

## SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

[Man's position, responsibility, failure, and God's judgment]

*Reference: Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Vol. 3, Ch. 31 Reading the Bible*

### 1. The dispensation of **innocence**:

from the **creation** of Adam to his being driven out of Eden—at most **130 years** (Gen. 5:3)

#### Man's original position:

- In the **image** and **likeness** of God
- To be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth
- Every tree that produces seed as man's **food**

Gen 1:26 - And **God** said, Let Us make man [*Adam*] in Our **image**, according to Our **likeness**; and let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Gen 1:27 - And **God** created man in His own image; in the **image** of God He created him; male and female He **created** them.

Gen 1:28 - And **God** **blessed** them; and God said to them, Be **fruitful** and **multiply**, and **fill** the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

Gen 1:29 - And **God** said, Behold, I have given you every herb that produces seed that is on the surface of all the earth and every tree which has fruit that produces seed; they shall be for you as **food**.

#### Man's responsibility:

- To **work** and **keep** the garden
- Every fruit of the tree may freely eat but the fruit of the tree of knowledge shall **not eat**

Gen 2:15 - And Jehovah **God** took the man [*Adam*] and put him in the garden of Eden to **work** it and to **keep** it.

Gen 2:16 - And Jehovah **God** commanded the man, saying, Of **every tree** of the garden you may **eat freely**,

Gen 2:17 - **But** of the **tree of the knowledge** of good and evil, of it **you shall not eat**; for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die**.

#### Man's failure (first fall):

- The woman **ate** the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil
- Gave some to her husband and he **ate**

Gen 3:6 - And when the **woman** saw that the **tree** was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the **tree** was to be desired to make oneself wise, **she** took of its fruit and **ate**; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and **he ate**.

#### God's judgment:

- Adam and Eve were **drove out** of the garden
- The way to the tree of life was **closed**,
- Placed the **cherubim** and a **flaming sword** to **guard** the way to the tree of life

Gen 3:24 - So He **drove the man** *[Adam and Eve]* **out**, and at the east of the garden of Eden He placed the **cherubim** and a **flaming sword** which turned in every direction to **guard** the way to the tree of life.

## 2. The dispensation of **conscience**:

from the **fall** of **Adam** to the flood—**1656 years** (Gen. 5:29; 7:6)

### Man's original position:

- Adam and Eve **knowing** good and evil

Gen 3:22 - And Jehovah **God** said,  
Behold, the **man** *[Adam and Eve]* has become like one of Us, **knowing good and evil**;  
and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also from the **tree of life** and eat and live forever—

### Man's responsibility:

- **Do well** to have a lifted countenance
- **Rule** over sin

Gen 4:7 - If you *[Cain]* **do well**, will not your **countenance be lifted up**?  
And if you do not do well, **sin** is crouching at the door;  
and his desire is for you, but **you must rule over him**.

### Man's failure (third fall):

- Man in general became **wicked**
- Every **imagination** and **thoughts** of their hearts was **evil**
- Man was **corrupt**
- The earth was filled with **violence**
- All **flesh** had **corrupted** its way upon the earth

Gen 6:5 - And Jehovah saw that the **wickedness** of man *[in general]* was great in the earth,  
and that every **imagination** of the **thoughts of his heart** was only **evil** continually.

Gen 6:11 - And the earth was **corrupt** before God, and the earth was filled with **violence**.

Gen 6:12 - And **God** looked on the earth, and behold, it was **corrupt**;  
for all **flesh had corrupted** its way upon the earth.

### God's judgment:

- Deep water burst open...rain fell
- **Blotted out** from the earth every living being from the earth

Gen 7:11 - In the six hundredth year of **Noah's** life,  
in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month,  
on that very day all the springs of the great deep **burst open**,  
and the windows of heaven were opened.

Gen 7:12 - And the **rain fell** upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

Gen 7:23 - Thus He **blotted out** every living being that was upon the surface of the ground,  
from man to beast to creeping things to the birds of heaven;  
and they were **blotted out** from the earth.  
And only Noah was left, and those who were with him **in the ark**.

### 3. The dispensation of human **government**:

from **Noah leaving** the ark to the tower of Babel—**427 years** (Gen.7:6; 11:9)

#### Man's original position:

- Man—Noah alone was **righteous**

Gen 7:1 - Then Jehovah said to **Noah**, Come into the ark, you and all your household, for **you alone** I have seen to be **righteous** before Me in this generation.

#### Man's responsibility:

- No blood shed

Gen 9:6 - Whoever **sheds man's blood**,  
By man shall **his blood be shed**, For in the image of God He made man.

#### Man's failure:

- Made bricks to build themselves a **city**
- A tower to reach the heavens to make **name** for themselves

Gen 11:1 - And the whole earth had **one language** and the same speech.

