

Interpreting the Bible—Dispensations

I. Review from last year.

1. Our objective is to ascertain precisely what God is communicating through His Word.
 - 1) All Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 2:16).
 - 2) We use a systematic approach to interpretation.
 - i. Literal.
 - ii. Historical.
 - iii. Grammatical.
 - iv. Contextual.
2. Revelation from God is progressive—accumulative.
3. A dispensational approach is imposed by Scripture.
4. The concept of a ‘dispensation’ was historically a normal household management system (Rom. 16:23).
5. The Biblical term ‘dispensation’ implies five interrelated elements (Lu. 12:42-43).
 - i. A lord.
 - ii. A steward.
 - iii. The dispensation is the house rules, the realm of authority given the steward.
 - iv. A household.
 - v. An accounting, day of judgment.
6. A dispensation is a unique period in God’s program related to mankind during which He tests some, or all of mankind. There are seven dispensations, each with different rules.
7. The household rules during a dispensation are **NOT** the means for salvation. The rules are lifestyle guidelines for those already in the household.

II. During all dispensations a human is saved by *grace* through *faith* (Rom. 4:1-4).

1. The object of faith and the content of salvation changes throughout the Bible; however, salvation is always by grace through faith.
2. ‘Grace’ is unwarranted favor, unearned. It is the attitude of God by which He gives salvation to those who do not deserve it (Rom. 11:6).
3. ‘Faith’ to believe the Gospel is a divine enabling, freely given to the believer (Phil. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 3:5; Gal. 3:22).
4. ‘Grace’ and ‘faith’ are compatible (Rom. 4:16).