means of covenants.
- 3e. He made provision for man's eternal salvation.
- 4e. He bestowed temporal favors on men.



2d. Christ brought a new period of grace: John 1:17  
For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

- 1e. Grace came in Christ's person.
- 2e. Our standing is in grace:  
Rom. 5:2 "wherein we stand"  
1 Peter 5:12 "this is the true grace of God"
- 3e. Ours is called the "dispensation of the grace of God"  
Eph. 3:2

3c. This age has three groups of people in view: 1 Cor. 10:32  
Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

1d. The Jews (nationally):

- 1e. They are not cast away: Rom. 11:1.
- 2e. Blindness in part till the fullness of the Gentiles has come:  
Rom. 11:23-27.
- 3e. The Jews do not believe now but will obtain mercy: Rom. 11:28-31.

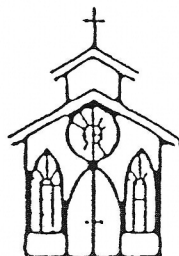
2d. The Gentiles: Eph. 2:11-13

- 1e. Without Christ
- 2e. Aliens from Israel
- 3e. Strangers from the covenants
- 4e. Have no hope
- 5e. Are without God

<sup>11</sup>Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

<sup>12</sup> That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.



3d. The Church:

- 1e. The Jews and Gentiles are on the same terms:

Rom. 10:12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Col. 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

- 2e. In contrast to the condition of the Gentiles, the believer sustains a special relationship: Eph. 2:13-22  
 Is made nigh by the blood, v. 13  
 Is one new man, v. 15  
 Is in one body, v. 16  
 has access by the Spirit, v. 18  
 is a fellow citizen, v. 19  
 belongs to the household of God, v. 19  
 and is God's building, v. 21

- 4c. This age goes far beyond the requirements of the Law:

- |      |               |  |
|------|---------------|--|
| 1d.  | 2 Cor. 10:5   | "casting down imaginations"                              |
| 2d.  | 1 Pet. 2:9    | "show forth the virtues"                                 |
| 3d.  | Eph. 5:20     | "giving thanks always for all things"                    |
| 4d.  | 1 Jn. 1:7     | "walk in light"  |
| 5d.  | Eph. 4:1-2    | "walk worthy"  |
| 6d.  | Eph. 5:2      | "walk in love"   |
| 7d.  | Gal. 5:16-23  | "walk in the Spirit"                                     |
| 8d.  | Eph. 4:17-32  | "grieve not the Spirit"                                  |
| 9d.  | 1 Thess. 5:19 | "quench not the Spirit"                                  |
| 10d. | Col. 3:1-17   |  |
| 11d. | Phil. 2:5     | "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" |

- 5c. This age has laws but not the Law:

- 1d. The names of this system of laws:

- 1e. "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25)  
 2e. "the royal law" (Jas. 2:8)  
 3e. "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2)  
 4e. "the law of the spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2)

- 2d. The nature of these laws:

**The Law of Christ is a definite code containing hundreds of specific commandments. Freedom from the Mosaic Law is not lawlessness or license.** The Apostle Paul wrote, "being not without law to God, but under the law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21).

**1e. Its precepts:**

**1f. Positive commandments: (1 Thess. 5:16-18)**

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice evermore.

<sup>17</sup> Pray without ceasing.

<sup>18</sup> In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

**2f. Negative commands: (Rom. 12:2)**

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

**3f. Principles:**

1g. Is it a weight? Heb. 12:1 "lay aside every weight"

2g. Is it a habit? 1 Cor. 6:12 "not be brought under the power of any"

3g. Is it a stumbling stone? 1 Cor. 8, esp. v. 13

4g. Is it winsome? Col. 4:15 "walk in wisdom toward them that are without"  
Give no offense to unsaved 1 Cor. 10:32

**4f. Rules:**

In some areas there are neither principles nor precepts given. In this area it is necessary to have special rulings. God has made provision for this by giving leaders to His church who rule in these matters (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:5). These leaders are given authority to rule in spiritual matters (Heb. 13:7, 17). If there are rulers, it is obvious that there are those ruled who must obey these rules (Heb. 13:17). Examples of this type of leadership would be the local church, a Christian camp, rules at school, such as dress, dating, conduct.

**2e. Its power:**

1f. The Spirit indwells permanently: John 14:17

2f. The spirit indwells every believer: Rom. 8:9  
1 Cor. 6:19—does not depend on spiritual maturity.  
His presence is proof of salvation.

