

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

The Word of God

1. God's word does not contradict nor has lies therein.
(See: Psa 12:6; 119:89; Psa 138:2; Jhn 17:17, Ti 1:2)
2. God promised to preserve his word.
(See: Psa 12:6-7); Read Jeremiah 36, this illustrates God's preservation.
3. The Bible alone is our authority for doctrine and the basis of what we believe.
(See II Tim 3:16-17; Rom 10:17)
 - You should believe the Bible in everything it says; Paul did (See Acts 24:14-15) Paul confessed he was a Bible believer.
4. There is only one correct hermeneutical approach to the Holy Scriptures and that is to rightly divide it.
(See: II Tim 2:15)
 - This is a mandate from God on how to interpret the Scriptures, not a suggestion.

How does God teach us deeper things?

(See: I Cor 2:6-16; Jhn 14:26; Jhn 16:7-15) By the Holy Ghost

How do we go about interpreting and understanding Scripture?

- By comparing spiritual things with spiritual things. This is the wisdom of the Holy Ghost (See: I Cor 2:9-13).
- What are "spiritual things?" (See: Jhn 6:63)
- Compare Scripture with Scripture to understand it.
- Then rightly divide it (II Tim 2:15)

Scriptural reasoning for the necessity of right division

There is an immense amount of evidence from the Bible that shows that God's plan, message, and dealings with man can change, have changed, and can continue to change as witnessed by the Bible. Now God is always the same in character (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). He is holy, just, faithful, gracious, and merciful always. But God does change things at his own will several times in the Scriptures. We will now look at some examples of these changes that God himself made.

(1) Dietary regulations

The simplest and most uncontroversial expression of this truth is found in the dietary regulations God gave man. Man's first diet was solely a vegetable/fruit diet (Genesis 1:29-30). Then after the flood, God allowed man to eat both animals and

vegetables with no restrictions (Genesis 9:3-4). Then we see in Leviticus 11 that the Lord restricts again man's diet. However this diet is only for Israelites, not Gentiles. These rules and regulations were for the nation of Israel. (Remember, God did not enter into a covenant with any Gentile nation.) Then during the church age, we have the privilege of eating anything we would like to eat (I Timothy 4:1-5).

(2) Circumcision

No one was circumcised from Adam up until Abraham. God did not command anyone to be circumcised before Abraham. It was with Abraham God established a covenant and the seal of that covenant was circumcision (Genesis 17:9-27). We see in Genesis 17:13-14 that it was mandatory for a man of 8 days old to be circumcised. If you refused to be circumcised, you broke the covenant and your soul was to be cut off from your people. We see in Exodus 4:24-26 that the Lord sought to kill Moses because he didn't circumcise his son. It seems him and his wife got into an argument about it. Eventually his wife cut off the flesh and cast it at Moses' feet. She thought it was barbaric probably. Nevertheless she did it because of her husband. Moses knew that he had to do it according to the command of the Almighty. Once his son was circumcised, God let him go.

After reading the Bible about circumcision, it is pretty clear that you needed to be circumcised back then. I say back then because we today (NT Times) we are not required by God to be circumcised. In fact, Paul contradicts that several times in his epistles (I Corinthians 7:19, Galatians 5:2, 5:6, 6:15). He actually says circumcision is nothing. Can you imagine? Paul is teaching this, that is one of the reasons why he is suffering persecution (Galatians 5:11 6:12-13). It is even fully known that he had been teaching things contrary to Moses among the saints at Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-28). The Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 specifically addresses the issue of circumcision.

Some men from Judea taught the brethren that unless ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. Then some Pharisees that believed said that it was needful to circumcise them [the Gentile believers] and command them to keep the Law of Moses. Why do you suppose they thought that? The apostles and elders considered the matter and came to the conclusion that the Gentiles did not have to be circumcised nor keep the law of Moses, but just to abstain from pollutions of idols, fornication, from things strangled, and from blood (15:20). The problem was that they were not rightly dividing the word and you can't blame them because to Paul were given revelations that were not given to others: one of them being the mystery of the inclusion of the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:3-6). Paul understood all mysteries (I Corinthians 13:1). He was the one that told us how to understand and interpret the Bible. The issue of circumcision through out the Bible teaches us the necessity of proper division of the Holy Bible.

