

Lesson 3:

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE (*continued*)

"Hebrew Poetry and Wisdom"

Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (Note: Job and Lamentations were also written in poetic form)

Time period covered: 1000 B.C. - 550 B.C.

Historical context/setting: Same as "The Rise and Fall of Israel" above: Establishment of monarchy in Israel, rise of Israel as a nation and world power, division and demise of Israel, final defeat and captivity

Primary characters: God and His people; authors - primarily David and Solomon

Primary teaching/themes: Worship, heart-felt prayer, Godly wisdom vs. foolishness, expressive description of married love

Outstanding highlight(s): Psalm 23 - the Good Shepherd, Psalm 119 - God's Word, Ecclesiastes 3 - big picture perspective on life, total intimacy portrayed in Song of Solomon

Christ & redemption:

1. Triad of Psalms 22-24: Christ as suffering and dying Savior, Christ as Good Shepherd, Christ as conquering King
2. Many Messianic references throughout Psalms
3. Personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8 may include descriptions of Christ
4. Ecclesiastes shows futility of life apart from living for the Savior
5. Song of Solomon can be applied to Christ's love for His church and her proper response to Him

"The Fulfillment"

Books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation

"The Fulfillment" (*continued*)

Time period covered: 3 B.C. - 70 A.D. (possibly as late as 95 A.D.)

Historical context/setting: the known world had been conquered by the Greeks with Alexander the Great - the Greek language and culture became dominant; this was followed by Rome's ascension as the world power with its promotion of a government of laws and the building of roads; Israel is under Roman control, and was known as a hotbed of rebellion (cf. the Maccabees at Masada); various religious/political factions are vying to win the culture - Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Zealots; Judea the focal point, with Galilee considered to be a lower class, and Samaria being despised by both Judeans and Galileans; as a result of earlier captivities, Judaism had spread around the world establishing synagogues in most major towns and cities. The Jews were looking for a Messiah, and each faction had their own ideas about what the Messiah would be like.

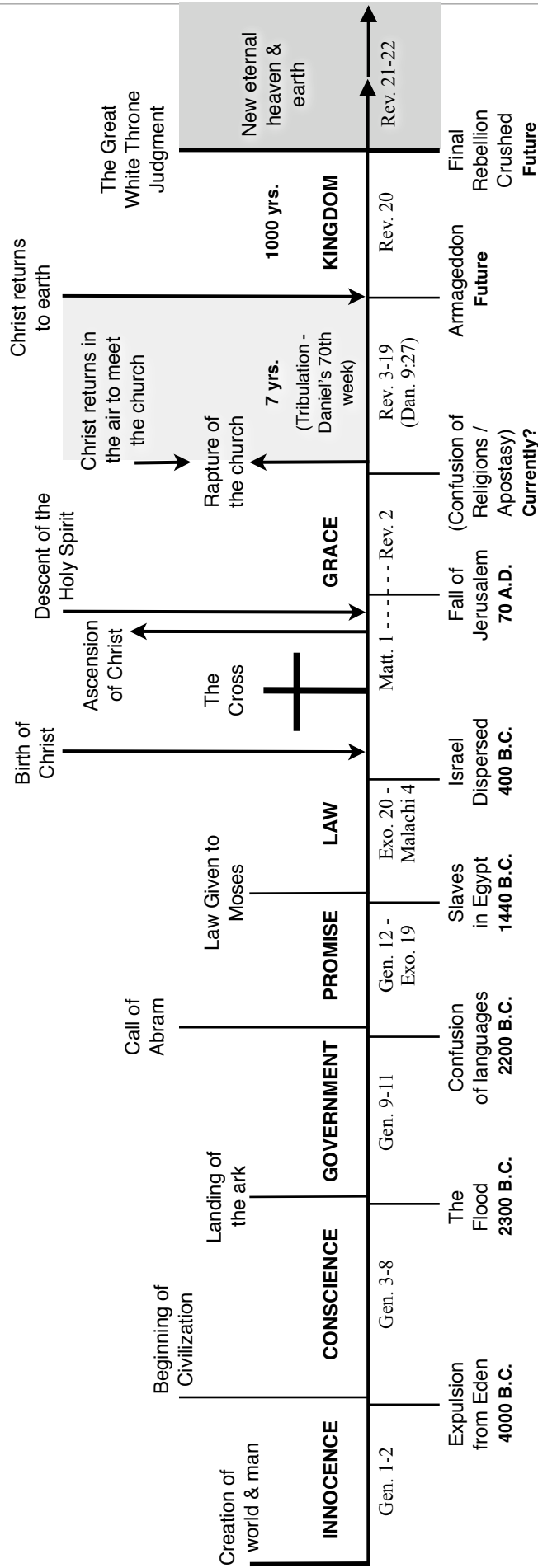
Primary characters: Joseph, Mary, John the Baptist, Jesus, (the 12 apostles) Peter, James, John, Matthew, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon "the Zealot", Judas Iscariot, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, and Timothy

