

Interpreting the Bible

- I. The Bible was “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16).
 1. The inherent quality of the Word of God demands that we believe all of it and practice the parts addressed to New Testament believers: God’s quality of written Word.
 2. The Old Testament is validated by the New Testament (Jn. 2:22; 20:9 *et al*, about 26 times).
- II. In Christendom there are many ardent critics a literal interpretation. They say we:
 1. “Do not use the Old Testament.”
 2. “Dispensation is not a Biblical system; it is imposed on the Bible.
 - 1) The term is used nine times (Lu. 16:2, 3, 4; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10, 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4).
 - 2) Five of these references refer to a period in God’s plan.
 - i. Grace (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4).
 - ii. Millennium/Kingdom (Eph. 1:10).
 - iii. Therefore, each dispensation has a characteristic: name.
 3. A literal interpretation disallows “principilizing” Scripture.
 4. They seem oblivious to the progressive nature of Scripture—accumulative revelation (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26).
- III. A simple example of how God changes the dietary rules for some, or all of mankind: dispensation.
 1. Adam to Noah—vegetarian (Gen. 1:9, 16; 9:3).
 2. Noah to Moses—eat anything, except blood (Gen. 9:3).
 3. Moses to Pentecost—highly restricted diet includes some meats, excludes pork, shell fish etc. (Lev. 11:1-47 *cf.* Gal. 5:3).
 4. Pentecost to the Rapture—eat anything you can be thankful for (1 Tim. 3:4)
 5. During the Tribulation, the 70th ‘week’ of Daniel, the Nation Israel is back under the Law’s restrictions #3.
 6. Eternity—no diet needed (Rev. 21:1-2).
- IV. Four of the seven dispensations are given names.
 1. Promise (Acts 7:17).
 2. Law (Josh. 8:34).
 3. Fulness of the Times, *i.e.*, Kingdom (Eph. 1:10).
 4. This allows us to extrapolate descriptive names for Innocence, Conscience, and Human Government.