(3) Swearing

Back under the Old Testament God commanded men were to swear by the LORD (Deuteronomy 6:13). However Jesus was teaching “contrary” to the LORD. He said to swear not at all (Matthew 5:34-37, James 5:12). Under the NT we are not to swear at all. There is no contradiction: only right division of the word of truth clears up this matter.

(4) Sabbath Keeping

God commanded Israel to keep the Sabbath Day (Exodus 20:9-11). Anyone who defiled the Sabbath was to be killed (Exodus 31:14-17, 35:2). A man was stoned according to the word of the LORD for gathering sticks on the Sabbath Day (Numbers 15:32-36). In Colossians 2:16-17 we are told not to let man judge us in respect to Sabbath days. Clearly there is a difference between the NT and OT regarding Sabbath Day keeping. The Scripture tells us that we are now no longer under the law but under grace (Romans 6:14). The issue of Sabbath keeping illustrates the necessity of proper division of the Scriptures.

There are several other subjects in the Bible that demonstrate the necessity for proper division on the Bible (sacrifice for sin – no more sacrifice for sin, eternal salvation schemas have changed throughout the dispensations). These four biblical illustrations are adequate for contending for the truth of and application of II Timothy 2:15. Sometimes we have preconceived notions about God and his word based upon man’s opinions and doctrinal statements or creeds of denominations: nevertheless the Scripture is our sole source for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect throughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16).

“Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”

See the verses in II Timothy 2:15; 2:7; I Timothy 4:16; II Peter 3:15-16

II Timothy 2:15 – we are to rightly divide the word of truth

I Timothy 4:16 – the importance of doctrine

Doctrine – simply means “teaching” or “instruction.” All scripture is profitable for doctrine (II Timothy 3:16). What you believe should come from and be based upon the Holy Scriptures (Romans 10:17).

- Did the LORD reveal everything that we know today to the prophets of the Old Testament? No (Read Isaiah 28:9-13).

There are differences and divisions in the Scriptures that we need to make in order to correctly understand the Bible. If you don’t rightly divide the Bible, you will have contradictions in your Bible. To simply illustrate the fact that the Bible is divided and needs to be divided let us look at a few examples.

1. Old Testament and New Testament: Before any effort of your own, the Holy Word of God is divided into two parts from the beginning. Clearly there are differences between the two testaments (see Jeremiah 31:31-34).
2. Jew, Gentile, and Church: In the Bible there are three groups of people (I Corinthians 10:32)
3. Different Gospels: There are at least 3 different gospels in the Bible.
4. Different Dispensations, Administrations, and operations: There seems to be at least 7 dispensations in the Bible, some count 9, others 8. It all depends on the criteria. Some call the tribulation a dispensation, other's do not. That's fine. The point is that you see the differences between the tribulation time period and the church age dispensation.

Are these contradictions?

Psalm 51:9-11 and John 14:16, 26

Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:20 and Matthew 5:33-36

Luke 18:18-22 and Ephesians 2:8-9

No, if you rightly divide the word of truth (see Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The Bible believer should believe in dispensations because it is biblical. You cannot lump the whole Bible together and apply everything (or what you want) to yourself. This is dangerous and can lead to false doctrines.

The Difference between the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church (I Corinthians 10:32)

The Jew

* This term is referred to all Israelites and not those just of the tribe of Judah. Technically a Jew is someone of the tribe of Judah, but the Scripture also uses the word Jew as referring to Israelites in general (Acts 18:24, Acts 21:39).

- Descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12:1-3; 26:1-4; 28:10-15)
- The Jews are the writers, preservers, and transmitters of the Holy Scriptures (Romans 3:1-2)
- They gave the world a Saviour (Genesis 12:1-3)
- Jesus says salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22)
- To the Jews pertaineth the adoption, glory, covenants, giving of the laws, service of God, the promises (Romans 9:4)

Did God ever make a covenant with the Gentiles?

Important: You cannot take the promises that God made to Israel and apply them to yourself, the church, or the Gentiles. Israel is promised earthly blessings for obeying the commandments of God. One of the physical blessings that God promises Israel is a kingdom (the kingdom of heaven). Is the church promised a kingdom?

Extremely important: The church or the Gentiles do not ever replace the Jews. This is against Scripture. There is no such thing as a new Israel. Some say there is and that the "new Israel" is the church. The problem is that there is no scriptural support for that

claim. God is not done with the Jews; he has not cast away his people (Read Romans 9-11).

God did not cast away his people (Romans 11:1). The Jews stumbled over the stumblingstone (Romans 9:30-33) but will not and have not fallen (Romans 11:11). God has concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all (Romans 11:32). Read Hosea 3:4-5. Jews are partially blinded until the fullness of the Gentiles come in (Romans 11:25-26).

Restoration of the Jews guaranteed (Amos 9:14-15). Read Isaiah 11:1-12. Gathering from the four corners of the earth: This did not happen in the return from Babylon but it happened (or is happening) when? Today!

Read Jeremiah 16:14-15; Isaiah 43:5-7; and Ezekiel 36:24-32. They will go back to their land unconverted. The Jewish nation to be born in one day? (Isaiah 66:8)?

The Gentile

- Anyone that is not a Jew is a Gentile
- "Times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24)
- The beginning of this period likely began with Nebuchadnezzar around 600/500 BC and will end when Christ returns.
- The times of the Gentiles probably refers to the rule that the Gentiles have over the Jews. Obviously this is still the case today and this will continue until the King returns. An outline of the times of the Gentiles can be found in Daniel 2:31-45; 7:2-28.

The Church

- Began at Pentecost (Acts 2) and ends at the gathering in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4) *Resurrection to Rapture*.
- It is not a kingdom
- Church is compared to a house (I Timothy 3:15) a temple (I Cor 3:16-17) and a body (I Cor 12:27-31) but never a kingdom.
- Christ is spoken of as the head of the church (Eph 1:22-23).
- The Church is a mystery, meaning that the "church" was not revealed in the OT (Eph 3:1-11).
- The prophets could not see the gap between the suffering and glory of the Messiah (I Peter 1:9-12).
- Made up of Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:12-18)

The Dispensations of the Holy Scriptures

Read II Timothy 2:15, II Timothy 4:2-5

Notice the warning from Peter (II Peter 3:15-16)

God reveals things gradually, not all at once (Isaiah 28:9-13)

Definitions:

Covenant-A covenant God made with man. A covenant is “to enter into a covenant or formal agreement; to agree formally or solemnly; to contract.”

Dispensation-Distribution; the act of dealing out to different persons or places; that which is dispensed or bestowed; a system of principles. Dispensation comes from the word dispense which means “to deal or divide in parts or portions.” The word dispensation appears four times in the Bible (I Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 3:2, Colossians 1:25).

There are at least 7 dispensations in the Bible. The 7 dispensations are as follows:

1. Dispensation of Innocence (Genesis 1-3)
2. Dispensation of Conscience (Genesis 4-8)
3. Dispensation of Human Government (Genesis 9-11)
4. Dispensation of Promise (Genesis 12-Exodus 19)
5. Dispensation of Law (Exodus 20-Death of Christ)
6. Dispensation of the Grace of God (Resurrection-Rapture)
7. Dispensation of the Kingdom (Revelation 19-20)
- * Eternity: Dispensation of the fullness of times (Ephesians 1:10)

Before we get into a discussion of each of these dispensations, it is pertinent to point out a few things. The Scripture references for the dispensations are *not* absolute. What that means is that relatively speaking, this is how they appear chronologically throughout the Bible and history. The Bible is not in a historical chronological order; rather it is in doctrinal chronological order. None of the names given above for the dispensations are found in Scripture except the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the fullness of times. The names given reflect and characterize the content of each dispensation. This will be explained in further detail below. The Bible tells us to *rightly* divide the word of truth. There is a right way and a wrong way when it comes to dividing up the Holy Scriptures. Everyone seems to agree on how the OT is divided up (5 dispensations in the OT). There is a debate though as to how to rightly divide the NT.