Gen 11:2 - And as they journeyed east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

Gen 11:3 - And they said to one another,  
Come, let us **make bricks** and burn them thoroughly.  
And they had brick for stone, and they had tar for mortar.

Gen 11:4 - And they said, Come, let us **build ourselves a city**  
and a tower whose top is in the heavens;  
and let us make a **name for ourselves**,  
lest we be **scattered** over the surface of the whole earth.

#### God's judgment:

- **Confound** the language that they may not understand one another
- **Scattered** them over the surface of all the earth

Gen 11:5 - And Jehovah came down to see the **city**  
and the **tower** which the children of men had built.

Gen 11:6 - And Jehovah said, Behold, they are **one people**, and they all have **one language**;  
and this is only the **beginning** of what they will do;  
and now nothing which they purpose to do will be kept from them.

Gen 11:7 - Come, let Us go down and there **confound** their language,  
that they may **not understand** one another's speech.

Gen 11:8 - So Jehovah **scattered** them from there over the surface of all the earth,  
and they ceased building the city.

### 4. The dispensation of **promise**:

From the calling of **Abraham** to the law on Mount Sinai—**430 years** (Gen 12; Exo 20)

#### Man's original position:

- Man [*Abram*] go the **land**

- Man will be a **great nation**
- Man will be **blessed** and make his **name great**
- In man [*Abram*] all the families of the earth will be **blessed**

Gen 12:1 - Now Jehovah said to **Abram**,  
**Go from your land** And from your relatives And from your father's house  
**To the land** that I will show you;

Gen 12:2 - And I will make of you a **great nation**,  
 And I will **bless** you And make your **name great**;  
 And you shall be a **blessing**.

Gen 12:3 - And I will bless those who bless you, And him who curses you I will curse;  
 And in **you** all the families of the earth **will be blessed**.

#### Man's responsibility:

- Man [*Isaac*] to **dwell** in the **land**
- **Sojourn** in the land
- Jehovah will be with him and **bless him**
- To his seed will Jehovah **give the land**

Gen 26:2 - And Jehovah **appeared** to him [*Isaac*] and said,  
 Do not go down to Egypt; **dwell in the land** of which I will tell you.

Gen 26:3 - **Sojourn** in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you;  
 for to you and to **your seed** I will give all these lands,  
 and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

#### Man's failure:

- Man [*house of Jacob*] **came out** of the land of Canaan
- They **dwell** in the land of Goshen

Gen 47:1 - Then **Joseph** went in and told Pharaoh and said, My father and my brothers  
 and their flocks and their herds and all that they have,  
**have come out** of the **land of Canaan**; and now they are in the **land of Goshen**.

#### God's judgment:

- The new king of Egypt set **taskmasters** over the children of Israel
- They were **afflicted** with **burdens**
- They made them serve with **harshness**
- Made their lives bitter with **hard labor**

Exo 1:8 - And a **new king** rose up over **Egypt**, who **did not know** of **Joseph**.

Exo 1:9 - And he said to his people,  
 The people of the children of Israel are now more numerous and stronger than we.

Exo 1:10 - Come, let us **deal wisely** with them,  
 lest they multiply and, when some war occurs,  
 they also join themselves to those who hate us  
 and fight against us and go up from the land.

Exo 1:11 - So they **set taskmasters** over them to **afflict** them with their **burdens**.  
 And they built storage cities for Pharaoh, Pithom and Raamses.

Exo 1:12 - But the more they **afflicted** them, the more they **multiplied**  
 and the more they **spread out** so that they came to dread the children of Israel.

Exo 1:13 - And the Egyptians made the children of Israel **serve with harshness**,

Exo 1:14 - And they made their lives **bitter** with **hard labor** in mortar and in brick

and in all kinds of labor in the field;  
all their **labor** with which they made them serve was with **harshness**.

## 5. The dispensation of **law**:

from the giving of the law to Moses to John the Baptist's ministry—**1500 years** (Exo. 20; Matt 1)

### Man's original position:

- Man [*the children of Israel*] came into the **wilderness** of Sinai
- Jehovah **bore them** on eagles' wing and **brought** them to **Himself**

Exo 19:1 - In the third month after the children of Israel had **gone out** of the land of Egypt, on that very day they **came into** the wilderness of **Sinai**.

Exo 19:2 - And when they had journeyed from Rephidim and had **come to** the **wilderness of Sinai**, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped in front of the mountain.

Exo 19:3 - And **Moses** went up to God, and Jehovah called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and **tell** the children of Israel:

Exo 19:4 - You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I **bore you on eagles' wings** and **brought** you to **Myself**.

### Man's responsibility:

- Man [*children of Israel*] to **obey** Jehovah and **keep** His **covenant**
- Man shall be a **kingdom of priest** and a **holy nation**

Exo 19:5 - Now therefore **if** you [*the Israelites*] will indeed **obey My voice** and **keep** My **covenant**, then you shall be My **personal treasure** from among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine.

