

The Dispensations: How God Relates to Man

Revelation Chapter 4 verses 1 and 2 are a turning point in the book of Revelation. If we compare it to a screen play or a script, it's a plot point, it's a complete turning point in the message that the book of revelation presents. It's where we go from one age to another.

This can be seen by going back to Revelation 1:19 where Jesus gives the command to the Apostle John in chapter 1 verse 19 which is an outline for the book. Jesus is speaking directly and personally to Him.

But before we do, I would like to step back and have a look at the big picture. In the book of Revelation we are going from one age to another — from the church age to the 7 year tribulation, then in to the 1,000 year millennial reign of Jesus Christ, and finally to eternity. But did you know that in the bible there are a series of ages or dispensations, which are a convenient way of arranging world history into time periods that reflect the different ways that God relates to man. I think it's important that we get the big picture so when we start looking at the final dispensations or periods of time, we know where everything fits.

First let's look at what a dispensation is:

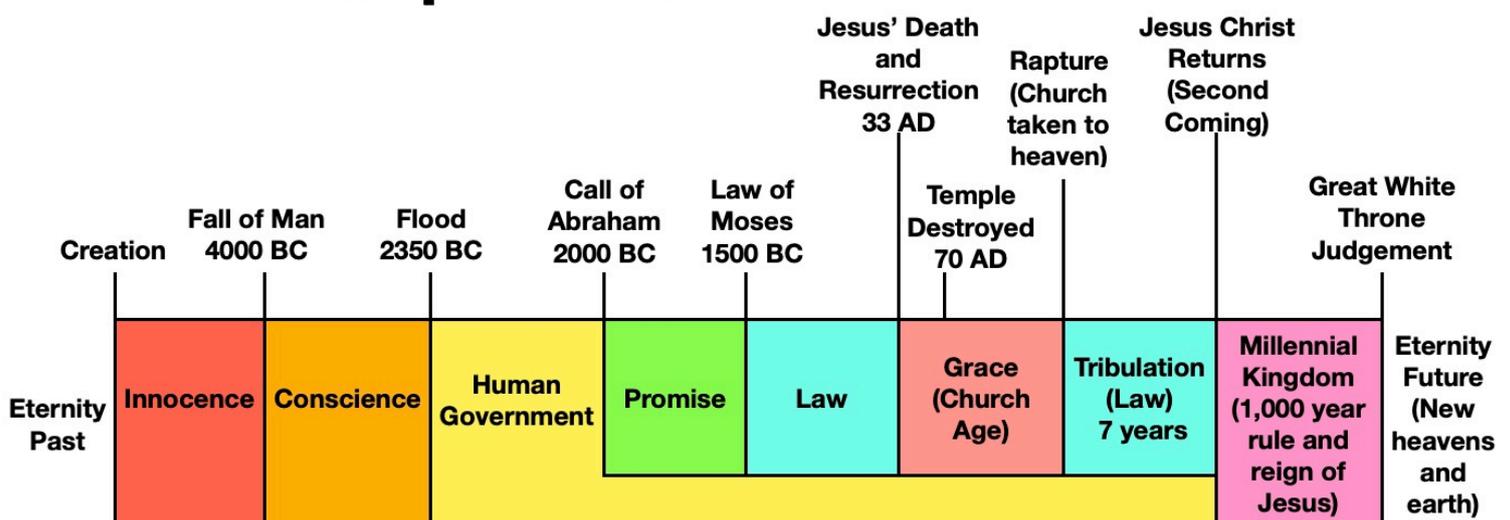
Dispensation: a political, religious, or social system prevailing at a particular time:
 - (in Christian theology) a divinely ordained system prevailing at a particular period of history: e.g. the Mosaic dispensation, when God gave the law to the nation of Israel.

Dispensationalism in the biblical sense is characterised by two primary distinctives:

- 1) a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture, especially Bible prophecy, and
- 2) a view of the uniqueness of Israel as separate from the Church in God's program.

Understanding these two things will go a long way to avoiding errors and false doctrines when studying the bible.

