

Dispensational Theology

A system of interpretation which, using a literal interpretation, believes that there are specific time-frames (or periods of history) where God has given additional revelation and stewardship responsibilities to man. Each of these stages of history, or "dispensations," can be marked by a beginning event, increased stewardship responsibility (as a result of the additional revelation being given to believe by faith and obeyed), the failure of man, and a closing event.

Another primary aspect of this system of interpretation which impacts various points of theology is the recognition of the distinct natures of the nation of Israel and the Church. Romans 11:25-26 states, "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved" In Jeremiah 31 & 33, God assures His covenants to Israel, Judah, and David by equating them to His covenants with the sun, moon and stars.

This recognition of the Biblical distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church stands in contrast to the system of interpretation called Covenant Theology.

Covenant Theology

A system of interpretation which views God's plan of redemption as the unifying principle of the Scriptures being portrayed in three primary covenants: the Covenant of Redemption (within the Godhead) and the Covenant of Works & the Covenant of Grace (with mankind). This Covenant of Grace was instituted when Adam broke

what they refer to as the Covenant of Works that God made with Adam. The Covenant of Grace is held to be the basis of all of the other covenants that God made with Noah, Abraham, Israel, David and mankind in general (in the New Covenant). This transcendent Covenant of Grace is seen as that which is fulfilled in Christ. The Church - which they define as "the people of God" - has been in existence since the time of Adam and makes no distinction for the nation of Israel. Hence, the Church is Israel (in the Old Testament) and Israel is the Church. The Church has superseded Israel and the covenants that seemed to literally apply to a physical entity.

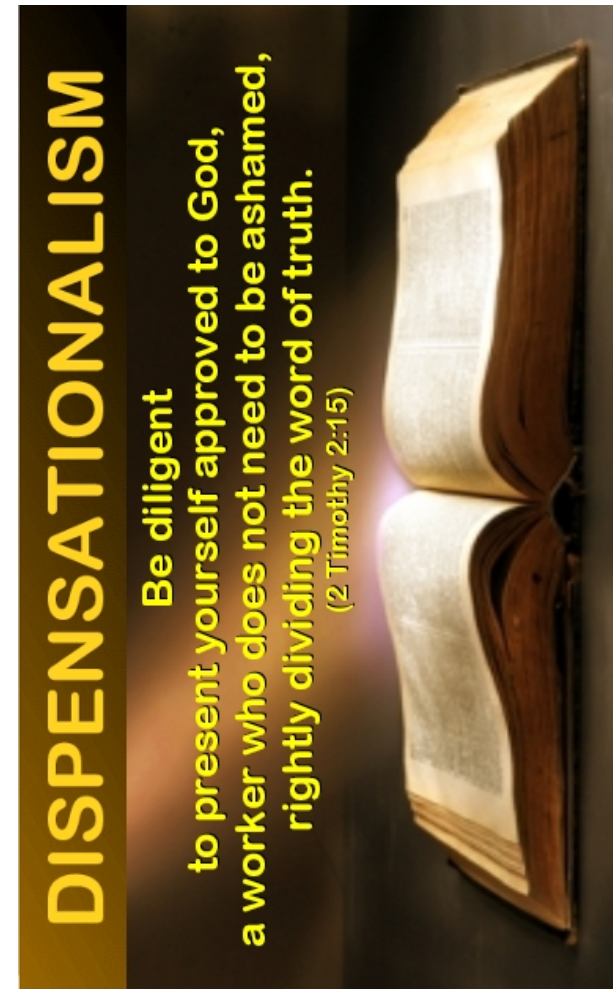
Family Bible Church's Viewpoint

At Family Bible Church, we believe that the Bible should be interpreted literally. Hence, we accept the Dispensational approach as we interpret the Scriptures, and reject the allegorical approach of Covenant Theology.

We believe that God specifically chose to work through the nation of Israel, will once again establish them, and reign in Jerusalem for a period of 1,000 years according to the fulfillment of His Word (Daniel 9; Romans 11; Revelation 11; Revelation 20).

Dispensation Chart

Though there are various opinions regarding how many different dispensations the Bible could be broken into, the seven dispensations shown in the chart are those which are commonly accepted.



The Seven "Classic" Dispensations of Scripture

INNOCENCE	CONSCIENCE	GOVERNMENT	PROMISE	LAW	CHURCH	KINGDOM
<u>Initial Event</u> Creation of Man (Genesis 1:26-29)	<u>Initial Event</u> The offerings of Abel & Cain (Genesis 4:4-5)	<u>Initial Event</u> Noahic Covenant (Genesis 8:20-9:17)	<u>Initial Event</u> God's call and promise to Abram (Genesis 12:1-9)	<u>Initial Event</u> Acceptance of law @ Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:1-8)	<u>Initial Event</u> Resurrection; Pentecost (John 20:19-23; Mt 28:18-20; Acts 2)	<u>Initial Event</u> Jesus' return at battle of Armageddon (Rev 19:11-21)
<u>Responsibility (Test)</u> Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:15-17)	<u>Responsibility (Test)</u> "Do what is right" (Genesis 4:6-7)	<u>Responsibility (Test)</u> Sanctity of human life and Dispersion through earth (Genesis 9:4-7)	<u>Responsibility (Test)</u> To dwell in the Land (Genesis 12:1,7; 35:1-15)	<u>Responsibility (Test)</u> Keep law & Sabbath; Serve YHWH alone (Exodus 19:5; 20:1-17; 31:12-17)	<u>Responsibility (Test)</u> Believe in Jesus (Acts 2:36-41; John 3:16-17; Titus 2:11-14)	<u>Responsibility (Test)</u> Come to feast of Tabernacles annually to worship YHWH (Zech 14:16-19)
<u>Failure</u> Adam chose to eat from the tree. (Genesis 3:1-6)	<u>Failure</u> Every intent of the thoughts of men's hearts was evil (Genesis 6:5-6)	<u>Failure</u> Man's refusal to disperse and their self-deification. (Genesis 11:1-4)	<u>Failure</u> Abraham and posterity leave the land (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 26:1-35; 28:10-15; 46:1-5)	<u>Failure</u> Israel rejects YHWH, Sabbath Law & Messiah (Dty 4:24-29; Exod 32:1-6; Jer 17:21-27; Ezek 20:5-32; 23:37-38; John 19:15)	<u>Failure</u> Rejection of God's provision of salvation. (2 Thess 2:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:1-4; 1 Peter 4:17-18)	<u>Failure</u> Gathering of nations against Messiah. (Rev 20:7-10)
<u>Final Event</u> Banished from garden and blocked from tree of life (Genesis 3:17-24)	<u>Final Event</u> God destroyed man by a flood (Genesis 6:11-8:19)	<u>Final Event</u> Confusion of languages and dispersion of people (Genesis 11:5-9)	<u>Final Event</u> Bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1:7-14)	<u>Final Event</u> Jerusalem destroyed by Rome; Israel scattered (Luke 21:5-24; Matthew 23:37-39)	<u>Final Event</u> Church taken away (1 Th 4:13-5:11; Rom 11:25-29; Rev 10:7; 11:1-3)	<u>Final Event</u> White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15)