**3e. Its purpose: Sanctification.**

1f. A holy person resembles his heavenly Father: 1 Pet. 1:16.

2f. We know what God is like through Christ: Jn. 1:18. The purpose of Christ is our **example** for godly life; the law of Christ is our **exhortation** to godly life.

3f. We are to bring glory to God: 1 Cor. 10:31.

"YE ARE NOT UNDER LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE?" ROM. 6:14

**THE DIVINE PURPOSE**

**THE BOOK OF THE DISPENSATIONS**

**RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**

**THE DISPENSATION OF Sinai LAW**

Dealing with **ISRAEL**, God's earthly people.

The **Seventh** day of the week, or the **Sabbath**, commemorating a *finished creation*, was made the seal of Israel's separation from all nations Ex. 31:13-17

A day of absolute bodily **rest**.

A day of legal restrictions.

Physical labor punished by **death**.

Prescribed the principle of one day's rest in seven.

Established in a covenant of **works**.

"He taketh away the first,

**THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE Sion**

Dealing with the **CHURCH**, God's heavenly people.

The **First** day of the week, or the **Lord's Day**, celebrating a *finished redemption*, became the symbol of the church's heavenly privileges.

A day of spiritual **activity**.

A day of voluntary worship.

Spiritual labor a proof of **life**.

Perpetuates the principle of one day's rest in seven.

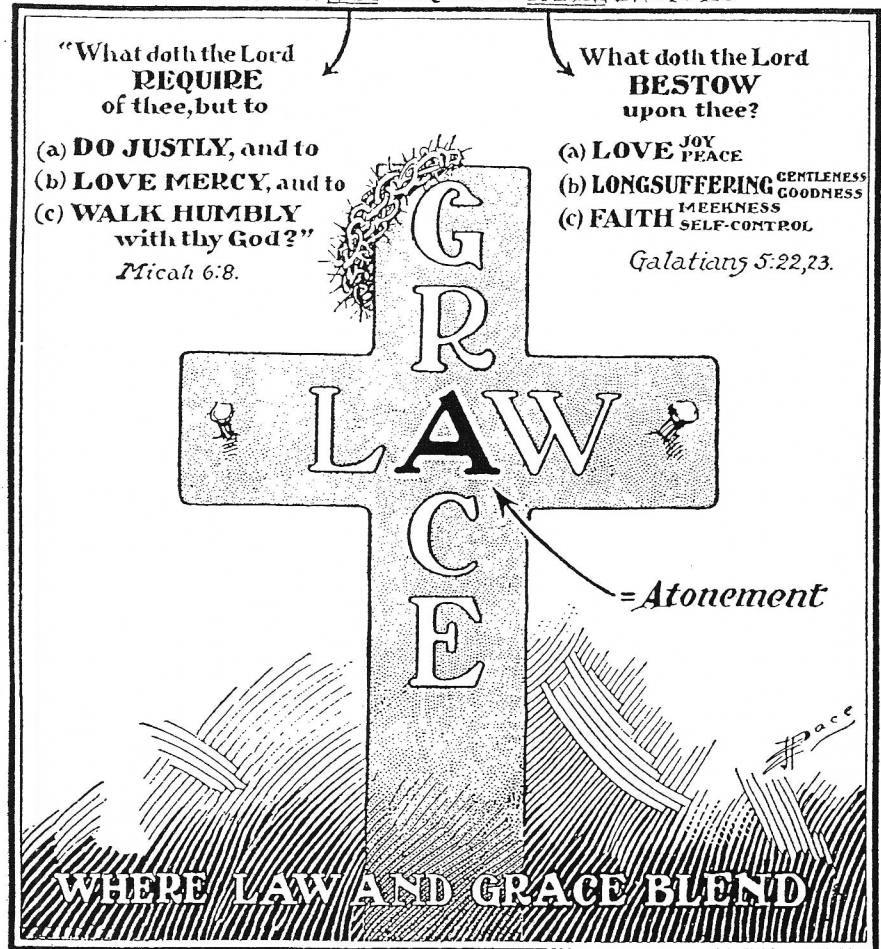
Grew up in a covenant of **grace**.

that He may establish the second" Heb. 10:9.

Note: It is passing strange, if the Spirit of God intended to make the Jewish Sabbath binding upon Gentile Christians, that no mention is made of it in that epochal 15th chapter of Acts, where the status of believers from among the Gentiles was finally settled.