Dispensations of the Bible



Dispensationalists hold to a literal interpretation of the Bible as the best way to interpret or understand the bible

So firstly, dispensationalists hold to a literal interpretation of the Bible as the best way to interpret or understand the bible. The literal interpretation gives each word the meaning it would commonly have in everyday usage. Of course, allowances are made for symbols, figures of speech, and types, but we need to understand that even symbols and figurative sayings have **literal** meanings behind them. So, for example, when the Bible speaks of “a thousand years” in Revelation 20, dispensationalists interpret it as a literal period of 1,000 years (the dispensation or age of the Kingdom of God on earth), since there is no compelling reason to interpret it otherwise.

There are at least two reasons why a literal interpretation of Scripture is the best way to view Scripture. First, philosophically, the purpose of language itself requires that we interpret words literally. Language was given by God for the purpose of being able to communicate. Words are vessels of meaning. If you take away the obvious literal meaning, then they can mean anything **but** the literal meaning. Imagine how difficult it would be to communicate to someone, if what you said couldn't be taken literally. For example, imagine you asked someone to, “please go outside.” The literal meaning is for the person to go outside. But the allegorical meaning could be anything, **except**, “to go outside.” Do you see how the words lose all their meaning when you interpret them allegorically? The same is true for prophecy.

The second reason to interpret all scripture as literal is biblical. *Every prophecy about the first coming of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament was fulfilled **literally**.* Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection all occurred **exactly, or literally** as the Old Testament predicted. *The prophecies were **literal**.* For example, the virgin birth was **literal**. Jesus was **literally** born of a virgin.

There are no non-literal fulfilment of messianic prophecies in the New Testament that relate to the first coming of Christ. Therefore, it seems foolish to then say that the prophecies concerning the second coming of Christ won't also be fulfilled literally.

The literal fulfilment of the messianic prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ argues strongly for the literal method of interpretation of the other prophetic passages in Scripture.

Think about it, if a literal interpretation is not used in studying the Scriptures, there is no objective standard by which to understand the Bible. Each person would be able to interpret the Bible as he saw fit. Biblical interpretation would devolve into “what this passage says to me” instead of “the Bible says.” Sadly, this is already the case in much of what is called Bible study today. Those who don't take the bible literally are generally the ones who deny the 7 year tribulation period and the 1,000 year millennial reign of Jesus, even though they are clearly described in various places in the bible, because they have an allegorical method of interpreting the scriptures, especially prophecy. In the allegorical method of interpretation they say that there is little or no historical or factual connection. It only has a “spiritual” meaning.

For the reasons mentioned, I completely disagree with the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures, especially prophecy. However, this is not a reason to break fellowship with another Christian. There will always be differences in end times theology, we just have to learn to agree to disagree. There are godly, learned men in both camps.

So, the first distinctive or characteristic of dispensational theology was that we take the bible literally. Now we come to the second.

There are two distinct peoples of God: Israel and the Church.

The second main distinctive or characteristic of dispensational theology teaches that there are two distinct peoples of God: Israel and the Church. Dispensationalists, (which is the view I am teaching) believe that salvation has always been by grace through faith alone—in God in the Old Testament and specifically in God the Son in the New Testament. Dispensationalists hold that the Church has **not** replaced Israel in God's program and that the Old Testament promises to Israel have **not** been transferred to the Church, which is a heretical teaching that is often heard these days (especially within the prosperity gospel). Dispensationalism teaches that the promises God made to Israel in the Old Testament (e.g. for the promised land, many descendants, and blessings) will be ultimately fulfilled in the 1000-year period spoken of in Revelation 20, the millennial reign.

Dispensationalists believe that, just as God is in this age focusing His attention on the Church, He will again, in the future, focus His attention on Israel (see Romans 9–11 and Daniel 9:24). There are many scriptures where God explicitly states that He has not finished with the nation of Israel. I'll just read one.

Jeremiah 31:35-37 NLT paraphrase

³⁵ It is the Lord who provides the sun to light the day
and the moon and stars to light the night,
and who stirs the sea into roaring waves.
His name is the Lord of Heaven's Armies,
and this is what he says:

³⁶ **"I am as likely to reject my people Israel
as I am to abolish the laws of nature!"**

³⁷ This is what the Lord says:

"Just as the heavens cannot be measured
and the foundations of the earth cannot be explored,
**so I will not consider casting them away
for the evil they have done.**
I, the Lord, have spoken!

Do you think that God is going to abolish the laws of nature anytime soon? Of course not! Therefore He will never, ever reject His people.