Exo 19:6 - And you [*twelve tribes of Israel*] shall be to Me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy nation**. These are the words that you [*Moses*] shall **speak** to the children of Israel.

### Man's failure:

- Man **sinned** against Jehovah by practicing **divination**
- They **sold** themselves to do what was **evil**
- They **provoke** Jehovah to anger

2Ki 17:7 - And this happened because the children of Israel **sinned** against Jehovah their God, who had **brought them up out** of the land of Egypt **from** under the hand of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and had feared other gods;

2Ki 17:17 - And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through fire and **practiced divination** and enchantments; and they **sold themselves to do what was evil** in the sight of Jehovah, in order to **provoke Him to anger**.

### God's judgment:

- Man [*Hosea*] became **servant** of Assyria
- He was **shut up** and **bound** in **prison**
- King of Assyria **invaded** the whole land
- **Carried** Israel **away** to Assyria
- **Nebuchadnezzar** **siege** Jerusalem
- **Famine** was severe, there was no food

- The city was **breach**, the men of ward fled while the **Chaldeans** were around the city
- Chaldeans **pursued** after the king and the army was **scattered** from him
  - they **slaughtered** Zedekiah's sons **before his eyes**
  - **put out** Zedekiah's eyes
  - and **bound** him with bronze fetters and **brought** him to **Babylon**.
- The house of Jehovah was burned
- **Broke down** the **wall** of Jerusalem
- Carried to **exile** in Babylon

- 2Ki 17:1 - In the twelfth year of **Ahaz** the king of **Judah**, **Hoshea** the son of Elah began to reign in Samaria over **Israel**; he reigned for nine years.
- 2Ki 17:2 - And **he did what was evil** in the sight of Jehovah, but not like the kings of Israel that had been before him.
- 2Ki 17:3 - Against him Shalmaneser the king of **Assyria** came up, and Hoshea **became his servant** and rendered presents to him.
- 2Ki 17:4 - But the king of Assyria found **conspiracy** in Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to **So** the king of Egypt and did not send up a present to the king of Assyria as he had from year to year. And the king of Assyria **shut him up** and bound him in prison.
- 2Ki 17:5 - And the king of Assyria **invaded** the whole land, and he went up against Samaria and **besieged** it three years.
- 2Ki 17:6 - In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and **carried Israel away** into Assyria; and he placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.
- 2Ki 17:24 - And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath and from Sepharvaim, and made them  **dwell in the cities of Samaria in place** of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities.
- 2Ki 25:1 - In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, **Nebuchadnezzar** the king of Babylon came, he and his **whole army**, against **Jerusalem** and encamped against it; and they built a **siege** wall against it all around.
- 2Ki 25:2 - So the city came **under siege** until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.
- 2Ki 25:3 - On the ninth day of the fourth month, the **famine** was so severe within the city that there was **no food** for the people of the land.
- 2Ki 25:4 - Then the city was **breached**, and all the **men of war fled** by night by way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden, while the **Chaldeans** were all around the city; and the king went on the way toward the Arabah.
- 2Ki 25:5 - And the army of the **Chaldeans pursued** after the king, and they **overtook him** in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was **scattered** from him.
- 2Ki 25:6 - And they **seized** the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced **judgment** upon him.
- 2Ki 25:7 - And they **slaughtered** Zedekiah's sons **before his eyes** then **put out Zedekiah's eyes** and **bound** him with bronze fetters and **brought** him to **Babylon**.
- 2Ki 25:8 - In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month

(this was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon),  
Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, the servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

2Ki 25:9 - And he burned the house of Jehovah  
and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem,  
and every large house he burned with fire.

2Ki 25:10 - And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the bodyguard  
broke down the walls around Jerusalem.

2Ki 25:11 - And the rest of the people who were left in the city  
and the deserters who deserted to the king of Babylon and the rest of the multitude,  
Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard carried away into exile.

Luk 21:20 - But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies,  
then know that her desolation has drawn near.

Luk 21:21 - Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those in her midst get out,  
and let not those in the country enter into her,

Luk 21:22 - Because these are days of vengeance, that all the things written may be fulfilled.

Luk 21:23 - Woe to those who are pregnant and to those nursing babies in those days,  
for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people.

Luk 21:24 - And they will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led captive into all the nations;  
and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

## 6. The dispensation of grace:

from John the Baptist's preaching of baptism to Christ's second coming—2000+ years

### Man's original position:

- Man [in general] was lost
- Under the law and fall under the judgment of God
- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Luk 19:10 - For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.