**"LET NO MAN THEREFORE JUDGE YOU--IN RESPECT OF THE SABBATH"** Col. 2:16





# The Dangerous Delusions of Covenant Theology

*Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.*



Covenant Theology grew out of the Reformation and as system was developed by second generation reformers, such as Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) who followed Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531), the Reformer of Zürich, Switzerland. As a theological system, Covenant Theology (CT) views the history of God's dealings with mankind under the framework of two or three overarching theological covenants, not specifically mentioned in Scripture, the covenant of works, the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption. God initially made covenant of works with Adam, promising eternal life for obedience and death for disobedience. Adam failed miserably, dooming the entire human race, but God intervened, entering into a covenant of grace through which the problem of sin and death would be overcome. Those subscribing to a covenant of redemption teach that in eternity past God the Father made a covenant with the Son as Head and Redeemer of the elect, voluntarily taking their place as the substitutionary sacrifice.



In contrast, dispensationalists view God's dealing with mankind in terms of several clearly distinguishable economies or dispensations. The term *dispensation* (Greek, *oikonomia* = economy, stewardship, dispensation) is used repeatedly in the New Testament (Eph. 1:10; 3:2, Col. 1:20), exactly the way dispensationalists use the term. As Charles C. Ryrie notes, "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" (*Dispensationalism* [1995], 29). They subscribe to the covenants mentioned in the Bible. There are at least eight: the Edenic covenant (Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15-17), the Adamic covenant (Gen. 3:14-19), the Noahic covenant (Gen. 8:20-9:17), the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3), the Mosaic covenant (Ex. 20-23), the Davidic covenant (2. Sam. 7:4-17), the Palestinian covenant (Deut. 30:12-10) and the New covenant (Jer. 31-37).

Covenant theologians espouse many important biblical doctrines, such as biblical inerrancy, the total depravity of man, the sovereignty of God and eternal security, but on the contemporary scene, their profuse publications, especially in the area of prophecy, challenge the literal, dispensational understanding of end-time events.

1. Covenant Theology (CT) tries to rob believers of the foremost hope Christ left to the Church (Tit. 2:13), the any-moment return for His Bride, to deliver believers from the wrath to come (Rom 5:9; 1. Thess. 1:10; 5:9). Many of their theologians teach that Christ has actually returned already in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 or the believer must endure the time of the tribulation. The belief in the imminent return of the Savior for the saints is ridiculed as a false doctrine of recent origin.
2. CT is influenced by ecclesiastical tradition rather than being based on sound biblical exegesis. CT with its Reformation roots follows St. Augustine (d. 430) who denied a literal Millennium, therefore any Scriptures relating to the earthly rule of Christ are summarily rejected by CT.



3. CT substitutes a theological system for a biblical theology. The opinions of Augustine and the Reformers, who failed to separate from the Roman Catholic amillennial position, count more than the declaration of the Church. The reformers followed the end-time view of the Roman Catholic Church. While they saw clearly the issue of salvation by faith alone, they failed to reform the spiritualizing of biblical prophecy. What Calvin (1509-1564), the Swiss Reformer, and Cocceius (1603-1669), founder of CT, espoused concerning the future is heeded more than what Christ taught.



4. CT engages in a system of interpretation that began in pagan Greece, where the philosophers allegorized Greek immoral religious tales to make them acceptable to the cultural mind. The Greek poet Homer wrote fantastic tales of the gods cavorting on Mt. Olympus. The philosophers allegorized "many lines in Homer which seemed to them unworthy, undignified suddenly became symbols of vices and virtues."

5. CT introduces, like Roman Catholicism and St. Augustine before, an illegitimate set of interpretive principles that distorts the plain sense of Scripture. This is primarily so in the area of prophecy. With their "dual hermeneutic" (*hermeneutics* = "the science and art of biblical interpretation") their theologians interpret fulfilled prophecy literally but spiritualize unfulfilled prophecy. CT would defend the literal fulfillment of Zech. 9:9 that Christ entered Jerusalem on a donkey but completely spiritualize the prediction of Zech. 14:4 that He would return physically to the Mount of Olives. Starting with the presupposition that there cannot be a millennium, any passage that remotely refers to a literal future reign of Christ on earth is reinterpreted.