Can the heavens be measured? No way! So God will not even consider casting His people away. We will see this more as we get into the book of Revelation. God has a major role for His people in the tribulation period. The seven year tribulation period is as much about bringing the people of Israel back to Him as it is about judging the world.

This is in contrast to those who interpret the Scriptures, especially prophecy, allegorically. Because they don't take literally all the passages where God specifically promises to never forsake Israel, no matter how much Israel disobeys, they assume that the Church has replaced Israel, and that the promises given to God's chosen nation Israel have been transferred to the church, usually in a spiritual or allegorical sense.

Dispensationalists understand the Bible to be organised into 7 ages or periods of time:

1. **Innocence:** Starting with Creation and Adam and Eve and ending at the fall (Genesis 1:1—3:7),
2. **Conscience:** Starting with Cain and Able and ending at the flood (Genesis 3:8—8:22),
3. **Human Government:** Starting after the flood with Noah and ending at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 9:1—11:32),
4. **Promise:** Starting with Abraham and continuing to Moses (Genesis 12:1—Exodus 19:25),
5. **Law:** Starting when God gave the Law to Moses and finishing when Jesus died on the cross. (Exodus 20:1—Acts 2:4),
6. **Grace:** Starting on the Day of Pentecost and finishing at the Rapture (Acts 2:4—Revelation 20:3),
7. **The Millennial Kingdom:** Starting at the end of the Tribulation Period when Jesus takes possession of the earth at His second coming and finishes at the Great White Throne Judgement. (Revelation 20:4–6).

These dispensations are not different paths to salvation, but different ways in which God relates to man.

Each dispensation includes a recognisable pattern of how God worked with people living in that dispensation or time period. That pattern is:

- 1) Man's responsibility,
- 2) Man's failure,
- 3) God's judgment, and
- 4) God's grace

We will see this later on as we go through each dispensation or time period. To summarise:

Dispensationalism is a theological system that emphasises the literal interpretation of Bible prophecy, recognises a distinction between Israel and the Church, and organises the Bible into different dispensations or periods of time where God changes the way He operates in the world.

There is only one way to be saved: by grace through faith

In Scripture, we observe seven ordered and connected time periods of God dealing with man throughout history, but we need to understand that these are not seven different ways of salvation. God may deal with man differently based on circumstances and the progressive nature of divine revelation, but his method of saving man always remains the same.

During each of these seven dispensations, God establishes his relationship with human beings based upon grace through faith, without any contribution of human merit, works or self-effort:

Ephesians 2:8, 9 NKJV

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Ephesians 2:8, 9 NLT paraphrase

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

In other words, God reveals his grace to man, creating faith in the heart and, thereby, bringing him to eternal salvation. This is how everybody was, is, and will be saved— simply by responding to God's grace and the provision of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on the cross.

But some might protest, but what about the Mosaic or Law dispensation when Israel had received God's law by Moses? Good question.

God used law to show the sinfulness and depravity of man, but he never used law as a means of justification. You will not find a single person who was perfect and was therefore declared righteous because they kept the law. Even under the law, the just lived by faith (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17).

Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV

“Behold the proud,
His soul is not upright in him;
But the just shall live by his faith.

We will come back to this when we get to the dispensation of Law. Now we will go through each of the seven dispensations starting at the beginning. Having your dispensation charts will be helpful here.

1. INNOCENCE

We call the first dispensation, “Innocence”, because man was created and placed in the Garden of Eden without the presence of sin (Gen. 1:28; 2:8). He was not compelled or forced to sin, but, after he was tempted by the serpent, by his own free will he chose to trust Satan instead of God and sinned, resulting in the fall of man. This period called innocence ended with expulsion from the garden of Eden and God cursing the earth (Genesis 3:17–24). By killing animals to create clothing for Adam and Eve, God showed that without the shedding of innocent blood, there can be no covering for the shameful sin of man (Genesis 3:21).

Innocence

- **Man's responsibility:** Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- **Man's failure:** They disobeyed God and did eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- **God's judgment:** — Expulsion from the garden, spiritual separation from God, the earth cursed, bodies started dying
- **God's Grace** — God killed an animal for the first time and clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins. This symbolised that God would make a way for them to become righteous again, and that this would happen by God providing a willing sacrifice that would take the punishment for their sins. God would punish the sin without punishing the sinner. This is the first picture of Christ being the substitute lamb sacrificed in our place. This was their hope of redemption, the promise of a coming Saviour.

