

Bible Basics Conference

Catford, 08 - 09 November 2008

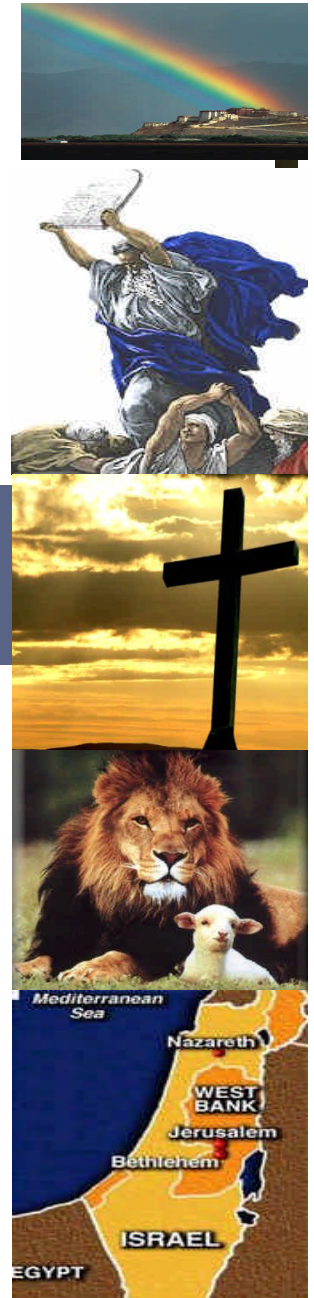
*“What Are Dispensations...
...and Why do they Matter?”*

Note: Audio files (mp3) of these presentations are made available on www.audioteaching.org

www.biblecentre.org

Slide 1

Bible Basics Conference



Agenda



1. The concept of a dispensation
2. What dispensations are there?
3. Law and grace
4. The way of salvation – has it changed?
5. God’s progressive revelation of His purpose
6. Covenants, including the new
7. The literal interpretation of scripture
8. Israel and its future
9. The church – and her hope
10. Dispensational truth and daily living (1)
11. Dispensational truth and daily living (2)
12. Dispensational panorama

Session 1: The Concept of a Dispensation

Hugh Clark

Bible Basics Conference
Catford, 08 - 09 November 2008





Is the term biblical (“oikonomia”)?

What say the scriptures?

Here are some examples of the use of the word “oikonomia”:

A translated “dispensation” or “administration”

- 1) I Cor 9:17 Paul’s responsibility in relation to the Gospel committed to him
- 2) Eph 1:10 The administration of the fulness of times (Millennium)
- 3) Eph 3:2 Paul’s responsibility in relation to the grace of God (revealed to him for the blessing of others)
- 4) Eph 3:9 ‘Administration’ (of the mystery)
- 5) Col 1:25 Paul’s responsibility as a servant of the church



Is the term biblical (“oikonomia”)?

B translated stewardship

- 6) Luke 16:2-4 Stewardship – an arrangement under which the steward was accountable for matters entrusted to him

(The Greek word “oikonomia” is rendered “dispensatio” in Latin, and “dispensation” in English)



Is the term biblical (“oikonomia”)?

Is the concept biblical?

First, we need to identify common features in order to understand what a “dispensation” is:

1. Revelation from God
2. Corresponding responsibility on the part of the one to whom it is revealed
3. “Stewardship” responsibilities mean that failure in carrying them out would bring an end to the stewardship

Apply these three principles to – for example

- Adam, or
- Israel



Is the term biblical (“oikonomia”)?

Second, think of some of the words of the Lord Himself.

- Matthew 11:11 the kingdom of heaven begins **AFTER** John the Baptist
- Matthew 16:18 the church was at that time **TO BE BUILT**
- Thirdly, many other scriptures imply change in God’s dealings with men on earth.
- We shall consider some examples later under “evidence of dispensational change”.



Is the term biblical (“oikonomia”)?

Definition of “dispensation”

“A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose” (C C Ryrie).

We have already seen that a dispensation may involve:

- some distinctive revelation by God
- responsibility on man’s part
- failure may render the “dispensation” no longer viable

To which we must add - even if it appears obvious –

- Dispensations relate to God’s dealings with man (or men) on the earth

Is the term biblical (“oikonomia”)?



- Note that a “dispensation” or an “economy” is an arrangement or a scheme of things
 - it is not primarily a matter of a specific period
 - Thus, it is not correct to make it synonymous with an “age” or time period.
- In practice, of course, because of man’s failure, one economy is put in place of another, and so time periods become identifiable (as we shall see in the next session).

Some evidences of dispensational change



- John 1:17
- Gal 4:4
- Heb 1:1
- I Cor 10:11
- Gal 3:25
- Matthew 9:16-17
- Matthew 11:11
- Rev 1:19

God's ways



- **Did God change His mind or His ways?**
- This question needs a serious answer in view of scriptures like:
 - Genesis 6:5-7, and
 - Matthew 21:33-44
- Perhaps Gen 15:16 helps: God
 - (1) knows what will happen, but
 - (2) waits until man has followed his course.

God's Plans



Other scriptures show that God had His plans and counsels in place BEFORE man was put to the test, eg

- Proverbs 8:30-31
- 1 Peter 1:20
- Ephesians 1:3-6
- Romans 11:29-36

The next session will consider what dispensations we can recognise.

In each one, man was put in responsibility but proved himself not up to sustaining the position into which God had put him.