The Gospels without a doubt are under the dispensation of the Law. Jesus was born under the law (Galatians 4:4-5). The NT could not have been in effect until after the death of the testator (Hebrews 9:16-17). The only portions of the Gospel that are under the dispensation of the grace of God would be post-resurrection chapters or passages. This is important to remember when reading the gospels since a lot of what is said in them doesn't fit with church age Pauline Epistle doctrine (except the gospel of John it seems).

NOTE: We are not lifting up Paul above the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are simply going by what the Apostle to the Gentiles said. Remember we are part of the church, the body of Christ. This did not exist before Jesus' incarnation; neither did it exist while he was on earth! The body of Christ started after the resurrection, likely at Pentecost (Acts 2).

The debated divisions in the NT have to deal with which books and epistles are considered church age (dispensation of the grace of God) and which books are primarily tribulational (Post church age, i.e. the rapture till the millennial reign of Christ). Some believe Romans – Philemon are church age epistles while they believe Hebrews-Jude (referred to from henceforth as the General Epistles) are primarily for those in the tribulation.

After the translation of the church age saints at the rapture, there will be a 3 ½ year tribulation on earth which Revelation speaks of. The prophets such as Daniel and Jeremiah spoke of these days when there will be terrible judgments upon earth: destruction and death widespread which ends at the Day of the LORD when the LORD comes with ten thousands of his saints. Clearly Revelation is applicable during the tribulation. Also Revelation will be better understood “at the time of the end” as will the book of Daniel.

This camp believes that the General Epistles are primarily applicable to the tribulation saints and not to the church. This does not mean that there is nothing applicable at all in these epistles to the church, but primarily it is applicable to the tribulation saints. This camp sees contradictory doctrines such as Salvation by faith and works in James 2 which doesn't seem compatible with Pauline Doctrine. They also see verses in the book of Hebrews which seems to contradict salvation by faith alone which is taught by Paul. This may be the main reasoning why they believe James-Revelation are books and epistles doctrinally applicable during the tribulation.

Another camp sees there being no contradictions between Pauline Doctrine and General Epistle Doctrine. They believe the General Epistles are written to the church and are to be followed and obeyed by the church.

You may ask yourself, “Shouldn't we follow everything the Bible says?” The answer is yes and no. Yes we are to obey all the words of the LORD our God. No doubt. However, not everything in the Bible is addressed to the church. Remember, the Bible is a Jewish Book written by Jews that were moved of the Holy Ghost (see Romans 3, 9:1-5; II Peter 1:21). There are three different types of people in the Bible: the Jew, the Gentile, and the church of God (I Corinthians 10:32). What is addressed to the Jew is meant for the Jew, what is addressed to the church is meant for the church, what is addressed to the Gentile is meant for the Gentile.

In the whole OT God is mainly speaking to the nation of Israel. God also speaks to Gentiles in the OT, but very little. In the NT, God addresses all three groups. The Church is a brand new thing. It is the body of Christ. The church did not exist in the OT. I repeat the church did not exist in the OT. The church is not “new Israel” or “Israel”. This is an important distinction one must make.

With that said, we shall look at the different dispensations of the Holy Bible in more detail. Remember, we are commanded of God to rightly divide the word of truth. This is not a suggestion, it's a mandate. You are not supposed to lump the whole Bible

together and apply all of it to yourself. We are in the church age. Therefore what God says to the church we are to hear, observe, and do. May the LORD God of Israel by his Holy Spirit give unto you wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding of him and his word.

