

The Seven Dispensations

Randy White

Dispensation	Start (KJV Reference)	End (KJV Reference)	Overview	How God Worked with Man	Additional Points
1. Edenic (Direct fellowship in innocence)	Genesis 1:26 – Genesis 2	Ends at Genesis 3:6	Man walked openly with God in the Garden, unhindered by sin. Sin entered when Adam and Eve disobeyed, breaking that fellowship.	Humanity knew God directly, walking and talking with Him personally.	God’s commands were simple (“Be fruitful...,” “Dress and keep the garden...,” “Do not eat...”).
2. Patriarchal (Limited revelation, faith by word of mouth)	Genesis 3:7 – Exodus 19	Ends near Exodus 19 (Giving of the Law at Sinai)	Man learned to please God through sparse commands and personal encounters, relying on the testimony of a few (e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). Man “heard” about God through others.	God worked through certain individuals (Patriarchs).	Sacrifices and covenants (e.g., Noahic, Abrahamic) guided moral and spiritual responsibility. The word was often passed by oral tradition.
3. Legal (Obedience under the Law)	Exodus 20:1	A transitional period in Acts, beginning with the Apostle Paul.	Man related to God through the Mosaic covenant and a detailed code of commands. Righteousness was framed in terms of compliance to the Law.	God worked with man through Israel and the statutes, ordinances, sacrifices, and covenants to the chosen nation. He spoke through the Law and occasionally through prophets.	The sacrificial system, priesthood, and Israel’s national identity shaped spiritual life.

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4. Grace (Free will acceptance under Christ)	Began with the revelation of the dispensation given to Paul.	Ends with the onset of the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18)	Man is invited to trust in the finished work of Jesus, receiving unmerited favor rather than adhering to ritual. Full counsel of God is accessible through the completed Scriptures.	God works with all people everywhere equally, offering a free gift of salvation.	“For by grace are ye saved through faith...” (Ephesians 2:8, KJV). Emphasis is on personal faith in Christ, not external observance.
5. Judgment (Direct accountability before God)	Often linked to Daniel 9:27, 2 Thessalonians 2:11, and Revelation 6:1 (Tribulation)	Ends at Revelation 19:11 (Second Coming of Christ)	Humanity stands under God’s righteous scrutiny. Israel will recognize these judgments as a call to repentance. Strong delusion falls on those who reject truth.	God directly intervenes in the activities of man in a way designed to bring Israel to her Messiah.	God’s wrath is poured out in unprecedented global turmoil. The believing remnant (Israel) stands apart from hardened unbelievers, highlighting the severity of rejecting God’s offer of salvation.
6. Kingdom (Renewed direct relation in the Millennium)	Begins at Revelation 20:1 (Christ’s thousand-year reign)	Ends at Revelation 20:7–10 (Final rebellion and judgment)	Christ physically reigns on earth, fulfilling promises of perfect governance. Man will know God closely under the righteous rule of the Davidic King.	God welcomes all people into the presence of His Son through Israel and her Law.	Satan is bound for a thousand years (Revelation 20:2). After the Millennium, his release leads to a final rebellion before the last judgment. Israel’s kingdom promises are realized in full measure under Messiah’s reign.
7. Eternal (God and man dwelling together forever)	Revelation 21:1	No ending—Revelation 22	The final state of unbroken fellowship: God and redeemed humanity dwell together. “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men...” (Revelation 21:3, KJV). Sin and death are abolished.	All things are directly under Christ’s reign (Ephesians 1:7)	Every tear is wiped away (Revelation 21:4). This is the ultimate fulfillment of God’s original plan of unhindered communion with humanity—eternity in God’s presence, with no further separation caused by sin.