2. CONSCIENCE

The second dispensation is known as “Conscience” or “Moral Responsibility”. It started after the fall. Having become like God in knowing good and evil, man was tasked with the responsibility of practicing good through the choosing of what is right. God also initiated the practice of blood sacrifices, the killing of a lamb in anticipation of the coming sacrifice of the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus Christ (Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 12:24). Once again, man fell short of God’s glory during the second dispensation. It ended with the flood.

Genesis 6:5-8 NLT paraphrase

The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶ So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. ⁷ And the Lord said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favour [grace] with the Lord.

Conscience

- **Man’s responsibility:** Choose to do what is right, because they had the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 4:7 NLT paraphrase

“You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

- **Man’s failure:** They disobeyed God and rebelled against God
- **God’s judgment:** Destruction by Noah’s flood
- **God’s Grace:** God saved eight people. Eight is the number of new beginnings. The ark is a picture of salvation.

1 Peter 3:20 NKJV

...when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

3. HUMAN GOVERNMENT

The third dispensation is called, “Human Government”, because it describes the delegation of God’s authority to man in the form of government. It started after Noah’s flood. Through civil government, God instituted a structured relationship between men. As God revealed to Noah, the government’s most important function is the protection of human life.

Gen. 9:5-6 NLT paraphrase

“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶ If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image.

Choosing right or wrong would no longer be decided only by our choices. God gave government the authority to enforce righteousness.

Romans 13:1-2 NLT paraphrase

Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. ² So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

This dispensation ended as man, under the leadership of Nimrod, boldly attempted to usurp God as King of creation (Genesis 10:8-10, 11:1-4). To prevent man from building a tower to the heavens, God scattered humanity by causing confusion when He created multiple languages according to family groups at Shinar, at the City of Babel (Genesis 11:5 – 8). From there, man spread over all the face of the earth and will remain scattered until the second coming of Christ when He comes to rule and reign.

Human Government

- **Man's responsibility:** "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth," i.e. spread out.
- **Man's failure:** They united in their rebellion against God and refused to spread out.

Genesis 11:4 NLT paraphrase

Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."

- **God's judgment:** The scattering of the people around the world when God confused their language.

Genesis 11:7-8 NLT paraphrase

Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other." ⁸ In that way, the Lord scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city.

- **God's grace:** The rainbow, symbolising God's covenant of grace with mankind that He will never destroy the earth with a flood again, even though they deserved it.

4. PROMISE

The fourth dispensation is the era of "Promise". It gets its name from the amazing unconditional promises primarily given to Abraham and the nation of Israel. What were some of the promises? God promised Abraham that his name would be great, that he would be the father of a great nation, that all nations would be blessed through him, and that he would be the recipient of the whole land of Canaan as an "everlasting possession" (Genesis 12:2, 13:14-17, 15:1-7, 18, 19, 17:1-7).

Remember that the promise of the land has never been completely fulfilled by the nation of Israel, Abraham's physical descendants through Isaac and then Jacob. This will happen when God brings them back in to the land (which we are witnessing even today) and will be finally and completely fulfilled during the earth's final dispensation, the Millennial Kingdom (Romans 4:13, Galatians 3:9, 15-18, 29).

Promise

- **Man's responsibility:** Abraham was commanded leave his home land and then dwell or live in the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1)
- **Man's failure:** Abraham and Isaac both went to Egypt to escape hard times and Jacob went there because of what his sons did to Joseph, selling him as a slave
- **God's judgment:** They became slaves in Egypt
- **God's Grace:** God used the experience of slavery in Egypt to make them a great nation, and then deliver them from slavery. Their sin could not prevent God's promises from being fulfilled. Also, there was the promise of the coming Messiah in the picture or type of the passover.

5. LAW

The fifth dispensation is called "Law" for obvious reasons. It begins with God giving his law to Israel through the prophet, Moses. The law promised physical blessings to the nation of Israel like; good rain, financial prosperity, lots of good food, lots of kids, good health, victory over enemies etc. However, if the nation disobeyed, there were specific curses like; drought, famine, disease, poor health, poverty, defeat, death and finally exile — they would be removed from their land.