1. Dispensation of Innocence (Genesis 1-3)

Man was *originally* created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). There was no death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain in the beginning. After the six days of creation, God saw everything that he made and said it was very good (Genesis 1:31). Why would God say everything was very good if there was death in the world already? There was not billions of years of evolution and billions of years of death before Adam stepped onto the scene. The Bible is very clear that sin entered into the world by one man (Romans 5:12). In Romans 5:14, death reigned from Adam to Moses, though sin was not imputed since there was no law. I Corinthians 15:21 says that by man came death. Death did not exist (that's a funny way to put it) until Adam's transgression. There is no way evolution is compatible with the Bible.

Anyway, God created a full grown man and a full grown woman able to reproduce the first day. God created everything with age. Notice on the 4th day of creation all of the stars, sun, and moon were created. The evening and the morning were the 4th day. This tells you plainly that the creation days are literal 24 hour days. Night is 12 hours long and Day is 12 hours long: add them together and you get 24 hours. That is one day and a 24 hour day starts at sundown. The whole earth was filled with vegetation on the 3rd day (Genesis 1:9-13). After 6 days, everything was finished and God rested on the 7th day. The Sabbath is Saturday, not Sunday. God commanded Israel to rest on the 7th day because God rested on the 7th day from all his works (Exodus 20:8-11).

Man was put into the Garden of Eden by God and received commandments from the Holy One. Adam was not righteous, he was innocent. He had no sin, neither had he righteousness. I suppose Adam may have gained righteousness if he obeyed the voice of the LORD, but we all know he disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden tree. Also, Adam did not have a knowledge of good and evil. He received this knowledge after he ate of the tree. All Adam knew was what God revealed to him and built into him.

The Edenic Covenant:

1. Multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:28)
2. Subdue the earth for their use (Genesis 1:28)
3. Exercise dominion over animal creation (Genesis 1:28)
4. Have a vegetable diet (Genesis 1:29)
5. Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:17)

These were the commands that LORD God gave unto man. Adam and Eve sin against their Maker, which forces God to act in a different way.

2. Dispensation of Conscience (Genesis 4-8)

Man has received a knowledge of good and evil by eating the forbidden fruit. Death has entered into the world and permeates it. God makes a covenant with Adam which we call the Adamic covenant.

The Adamic Covenant:

1. The serpent is cursed to crawl upon the ground and eat dust (Genesis 3:14)
2. Woman-greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception (Genesis 3:16); bring forth children in sorrow (Genesis 3:16); have a desire for her husband and be in subjection to him (Genesis 3:16).
3. Man-ground was cursed (Genesis 3:17); man to labor in sorrow and sweat and physically die (Genesis 3:17-19).

Also within this covenant we find God made a promise to bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). This is the first prophecy of a future Redeemer (who today we know as the Lord Jesus Christ) that would bruise the serpent's head (see John 12:31, Hebrews 2:14-18). The seed of the woman (Jesus Christ) had its heel bruised by the serpent in that he killed the Anointed One of God, but God rose him from the dead, Amen.

Here it seems man was left with his conscience to guide him; no commands were given here. Man became exceedingly wicked and God would later destroy the world with a flood (Genesis 6).

3. Dispensation of Human Government (Genesis 9-11)

The dispensation of human government comes after the Genesis flood which destroyed the whole earth, save 8 souls. The Lord made a covenant with Noah and the rest of the creation: the LORD would no longer destroy the whole earth with a flood. God smelled Noah's sacrifice and said in his heart that he would not curse again the ground for man's sake, neither smite anymore every living thing which he had done (Genesis 8:20-22).