Rom 3:19 - Now we know that whatever things the law says,  
it speaks to those who are under the law,  
that every mouth may be stopped  
and all the world may fall under the judgment of God;

Rom 3:23 - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

### Man's responsibility:

- Man [Jews and the Gentiles] should receive and be given authority
- Man to believe in the only begotten Son of God to become children of God
- God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son
- Everyone who believes into Him would not perish

Joh 1:12 - But as many as received Him,  
to them He gave the authority to become children of God,  
to those who believe into His name,

Joh 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,  
that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.



#### Man's failure:

- Man was **unfaithful**, laid away his minas
- Man was **unproductive**
- Man was **unbelieving**

Luk 19:12 - He said therefore, A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

Luk 19:13 - And he called ten of his own slaves and **gave them ten minas**, and he said to them, **Do business** until I come.

Luk 19:14 - But his citizens **hated him** and sent an envoy after him, saying, We do **not want this man to reign** over us.

Luk 18:8 - I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly.  
Nevertheless, when the **Son of Man** comes, **will He find faith on the earth?**

Mat 24:37 - For just as the **days of Noah** were, so will the **coming** of the **Son of Man** be.

Mat 24:38 - For as they were in those days before the **flood**, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark,

Mat 24:39 - And they did not know *that judgment was coming* until the **flood came** and took all away, so also will the coming of the **Son of Man** be.

#### God's judgment:

- God will repay with **affliction** those afflicting the believers
- Rendering **vengeance** to those who did not know God and did not obey the gospel
- Man, to pay the penalty of **eternal perdition**
- God sends an **operation of error** for man had taken pleasure in unrighteousness

2Th 1:6 - Since *it is* just with God to **repay with affliction** those afflicting you,

2Th 1:7 - And to you who are being afflicted, rest with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire,

2Th 1:8 - Rendering **vengeance** to those who **do not know God** and to those who **do not obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2Th 1:9 - They will **pay the penalty of eternal destruction** from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His strength

2Th 2:7 - For *it is* the **mystery of lawlessness** *that* is now operating, *but* only until the one now restraining goes out of the way.

2Th 2:8 - And then the **lawless one will be revealed** (whom the Lord Jesus will slay by the breath of His mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of His coming),

2Th 2:9 - The coming of whom is according to Satan's operation in all power and signs and wonders of a lie

2Th 2:10 - And in all deceit of unrighteousness among those who are perishing, because they **did not receive the love of the truth** that they might be saved.

2Th 2:11 - And because of this God **sends to them an operation of error** that they might believe the lie,

2Th 2:12 - So that all who have **not believed the truth** but have taken pleasure in unrighteousness might be **judged**.



## 7. The dispensation of the kingdom:

from Christ's second coming to the casting of Satan into the lake of fire—1000 years

### Man's original position:

- To the **overcoming ones** they who are blessed by the Father will **inherit** the kingdom
- The **unrighteous ones** will go to eternal perdition but the righteous one into eternal life

Mat 25:34 - Then the King will say to those on His right hand,  
Come, you who are **blessed of My Father**,  
**inherit** the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Mat 25:46 - And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the **righteous into eternal life**.

### Man's responsibility:

- Man should **go up to Jerusalem**
  - To **worship** the King
  - To **keep** the Feast of Tabernacle
- If they do not go up to Jerusalem there will be **no rain** upon them

Zec 14:16 - And everyone left from all the nations that went forth against Jerusalem will **go up** from year to year **to worship the King**, Jehovah of hosts, and **to keep the Feast of Tabernacles**.

Zec 14:17 - And whichever of the families of the earth **does not go up** to Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them **there will be no rain**.

Zec 14:18 - And if the family of **Egypt** does not go up and enter, there will be **no rain** upon them; **there will be the plague** with which Jehovah strikes the nations that **do not go up** to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Zec 14:19 - This will be the **sin** of Egypt and the **sin** of all the nations **that do not go up** to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Zec 14:20 - In that day on the horses' bells will be, Holiness to Jehovah;  
and the pots in the house of Jehovah will be like the basins before the altar.

### Man's failure:

- Man was **deceived**, that their number is like the sand of the sea
- Those deceived surrounded the camp of the saints; gathered together to **make war**

Rev 20:7 - And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison

Rev 20:8 - And will go out to **deceive** the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to **gather** them together **for the war**.  
Their number is like *that of* the sand of the sea.

Rev 20:9 - And they went up upon the breadth of the earth and **surrounded** the camp of the saints and the beloved city; and fire came down out of heaven and devoured them.

### God's judgment:

- **Fire** came down out of heaven and **devoured** the **rebellious men**
- **Satan** the devil was cast into the lake of fire
- The **beast** and the **false prophet** were **cast into** the **lake of fire** and will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Rev 20:9 - And they went up upon the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city; and **fire came down** out of heaven and **devoured** them.

Rev 20:10 - And the **devil**, who deceived them, was **cast into the lake of fire** and brimstone, where also the **beast** and the **false prophet** were; and they will be **tormented** day and night forever and ever.