

Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism is a method of Biblical interpretation which claims the existence of a series of “dispensations,” or periods of history. In each of these dispensations, God has dealt in different, but not contradictory ways, with humanity to effect salvation. These methods are generally stated to be contained in covenants.

This method is generally focused on eschatology, based on readings of Daniel and Revelation as long-term, detailed predictive prophecy. The schemes expect a rapture, or removal of the church from the earth. This will be followed by a period of tribulation, marked by the rise of an Anti-Christ (in some schemes, the rapture is in the middle or end of tribulation). In some schemes, this Anti-Christ will be false Messiah who misleads Israel; in others, it is a revived Roman Empire. Then Israel will accept Jesus as Messiah, which will be followed by a millennial (1000 year) period with the direct rulership of Christ from Jerusalem.

Scripture is generally read literally. Many believe that only the King James (Authorized Version) translation is reliable. Jesus is always the redemptive figure, and blood atonement is generally accepted. Before his life, people are saved by the sacrifice which is yet to come by accepting the promise of a coming Messiah in the revelation made to date.

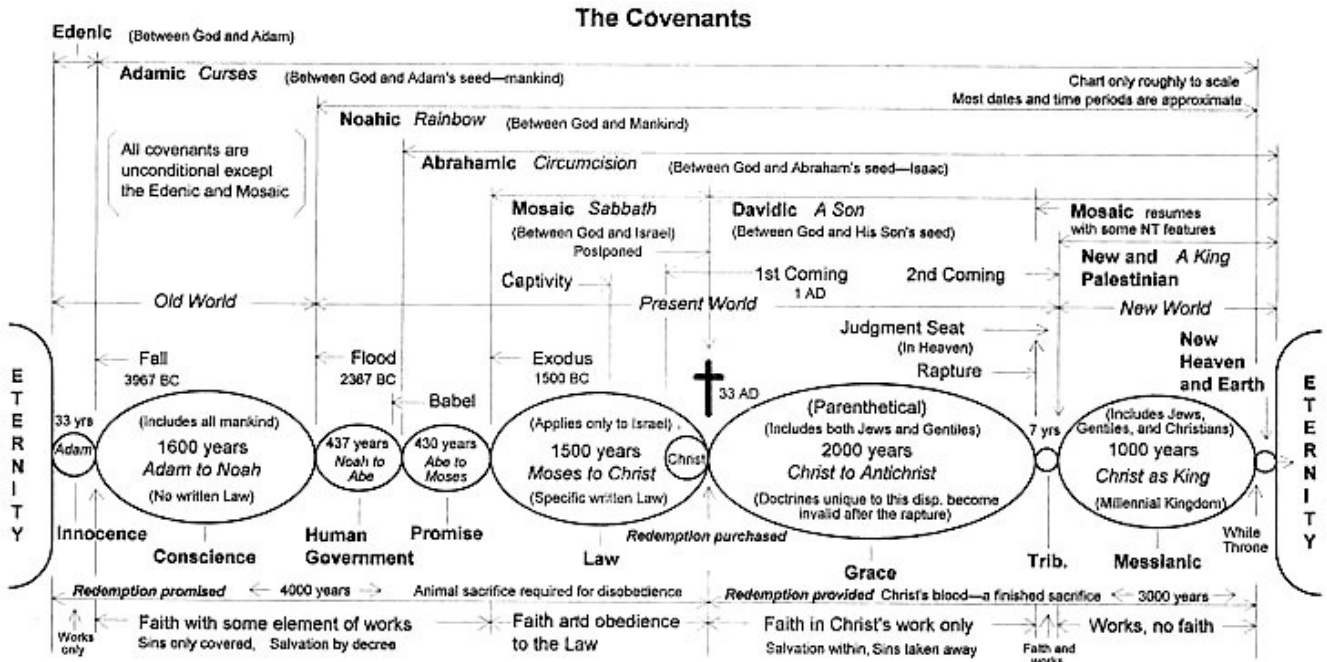
The modern movement began with John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), who stated that Isaiah 32 teaches a separation of earthly and heavenly rule and blessing, which in turn resulted in the idea that the church was a temporary, spiritual interruption to carry out the divine plan. Darby believed that the rapture was imminent.

The American evangelist Dwight Moody (1837-1899) accepted the tenets of dispensationalism, although in his typical manner of not going into great detail. Reuben A. Torrey (1856-1928) was a superintendent of MBI and later pastor of MC. In 1910-1915, he edited *The Fundamentals*, a series of pamphlets intended for pastors, which gave the name Fundamentalism and added a body of doctrine.