The Noahic Covenant:

1. God would not curse the ground (Genesis 8:21)
2. Not flood the earth again to destroy it (Genesis 9:11)
3. The seasons and day and night will not cease as long as the earth remains (Genesis 8:22)
4. Rainbow as a sign of the covenant (Genesis 9:12-13)
5. Animals would fear man (Genesis 9:2)
6. Animals can now be eaten as well as vegetable (Genesis 9:3)

Commandments:

1. Multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 9:1, 7)
2. Not to eat blood (Genesis 9:4)

3. Capital Punishment (Genesis 9:5-6)

In Genesis 1:29, the LORD God gave man a vegetable diet, but in Genesis 9:3, God allows them to eat animals as well. There is no contradiction, God is now allowing man to eat meat as well. God's character has not changed, but God's dietary regulations changed.

The destruction of the earth by the flood shows us God hates sin (Genesis 6:4-7). Under this dispensation, God laid out simple rules. Mankind was now responsible for punishing the sins of individuals. Man should disperse and replenish the earth. Instead, man rebelled and created the tower of Babel (Genesis 11).

4. *Dispensation of Promise (Genesis 12-Exodus 19)*

The LORD speaks to Abram in Genesis 12 and tells him to leave his country and go to a land that he would show him. God later established a covenant with Abraham and his seed that would follow.

The Abrahamic Covenant:

1. Make Abraham a great nation (Genesis 12:2)
2. To bless him (Genesis 12:2)
3. To make his name great (Genesis 12:2)
4. Blessing to others (Genesis 12:2)
5. Bless those that bless him (Genesis 12:3)
6. Curse those who curse him (Genesis 12:3)
7. Bless all families of the earth in him (Genesis 12:3)

- How was this fulfilled? See Galatians 3.

This promise relates only to the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, then Jacob. The only part that is applicable to the Gentiles is the blessing that would come to the world from Abraham's seed, Jesus Christ. Also by blessing Israel, Gentiles would be blessed of God.

*Required (Genesis 17:9-14): Circumcision is a token of the promise God made to Abraham and his seed. Whosoever rejected circumcision was cut off and not a partaker of the promises and excommunicated (Genesis 17:14).

God made these promises to Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob. He didn't make these promises to any other nation(s). This dispensation ends with the children of Israel as servants in Egypt.

5. *Dispensation of Law (Exodus 19-Death of Jesus Christ)*

The dispensation of the law was given by God on Mt. Sinai to the children of Israel. Israel possessed the word of God and knew the commandments of the Almighty. The Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God as the Scriptures said. The LORD God made known unto the children of Israel his righteous statutes and judgments. He hath not dealt so with any other nation unto this day. God referred to

Israel as his firstborn son in Exodus 4:22. The LORD loved the people and he also loved the stranger, Amen. The dispensation of law was in effect until the death of Christ Jesus our Lord. Read Galatians 4:4, Galatians 3:10-29.

The Mosaic Covenant:

1. Some have estimated that there are a total of 613 commandments God gave unto the children of Israel. The Ten Commandments are just the start. The whole law is found in Exodus – Deuteronomy with some repetition of some laws and festival regulations and offering regulations.

2. Sabbath Day observance required (Exodus 31:16-17)

Note: God commanded Israel to keep and remember the Sabbath day. It is a sign between Israel and God. Again, the church and Israel are not the same “thing” they are different. In fact, the church is not required to observe the Sabbath day at all (Colossians 2:16-17).

The dispensation of law ends with the Jews murdering their Lord and King. Remember every dispensation ends in failure and apostasy.

6. Dispensation of the Grace of God (Resurrection-Rapture)

We are currently in the dispensation of the grace of God. Sometimes this is referred to as the church age. During this time, God is calling out of the Gentiles a people for his name. The Jews have been partially blinded for our (us Gentiles) sakes that we might obtain mercy. After the fullness of the Gentile come in, God removes the vail from Israel’s eyes and all Israel shall be saved (see Romans 9-11).

Up until the resurrection of Messiah, the dispensation of the law was still in effect. Christ was born under the law and the law was still in effect until his death. This is important to remember when reading the gospels. In this dispensation, God commands all men everywhere to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved from hell fire (Acts 16:30-31, Acts 20:21).