Why was the law given?

The law teaches the absolute holiness of God, the exceeding wickedness of sin, the importance of submission to God's will, the universality of man's failure, and the goodness of God's grace. It also reveals the importance of God's covenant people to God.

Exodus 19:5-6 NLT paraphrase

Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. ⁶ And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' This is the message you must give to the people of Israel."

Now, here is an important question. Did the law replace the promises given to Abraham? NO! The law did not change anything about the promises of God to Abraham, even though Israel failed to obey it.

Galatians 3:19 NLT paraphrase

¹⁹ Why, then, was the law given? **It was given alongside the promise** to show people their sins. **But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised.** God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people.

Notice firstly that the law **was given alongside the promises** given to Abraham. The way to become right with God didn't change:

Genesis 15:6 NLT paraphrase

"And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV

"...the just shall live by his faith."

The law was just a tool to show people their sins. Today, we still use the moral law of God when witnessing to help people see how sinful they are and therefore understand their need for God's forgiveness.

Notice secondly that "**the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised**" (Galatians 3:19). The promised Saviour or Seed or child of course is Jesus. The law as a system of commandments and regulations was only to be in effect until the time Jesus came to earth and fulfilled it. As Acts 15 says, there's no point in us trying to keep the law because we can't, and we don't have to. We are under the new covenant now, the age of Grace, which is the next dispensation we will cover. The law represents the Old Covenant where the person was required to keep all the sacrificial, cultural and moral laws. Again, now that Jesus has come, we are no longer required to keep the ceremonial and cultural aspects of the law. *This is where it's really important to understand that when one dispensation finishes, another starts.* For the New Covenant to begin, the Old Covenant had to end. Consider the following verses:

2 Corinthians 3:6 NLT paraphrase

He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

Hebrews 8:13 NLT paraphrase

When God speaks of a "new" covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear.

Law

- **Man's responsibility:** The nation of Israel promised to keep every part of the law perfectly.

Exodus 24:7

Then [Moses] took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. Again they all responded, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey."

- **Man's failure:** The people consistently broke God's law, even making a golden calf while Moses was up on the mountain talking with God (Exodus 32).
- **God's judgment:** All the curses written in the law came upon the Nation of Israel. They were defeated by their enemies and taken captive to foreign lands.
- **God's Grace:** There was always a remnant. God never completely destroyed them, but rather showed mercy and saved some so that He might keep his promises in the 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom.

6. AGE OF GRACE

The sixth dispensation is known as, "The Age of Grace" or "The Church Age." It begins in the Book of Acts with the day of pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon people and empowered them to be witnesses to all the world. He promised that he would build his Church upon the "rock" of Peter's confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:15 – 18). Baptism in the Holy Spirit would place living believers into the Church, where there is salvation, the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:16, Acts 1:4, 5; 2:38-39; 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:7).

The emphasis is on salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ's complete work on the cross. The Age of Grace will end abruptly with a series of prophesied events including, the Lord's coming for his Church (the Rapture), followed by the judgments that are a part of the 7 year tribulation period and finally the glorious return of Christ to this earth.

Grace

- **Man's responsibility:** We are Christ's ambassadors. We have been given the message of reconciliation, that is that God is pleading through us, "be reconciled to God" through the sacrifice of Jesus (See 2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Matthew 28:19-20 NLT paraphrase

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- **Man's failure:** People refused to listen to God's plea that they be saved.

John 3:18-19 NLT paraphrase

"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.

- **God's judgment:** The unsaved, including the apostate church, all the false converts, will go into the tribulation period. This is the time called Jacob's trouble in the bible. Times will be tough for the nation of Israel, but even tougher for the rest of the world. God will pour out His wrath on a generally unbelieving world.
- **God's Grace:** There will be a multitude of people from all nations who will respond to the gospel of grace which will be preached during the 7 years by 144,000 Israeli evangelists especially prepared by God, angels, and the very special two witnesses who will prophesy from Jerusalem for the first 3 1/2 years.