Dispensationalism became popular with the 1909 reference Bible of Cyrus Scofield (1843-1921), which placed notes in and along the text of the Bible (to this day, many people do not realize that these notes are not part of the text!). His seven-stage scheme was picked up and promoted by Dallas Theological Seminary, which became prominent after World War 2. Hal Lindsey, a DTS graduate, wrote *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, which was published 1970 on the heels of the Six-Day War. The original version stated that since the United States is not mentioned in Daniel or Revelation, it would not be an important nation by the time of tribulation. He believed that the emerging European Union would be a revival of the Roman Empire, ruled by an antichrist. A later book, *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon*, stated that a Soviet nuclear attack was imminent, and would destroy the United States. He has since stated that Barack Obama's election is the culmination of the trends of 1960's counterculture and the first step to the establishment of a false religion, and claims that his confirms his predictions in the other books, which have been extensively revised through the years.

There are from 3 to 8 dispensations, following a general scheme:

	Genesis 1-3	Genesis 3-8	Genesis 9-11	Genesis 12-Exodus 19	Exodus 20 - Acts 1	Acts 2-Revelation 20.3	Revelation 20.4-6	Revelation 20.7-22
3	Law					Grace	Kingdom of God	
4	Patriarchal promise				Mosaic Law	Church	Zion: restoration of Davidic kingdom	
7	Paradise		Noah	Abraham	Israel	Gentiles	Spirit	Millennium
8	Edenic innocence	Conscience	Civil government	Patriarchal Promise	Mosaic Law	Grace and Church	Millennial kingdom	Eternity



The Dispensations

Illustration 1: Chart of 7-stage dispensationalism (http://www.biblebelievers.com/Dispensation_Chart.html)