Primary teaching/themes: Christ (Heb. "Messiah") is the fulfillment of not only the messianic prophecies and promises, but also the fulfillment of the Law; Christ is the Son of God incarnate, and therefore Divine; Christ is the substitutionary sacrifice for mankind's sin - the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God; the kingdom of God is first and foremost a spiritual kingdom (esp. for now); righteous living not imposed from the outside but flowing from the inside; Christ's followers are His "body", and they are to be marked by their love for each other and their unity; Christ died for sin, rose again, ascended into heaven, and He will literally return again to earth in the future; in the meantime His followers are to be actively making more followers

Outstanding highlight(s): Christ's death as satisfactory payment for humanity's sin and His literal resurrection; many miracles that point to Christ's true identity; the birth and miraculous growth of Christ's church; persecution of the church and the resulting spread of the gospel; the miraculous conversion of Saul who later became known as Paul; the "Revelation" of future events for the church and the world that lead to the establishment of Christ's earthly kingdom.

Christ & redemption: The New Testament deals most pointedly and thoroughly with this subject, not only the doctrines related to it but the practical implications from it as well.

Biblical Dispensations Chart
 (see opposite side for descriptions/explanations)



NOTE: Chart is not drawn to chronological scale.

Dispensationalism

“Dispensationalism” is a millennialist approach to understanding Scripture. It is almost always “premillennial”. Generally, a dispensationalist believes that God’s plan for the earth includes seven different “dispensations” which are the key to understanding what God is doing, and what He’s going to do.

“Dispensation”

3622 οικονομια oikonomia oy-kon-om-ee'-ah

from 3623; TDNT - 5:151,674; n f

KJV - dispensation 4, stewardship 3; 7

1) the management of a household or of household affairs

1a) specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of other's property

1b) the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship

1c) administration, dispensation

We see this word used in Ephesians 1:10 (and a few other places, though not as clearly).

It refers to the way God is managing things during a particular time period in human history. Each of these time periods is intended to draw man to see his need for God.

The Seven Dispensations

(as taught by C. I. Scofield of the Scofield Bible fame):

1. Man governed by “**innocence**” (Garden of Eden)
 - a. Man does not have a sinful nature and only one command to follow.
 - b. Mankind fails; innocence incapable of meeting man’s need; God intervenes with grace and promise of a Savior.
2. Mankind governed by “**conscience**” (Fall of man to the flood)
 - a. Built-in awareness of right and wrong; humans responsible to choose what they know is right.
 - b. Man fails; wickedness of man is seen to be great; God intervenes with judgment and grace with a picture of salvation (Noah & family in ark).
3. Mankind governed by “**himself (Self-Governed)**” (flood to Abraham)
 - a. Noah and descendants given the right to rule the earth, including the authority to take life if needed to do so.
 - b. Man fails – chooses to worship false gods; God judges at tower of Babel (origin of languages)
4. Mankind governed by “**promise**” (Abraham to Moses)
 - a. God makes a promise to Abraham and justifies him by faith.
 - b. Man fails – does not focus on or believe God’s promise. Abraham’s descendants find themselves in bondage in Egypt.
5. Mankind governed by “**Law**” (Moses to Christ)
 - a. God gives man a perfect moral law, and ceremonial law that accurately points to the coming Messiah.
 - b. Mankind fails – does not keep the Law and misses its intent. God is silent for close to 400 years.
6. Mankind governed by “**Grace**” (Christ to the Rapture)
 - a. God invites every person in the world into a relationship based on grace – can be gained simply by believing.
 - b. Mankind fails – many reject Christ, church fails to reach many. God brings this age to an end with the rapture which will usher in the tribulation period and the next dispensation.
 - c. NOTE: This is our current dispensation – the one we are in now.
7. Mankind governed by a “**Perfect King in a Perfect Kingdom**” (Millennial kingdom)
 - a. God provides a perfectly just government ruled by Christ Himself.
 - b. Mankind fails – many reject Christ’s rule and follow Satan in a final rebellion.

After the final dispensation, the heavens and earth are destroyed and replaced with new ones with no curse of sin, and believers live with the Lord in the new creation forever.