**THE RATPRE, SEVEN YEAR TRIBULATION, AND SECOND COMING ALL FIT
HERE CHRONOLOGICALLY (see chart and box below)**

7. MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

The seventh and final dispensation or period of earth history is called, "The Millennial Kingdom" or "The Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ on Earth". Jesus, along with all believers (Jew and gentile), will reign in righteousness over all the earth (Matthew 19:28, 25:31-32, Revelation 1:6, 2:26-27, 3:21, 5:10, 11:15, 20:4-6).

Unlike the Age of Grace, the Millennial Kingdom is entirely future from our perspective. In the Millennium, the gospel of peace will be declared everywhere and there will be world-wide recognition of Jesus Christ as "The Prince of Peace" and "Lord of All" (Isaiah 9:6, Acts 10:36). His greatness will reach the ends of the earth (Psalm 2:8-12, Micah 5:4). Jesus will literally rule the entire world with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9), meaning that He will have complete and total control, except that people born in the *Millennial Kingdom* will still have free choice to choose or reject Jesus as being their king, of accepting or rejecting His gift of forgiveness.

Who will be a part of the Millennial Kingdom? There will be two kinds of people - those who have received their immortal glorified body and those who still have their mortal body.

Firstly, those in their resurrected, glorified, immortal bodies. These resurrected saints includes three groups of people:

1. **The church**, saints who died or were raptured during the church age,
2. **The tribulation saints** who were killed during the tribulation and,
3. **The Old testament saints**—anyone who died before Jesus rose again.

All of these people will have received their resurrection bodies and will be like the angels (they won't be getting married and having kids). Instead, they (us included) will have special responsibilities that are in line with our faithfulness now. The more responsible we are with our faith now, the more responsibility we will be given then as a reward.

Secondly, there are those believers still in their mortal bodies. These are the Jews and gentiles (non-Jews) who repent and put their trust in Jesus during the seven year tribulation, and who also survive to the end of the seven year Tribulation (when Jesus returns at His second coming). These people include the Jews that say, "blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39), as well as the believing gentiles (the sheep—Matthew 25:32-46) who survived the tribulation. All unbelievers (the goats) will be separated out at *the sheep and goat judgement* (Matthew 25:32-46) and cast into hades. The saints who survived the Tribulation (mortal bodies) will enter the 1,000 year Millennial reign of Jesus Christ and will repopulate the earth as they marry and have children of their own. As said before, these children will have free choice to choose or or reject Jesus as being their king, of accepting His gift of forgiveness.

Also, at the beginning of the Millennium, Satan will be bound for a thousand years in the bottomless pit (abyss) (Revelation 20:1-3), and the ecology of the planet will be restored to what it was like in Eden. The earth will be like a paradise (Eden) again.

Then, at the end of the Millennium there is the final rebellion when Satan is released and he makes war with Jesus one last time, only to be defeated and permanently cast into the Lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-15). Following this battle, the earth and heavens are dissolved, and all the unbelieving dead resurrect and are judged at the *Great White Throne Judgement* when they will be sent to the Lake of Fire (the second death). Then there is eternity future, when God creates the new heavens and new earth and that awesome city, the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. Glory be!