The New Covenant:

The New Covenant is not made with the church. It is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This covenant is not according to the Mosaic Covenant (that is the Old Testament), it is different. The LORD speaks of what it entails.

1. The LORD would put his law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33)
2. God will be their God, and they (Israel) shall be his people (Jeremiah 31:33)
3. They shall all know the LORD (Jeremiah 31:34)
4. The LORD will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more (Jeremiah 31:34)

This New Covenant is the covenant Jesus refers to in the gospels (Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20). The church has been made partakers of the NT along with Israel. This was a mystery not revealed in the OT (Read Ephesians 3). The Gentiles have been made partakers of the Jews spiritual things (Romans 15:27).

The “rapture” of the church (I Thessalonians 4:13-18) concludes the church age or the dispensation of the grace of God. The church age ends in apostasy (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).

7. Dispensation of the Kingdom (Revelation 19-20)

The dispensation of the kingdom refers to the earthly kingdom that was promised to be restored to the nation of Israel. It is when Jesus Christ returns to earth and sets up the kingdom of heaven. The promise of an eternal kingdom goes back to David. II Samuel 7:11-17 and I Chronicles 17:10-15 speak of the manner of the kingdom. The LORD said that he would make David a house. The throne of David’s kingdom and house would remain for ever. One of David’s son’s would God “raise up” after David and God would establish his kingdom. Raise up means to bring to life (Genesis 38:8, Deuteronomy 18:15, Jeremiah 30:9). God would raise up David’s seed, which would be one of David’s son’s (I Chronicles 17:11). God would resurrect the King of Israel from the dead which was one of David’s son’s! Amen (See Acts 2:30-33, I Corinthians 6:14). Isaiah said a son born unto Israel would be called the mighty God and Everlasting Father: The increase of his government and peace would see no end (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The kingdom of heaven ceased to exist in Israel since the Babylonian captivity. It will be restored when the King whose right it is come (Ezekiel 21:25-27). At the Day of the LORD, The Word of God comes with his saints and angels and wages war on all those nations that come against Israel and Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:1-9, Revelation 19:11-16). The kingdom spoken of by the prophets of the Most High will finally be on earth. The Great King, the LORD of hosts will dwell on earth! Christ will reign for 1,000 years before one final rebellion by the devil.

During the millennial reign of Christ, Satan is bound for the 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3) and the tribulations saints are resurrected and live and reign with Christ (Revelation 20:4). After the 1,000 years are expired, Satan is loosed and gathers nations to make one final rebellion against the Holy One. They compass Jerusalem, wherein the saints dwell, and fire come downs from God out of heaven and devours them (Revelation 20:7-10). Satan is finally cast into the lake of fire. This millennial reign of Christ ends with rebellion.

**Eternity: The Dispensation of the Fullness of Times (Revelation 21-22)*

After the millennial reign and the Great White Throne of Judgment, there is a new heaven and a new earth. (Revelation 21:1). God dwells with men! God will wipe away all tears from our eyes: and there shall be no more death, sorrow, pain, or crying

(Revelation 21:3-4). God makes all things new. The holy city, New Jerusalem which was in heaven descends to earth. Here is the dwelling place of the saints of God.

The tree of life is on either side of the river of water of life which flows out from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Revelation 21:1-2). We will serve the LORD and we shall see his face and his name shall be in our foreheads (Revelation 21:3). God will be all in all; and God will be glorified through the Lamb of God. The Glory of God lightens the city, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Only those written in the Lamb's book of life may enter into the city.

Our eternal home, on earth in New Jerusalem with the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: the Holy One of Israel. The mystery of God is finished. It is done. The Greatest Story ever told ends after a short 7,000 years and begins with new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. We will see the Saviour, will we see the face of the Almighty: the face of him that created us, the face of him that loved us, and gave himself for us. This is life eternal, knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

The LORD God of Israel bless you and keep you. May Jesus Christ be praised! Amen. Remember the final words of our Lord: Surely I come quickly.