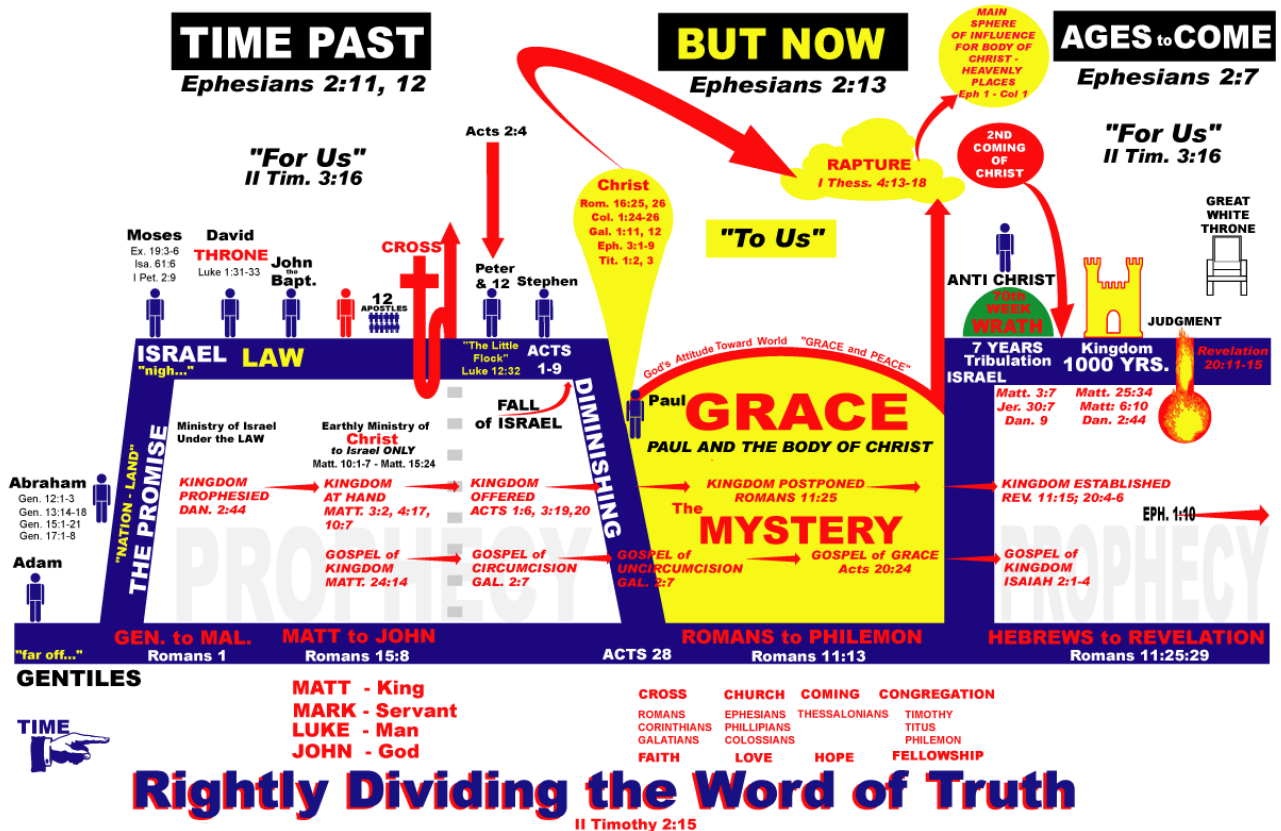
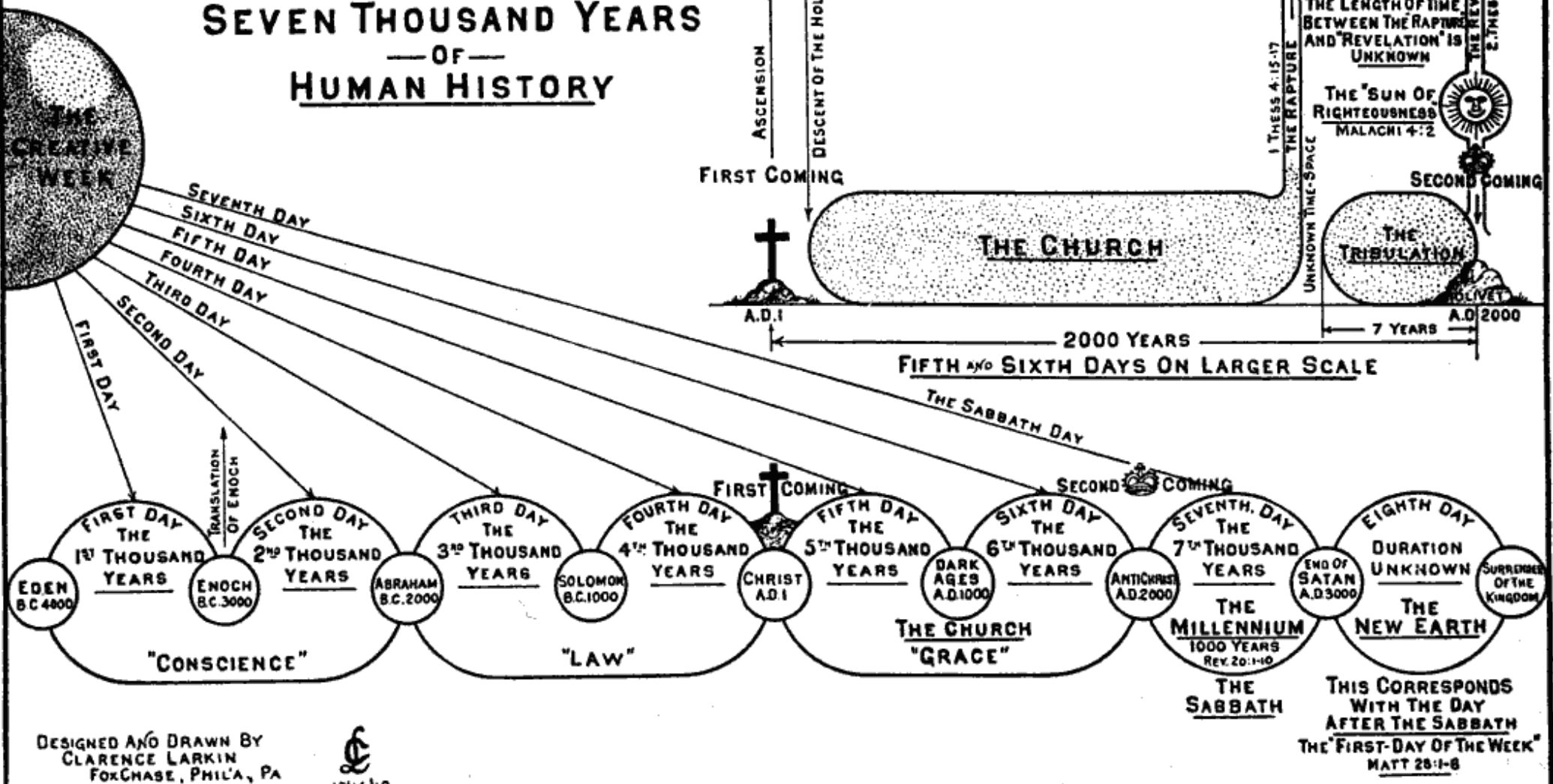


Illustration 2: Chart of 3-stage dispensationalism (<http://www.helpersyourjoy.com/images/Chart.gif>)

CHART No 5

THE SEVEN THOUSAND YEARS — OF — HUMAN HISTORY



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THIS CORRESPONDS
WITH THE DAY
AFTER THE SABBATH
THE "FIRST-DAY OF THE WEEK"
MATT 28:1-8