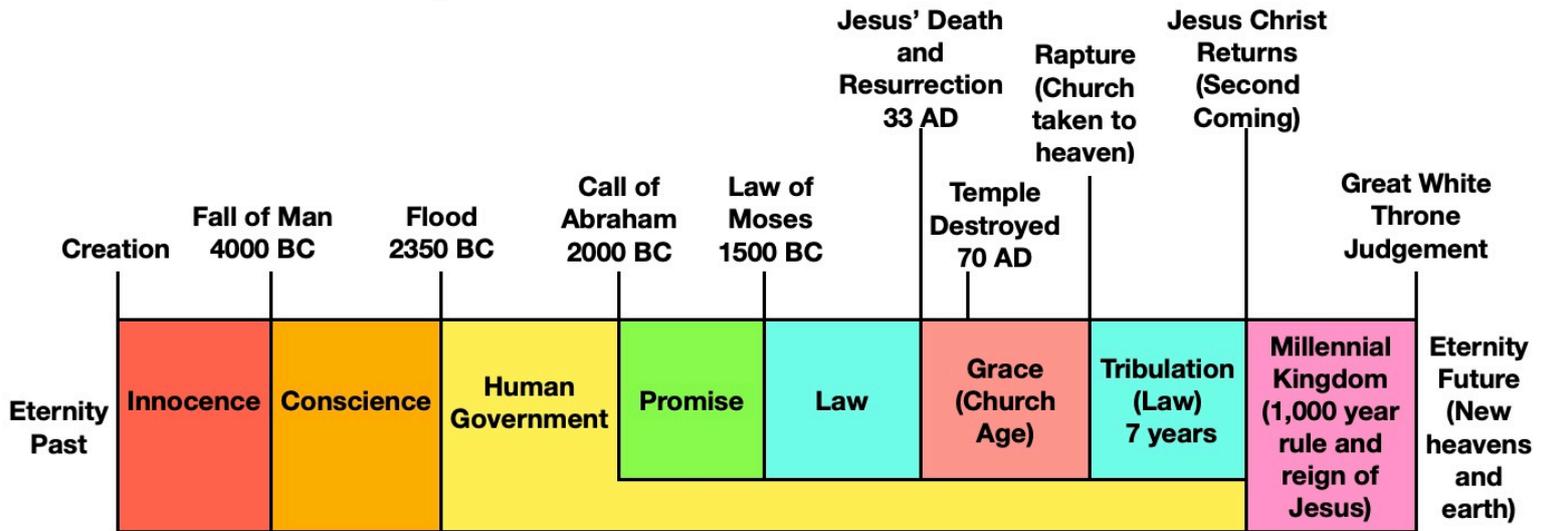
Millennial Kingdom

- **Man's responsibility:** Choose to respond to Jesus gift of eternal life and forgiveness.
- **Man's failure:** In spite of; a perfect climate, all wildlife tamed, world wide peace, and Jesus Christ ruling the world from Jerusalem, there will still be people who will be born during the Millennial Kingdom that will choose not to receive the free gift of salvation in Christ.
- **God's judgment:** Unbelievers (if they survive past age 100), will side with Satan, be defeated, and then be judged at the Great White Throne judgement along with all the other unbelievers. Then they will be cast into the Lake of Fire.
- **God's Grace:** Those born in the Millennial Kingdom who do choose to accept God's pardon, His gift of forgiveness will receive their resurrection bodies at the end of the Millennial Kingdom and enter eternal life.

In conclusion, we should be thankful that God has gradually revealed his plan, over a series of dispensations or ages, to restore fellowship with man in new creation. We know more than previous generations could have ever known about God's plan for "peace on earth, and good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

In summary, to be saved, we must acknowledge God's grace and approach him in faith, as believers of previous dispensations have done. In our case, as people living in the *Age of Grace (Church Age)*, we are saved by repenting of our sins, and accepting God's free gift of pardon or forgiveness. All believers who do this will receive the Holy Spirit as "the gift" and "guarantee" of inheritance until the Lord comes and the final dispensation begins (Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13-14). Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Dispensations of the Bible



THE SEVEN YEAR TRIBULATION

6. CHURCH AGE → RAPTURE → TRIBULATION → SECOND COMING → 7. MILLENNIAL KINGDOM
(5. LAW)

(Refer to chart above)

THE SEVEN YEAR TRIBULATION FITS IN BETWEEN THE SIXTH DISPENSATION, "THE AGE OF GRACE/CHURCH AGE" AND THE SEVENTH DISPENSATION, "THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM". THE RAPTURE (THE REMOVAL OF THE CHURCH FROM THE EARTH) MARKS THE END OF THE CHURCH AGE WITH THE TRIBULATION SOON TO BEGIN. THE TRIBULATION ENDS WHEN JESUS RETURNS AT THE SECOND COMING AND THEN THE 1,000 YEAR MILLENNIAL REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST BEGINS SOON AFTER.

Note: Some charts include the Tribulation as an separate dispensation, but really it is just the completion of the fifth dispensation, *The Law*, being the last seven years (Daniel's 70th week or set of seven years) to complete the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, commonly known as Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy. A total 490 years (70x7 years) was determined for the nation of Israel and Jerusalem. There was exactly 483 years (69 weeks or sevens of years) from the command to rebuild the walls and city of Jerusalem to Messiah the Prince (the triumphant entry—when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey). The final seven years (Daniel's seventieth week) is future and Daniel 9:27 clearly says that it begins when the antichrist confirms an agreement for 7 years with the nation of Israel, but then breaks it by defiling the temple at the half way mark (3 1/2 years).