

Twelve Lessons

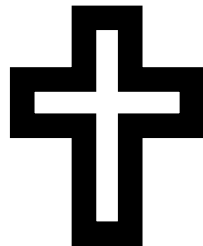
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Dispensational Truth I

Compiled and Written

by

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\$6.00

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AN OVERVIEW OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH – LESSON 1

Introduction: Facts reveal in the Scripture that there are five Ages altogether, and eight Dispensations. Two of the Ages are defined inside of eternity, while the other three are during what we know as time. While the dispensations are moral periods, the form of administration for each period is different and also progressive. For example, the administration of the Legal dispensation was that of Law, the Present dispensation is that of Grace, and the one to follow of Righteousness. Every dispensation of time ends in the judgment of God because of Sin. The Dispensations are grouped under the Ages.

Lesson Goals:

1. Make a distinction between Ages and Dispensations.
2. Give a brief overview of the five Ages and eight Dispensations.
3. Show how the administration in each dispensation is different and progressive in revelation.

Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Age – A period of time between two great physical changes in the earth.
2. Dispensation – A moral period in the history of the world.

THE ALPHA AGE – The Eternal Past

We do not have much information on the Alpha Age, but the Bible begins with the declaration that God created all things in Genesis 1:1. There are two different views concerning the Alpha Age and the Creation of the World.

1. The Gap Theory View – This view teaches that the world we now know went through three distinct stages.

a. Creative Stage – This creation was in the dateless or eternal past. The six day's work described in Gen. 1:3-31 is the account of restoration of the earth to its original condition, before it was made “formless and void”, and submerged in water and darkness. 2 Peter 3:5-7 speaks of this original earth. However the creation of the original earth is not revealed in the scriptures.

b. Chaotic Stage – The “original” earth was not always “formless and void.” Isaiah 45:18 states – “*He created it not in vain.*” The reason for the judgment of the original earth was sin. The account of the fall of Adam shows us that sin was present before man's creation. This sin was of course the pride and rebellion of Satan. Clarence Larkin feels that the prophet Jeremiah saw a vision of that time of judgment in Jeremiah 4:23-26 which came upon a “Pre-Adamite” earth and has great similarities to the destruction of the earth by fire described in Revelation. It gives us the conclusion of the judgment of God upon the sin of His creatures.

c. Present Stage – This is the earth as we know it today except for the fact that the earth has been put under a curse because of Adam & Eve's fall. After this stage, time started (or the Dispensations of Time).

2. The Literal View – This view teaches that the earth, universe, and angels were created at the same time and does not recognize the Gap Theory as being valid. Below are several arguments against the Gap Theory View.

a. The Gap Theory View teaches that Satan's judgment caused the Pre-Adamite earth to be destroyed.

1. Satan and the other angelic beings were created in 6 days of creation. Angels are created beings which subjects them to time. There is no Biblical evidence that can confirm the teaching that Satan and other angelic beings were created before Genesis 1:2.
2. Job 38:4-7 – “the sons of God shouted for Joy” when God laid the foundations of the earth. Using this verse to argue the existence of angels before the Genesis account of creation is useless. There is no evidence to suggest the “sons of God” had been created before. They were created at the same time and began exercising their purpose to worship God.
3. Ps. 148:2-5 includes the angels with the sun, moon, and stars as part of God's creation.
4. Moses places the fall of Satan somewhere between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 3:1.

b. The Origin of the Gap Theory and Pre-Adamite Race is connected with Babylonian Mysticism.

Many Bible scholars have been taught and have believed that the verse of Genesis 1 describes a previous earth that was destroyed due to the judgment of God upon the sin of Satan. There is no biblical evidence for this theory, but it has become a “fact” in many churches. This idea was formed after the theory of evolution had been created by Darwin. Theologians felt the need to explain the Biblical account of the creation in a way that would not confront the seeming “proof” of evolution. The Gap theory and the theory of a Pre-Adamite race were misguided attempts to protect the integrity of the biblical account. These two theories greatly resemble the mysticism of Babylon. Sumerian and Babylonian mythology provided a similar belief in chaos and restoration. According to the old pagan story, a great conflict had

taken place in the primeval ages between the good hero, the sun-god Marduk, and the female evil dragon of chaos, Tiamit. When Marduk finally won the battle he sliced the huge fish like body of Tiamit in two pieces. The upper portion of her body became the over arching heavens and the lower part became the flat part of the earth where men dwell. Thus the world was created. It was the initial victory of order over chaos. The Roman Catholic church is closely tied to the mysticism of Babylon and Sumer. Many believe this connection has created an idea which has perverted the creation account.

c. **All Scripture references** used to support the Gap Theory and Pre-Adamite Race are all prophetic verses concerning the judgment of God upon Israel and their future with some of these already fulfilled.

3. The Correct View of Genesis 1:1-2 – The description of the earth as being “formless and void” simply illustrates the matter God used to bring into existence the present world. It may be looked upon in the same manner as a potter who picks up a mass of clay to produce a beautiful vase.

- a. Genesis 1:1 should be considered the title or introduction to God’s explanation of Creation. In other words God makes a blanket statement in verse 1 telling us “I created the heavens and the earth.” In verses 2 through 31, he gives a detailed account of his work.
- b. What about the word “replenish” used in Genesis 1:28? Does this word teach that the earth was to be “filled again”? Do not confuse the definition of the word “replenish” because of its similar structure with words like “refinish, reuse, rebuild”. The word “replenish” does not mean to “plenish” again. There is no such thing. Replenish is an Old English word which simply means “to fill to completeness”. The Hebrew word from which replenish was translated is “*male*” and means to “fill or to furnish”.
- c. We have covered this subject sufficient for our purposes in Dispensational Truth, but I encourage every student to study this subject in greater detail to confirm the correct view in your own mind.