6. CT refuses to see any fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (e.g. Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18) in a future nation of Israel. The Reformed Knox Theological Seminary in Florida, published "An Open Letter to Evangelicals and Other Interested Parties: The People of God, the Land of Israel, and the Impartiality of the Gospel" in which the authors assert that "the entitlement of any one ethnic or religious group to . . . the 'Holy Land' cannot be supported by Scripture. In fact, the land promises specific to Israel . . . were fulfilled under Joshua" (IX). Why the blindness to clear land promises to Israel? Why the denial of specific, literal prophecies that Israel would possess the land "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18). The "land of Canaan [would be Israel's] for an everlasting possession" (Gen. 17:8). Sadly, to date, over 300 theologians and pastors added their signature to the open letter which constitutes a clear denial of God's future program for His people.

7. CT has fostered a movement that is inimical to biblical truth and polemical in its publications. The biblical dispensational position, clearly espoused in the "Thief in the Night" films series and the "Left Behind" volumes, is constantly under attack by such books as Gary DeMar's *Last Day Madness* and *End-Time Delusions*. It is virtually impossible to find a similar no-holds-barred dispensational attack on the CT position. Theologian R. C. Sproul, in his foreword to the latter volume, says that "in my years of study and ministry I have yet to discover a single text of sacred Scripture that teaches a pretribulation Rapture." The notion is "pure fiction" (ix). One wonders whether his version of the N.T. contains verses such as 1. Thess. 4:17 and Rev. 3:10!





8. CT denies a literal rule of Christ on the throne of David, contradicting the angelic promise to Mary (Luke 1:32-33) and detracting from the future exaltation of Christ. That someday the Savior will graciously rule the world from Jerusalem - a frequent prophetic prediction (Is. 2:1-4; Mic. 4:1-3) - is strongly rejected by CT.
9. CT undermines any hope for a world yearning for righteousness and peace. For them human history ends in tragedy and ruin rather than triumph and redemption. The prophets clearly speak of a future time when Jerusalem will be the world's capital. Christ will judge righteously the whole world from the holy city. The nations will gather there for worship. All wars will cease. Redeemed Israel will bask in the light of their Messiah (Is. 2:4; Mic.4:2; Hab. 2:14). CT might believe in a return of Christ after the tribulation but sees that event as the end of human history.
10. CT leaves the saving work of Christ incomplete as it fails to see the redemption of nature from the curse of sin (Is. 11:6-8; Rom. 8:21-23). God predicts the future deliverance of this planet from the curse occasioned by the Adamic transgression (Rom. 5:12). CT does not allow any time for the glorious transformation of our planet to occur. All of creation groans for deliverance and that will surely come. A denial of clear literal prophecies will not deter their ultimate fulfillment.
11. CT distorts and denies not simply isolated passages but major portions of the prophetic Word, such as Ezekiel 40-48, Zechariah 14 and Revelation 4-22. Many in the CT camp, insist most of the predictions in the Revelation were fulfilled in the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70! Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, they insist that John penned the Revelation in the mid 60's and predicts that God would divorce national Israel for rejecting the Messiah, would judge her and replace her permanently with the universal church.
12. CT expands its energy and finances against fellow-Christians rather than rightly dividing the Word of truth (2. Tim. 2:15). Failure to do that, says the Apostle Paul, brings shame to those who fail to make biblical distinctions. Israel is not the Church. Law is not Grace. The throne of David will never be found in heaven.
13. CT makes the Holy Spirit a liar who expressly revealed **6 times in Revelation 20** that Christ's reign would last **1000 years**. With exegetical sleight of hand, CT tries to explain the number away. CT insists despite clear grammatical rules that the number 1000 is symbolic. In fact, when in the Greek (or Hebrew) language the word day or year is preceded by a numerical adjective, the reference is to a literal time period. What is true for the days of Genesis 1 is equally true for the years of Christ's reign. The earthly kingdom so clearly revealed and promised to believers (Lk. 12:32; 1. Cor. 6:2; Rev. 3:21) cannot be so cavalierly dismissed.
14. Theologians in the CT camp are unable to agree among themselves on a clear outline of future events. Some see the tribulation period in the past (Gary DeMar, R.C. Sproul), some in the present (Billy Graham) and still others future (Bill Bright). They are agreed on what they do not believe, but are unable to come to an agreement on what they do hold about the future. Departure from literal interpretation is detrimental to an understanding of the divine design for the future. The literal fulfillment of Bible prophecy is a striking demonstration to the world of the power and wisdom of God. The fact is that God does have a future



plan, "Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Is. 46:11). Furthermore, to know that the blood-bought believer has such a prominent place in God's plan for the future gives the individual an ardent desire to live for Christ, a hope that he will perhaps soon be summoned by Christ and an anticipation of the future eons of basking in the presence of Christ.