THE ANTE-DILUVIAN AGE – Creation to the Flood

1. **The Edenic Dispensation** – This dispensation extends from the creation of Adam to the Expulsion from the Garden. We do not have any record of its duration in the Bible. However, it was probably short and is known as the Dispensation of Innocence.
2. **The Ante-Diluvian Dispensation** – This dispensation extends from the Fall to the Flood, and is known as the Dispensation of Conscience. This period proved what man will do when governed by his own conscience. Conscience is the knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen.2:17). Several thoughts should be considered in studying this era.
 1. Adam & Eve had no conscience before the fall.
 2. Adam & Eve had no children before the fall.
 3. There are two representative men – Cain and Abel.
 - a. Cain – wicked men
 - b. Abel – righteous men
 4. There were two actions to please God.
 5. Mankind was treated as one group. There were no nations.
 6. This dispensation is called the Times of Ignorance in Acts 17:30. During this period, God “winked at” what He did not overlook in the next dispensation.

THE PRESENT AGE – Flood to the Revelation of Christ

3. **The Post-Diluvian Dispensation** – It is known as the Dispensation of Human Government. God allowed man the opportunity to govern himself. He did this to show man his inability. Noah was over 600 years old and full of wisdom and understanding. The youngest was Shem. He was 98 years old. 325 years after the flood the Tower of Babel was built. God confused the language of the people and scattered them throughout the world. This was the origin of nations. This failure of human government is recorded in Gen. 11:1-9. This dispensation was a failure like its predecessors.
4. **The Patriarchal Dispensation** – This dispensation extended from the Call of Abraham to the Exodus, a period of 430 years. It is better known as the Dispensation of the Family.” It deals mainly with Abraham and his seed. In this period we read of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. It ended with the deliverance of the children of Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh.
5. **The Legal Dispensation** – This dispensation extended from the Exodus to the Death of Christ, and is known as the Dispensation of Law. God had previously allowed men to govern themselves. In this period God set up His own rules and regulations through the Law of Moses. God instituted and organized a Commonwealth with His laws, with a visible place of worship. The government was Theocratic. God ruled the nation Israel through representative men such as Moses, Joshua, and the

Judges. The nation Israel soon grew weary of this government and began to be ruled by human kings, which eventually led to their destruction. God, based upon His Written Law given to Moses, watched over and protected Israel during this period. However, they repaid His love and kindness by rejecting Christ, His Son. This rejection ended the Dispensation of Law.

6. The Ecclesiastical Dispensation – Dispensation of Grace

This dispensation extends from the Cross of Christ to the Crown of Christ, or from Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church. It is called a Parenthetical Dispensation, which means God has inserted this period for a distinct purpose. It is placed between the Dispersion of Israel, and the Restoration of Israel.

- a. We live under the Davidic Covenant – A sign by a Son
- b. The elimination of Discrimination – Romans 10:12
- c. A New Body (old=Israel, new=Church; Romans 11, 12:4,5)
- d. God's New Throne – Romans 6:14 – In the Old Testament it was a throne of judgment. In the New Testament it is a throne of Grace. God's attitude is of longsuffering and favor to lost mankind.
- e. The Dispensation's End – Wickedness in the earth – Luke 18:8

7. The Dispensation of Judgment – Three groups of people will be judged during this period.

1. Church – Judgment Seat of Christ – 2 Corinthians 5:10
 2. Gentiles – Judgment of the Nations – Matthew 25:31-46
 3. Jews – Time of Jacob's Trouble – Jeremiah 30:4-7
- These three different groups can be seen in I Thessalonians 4:16.

1. Shout – Judgment for the Church
2. Trump – Notice of Judgment for the Jews.
3. Voice – Judgment for the Gentiles

The Church will be judged individually. Israel and the Gentiles will be judged as nations.

THE AGE OF AGES – The Return of Christ to Great White Throne Judgment

8. The Messianic Dispensation – the Golden Age

- a. The Jews believe the Seventh Thousand of years from the Creation will be a Sabbath of Rest.
- b. This period is mention 6 times in Revelation 20:1-7.
- c. Mankind will be dealt with as a whole, but as many nations.
- d. Jews will be the Head of the Nations. See Deut. 28:13.
- e. There will be a New Covenant. Jer. 31:31, Heb. 8:7-13. Not under law or grace, but righteousness.
- f. Christ will rule – Isa. 11:1,4; Rev. 2:27, 19:15; Psa. 2:9
- g. It ends in destruction by fire. 2 Peter 3:7-13
- h. After this destruction, there will be New Heavens & New Earth
- i. Activity after this renovation – Isa. 66:22-24, Ps. 105:6-10, I Chr 16: 13-17 – The reign of the Jews

THE AGES OF THE AGES – Eternity Future – Better known as The Omega Age, this age represents the beginning of both enjoyment of the Saints, and torment of the Sinner.

1. The Apostle Paul speaks of these ages – Eph. 2:7 – They are the Ages to Come.
2. Satan, the Beast, the False Prophet will be tormented during this eternal age – Revelation 20:10
3. The Saints will reign for the same period – Revelation 22:5 – We have very little knowledge of what the Ages of the Ages will reveal about the plan and purposes of God. However, we will be there to live His plans, and be part of His purposes. It will be the beginning of eternity future!