

Ephesians Series

Lesson #086

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Dean Bible Ministries

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EPHESIANS

THE WEALTH, WALK
& WARFARE
OF THE BELIEVER

**The Dispensation of Grace:
Based on Paul's Mission and Message
Ephesians 3:2**

**Eph. 3:1, “For this reason I, Paul, the
prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—”**

**Τούτου χάριν, *toutou charin*;
“for this reason”**

Eph. 3:13, “Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.”

**ἐγκακέω *enkakeō*
pres act inf,
become tired, lose
heart, become
discouraged**

**θλίψις *thlipsis* fem
plur dat
trouble, tribulation,
oppression,
suffering**

Paul's Mission

Acts 22:21, “Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’ ”

Paul's Mission

Rom. 11:13, “For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,”

Eph. 3:2, “if indeed you have heard of the dispensation *of the grace of God which was given to me for you,*”

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If the Ephesians fully understood God’s mission for Paul (and us) then they would not be discouraged by his (or anyone’s) apparently negative circumstances.

This is the Mystery Doctrine Rationale

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- 1. The Mystery Doctrine describes the new revelation given to Paul and the other apostles regarding the new dispensation of the Church Age.**
- 2. In this New Dispensation God is building a new temple of believers, composed of Jew and Gentile equally in this new man, this new body.**

This is the Mystery Doctrine Rationale

3. This new identity which involves new blessings, a new joint inheritance, a joining together in a new body, and new partakers of the promise in the Christ is so incredible that we should never lose heart in proclaiming our new wealth in Christ. Eph. 3:6

This is the Mystery Doctrine Rationale

- 4. Because of who we are in Christ, our assets, privileges, future inheritance, and identity, there is no excuse for ever losing heart or becoming discouraged by our circumstances for every circumstance, good or bad, is another opportunity to tell others about our wealth in Christ.**

**What does this clause, “the dispensation
*of the grace of God which was given to me
for you,*” mean?**

Eph. 3:7, “I became a minister of this gospel according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.” ~RD

Eph. 3:2, “if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,”

**δίδομι *didomi*
aor pass part
fem sing gen
to give**

Eph. 3:2. “if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Eph. 3:3, “now that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already,

Eph. 3:4, “by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

Eph. 3:5, “which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

Eph. 3:6, “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

Eph. 3:7, “of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.”

But his ministry mission was directly connected to his message.

Eph. 3:7, “of which I was made a minister, according to the gift [dorea] of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

Eph. 3:8, “To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given [didomi aor pass ind], to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,”

Wealth/riches of Christ (Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16)

Eph. 3:8, “To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach the good news to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [~RD]

Eph. 3:9, “and to reveal to all what is the dispensation [administration] of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;”

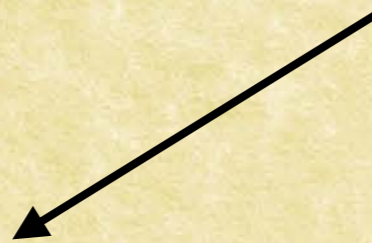
Conclusion: *grace given to me* refers to Paul's apostolic gift/office and apostolic function.

Eph. 3:2, “if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,”

the administration of the grace of God

which was given to me

**i.e., the dispensation of
the Church Age was
given to Paul.**



the administration ...

of the grace of God which was given to me
i.e., the administration of the office and
function of apostleship which was given to me.
And my focus is on the communication of the
previously unrevealed information.

What is a dispensation?

Latin: *dispensatio*, “to deal out, to weigh out, to dispense, or to distribute.”

Webster's *Third New International Dictionary*:

- 1. a divine ordering and administration of worldly affairs;**
- 2. a system of principles, promises, and rules divinely ordained and administered;**
- 3. a period of history during which a particular divine revelation has predominated in the affairs of mankind;**
- 4. any general state or ordering of things.**

***A dispensation takes place in time, but isn't necessarily related to time.**

- 1. The action of administering or ordering something; dealing out or distributing something.**
- 2. The act of administering or dispensing with some requirement.**

**οἰκονόμος *oikonomos* and οἰκονομία *oikonomia*,
management, office from which we get the
word “economy,” meaning to manage,
regulate, administer, to plan.**

**A combination of οἶκος, (house) νομῶ (law),
house law, house rule.**

**“Economy: the management of the resources of a
community, country, etc.; the disposition or regulation
of the parts or functions of any organic whole; an
organized system; the management of household
affairs.” (Random House *Webster’s Electronic
Dictionary and Thesaurus*, College Edition 1992)**

**Thus it means managing or administering the affairs of
a household. This is not a time word.**

- 1. *Oikonomeo*: 1 time as a verb (Luke 16:2 “to be a steward”).**
- 2. *Oikonomos*: Ten times as a noun (Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3, 8; Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2; Galatians 4:2, Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10).**
- 3. *Oikonomia*: “dispensation” Ephesians 1:10, 3:2, 9; “stewardship” Colossians 1:25; 1 Timothy 1:4; Luke 16:2–4; 1 Corinthians 9:17.**
- 4. Jesus’ usage:**

**Luke 16:1, “He also said to His disciples:
‘There was a certain rich man who had a
steward, and an accusation was brought
to him that this man was wasting his
goods.**

**Luke 16:2, “ ‘So he called him and said to
him, “What is this I hear about you? Give
an account of your stewardship, for you
can no longer be steward.” ’ ”**

- a. Two parties involved, one party has authority to delegate responsibilities; the other has the responsibilities to carry out the duties (cf., Luke 16).**
- b. There are specific responsibilities for the steward (Luke 16:1).**
- c. Accountability and responsibility are part of the arrangement. At any point in time the steward can be called upon to explain how he has fulfilled his responsibilities. (Luke 16:2)**
- d. A change can be made at any time if unfaithfulness is found.**

1 Cor. 4:1, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards [*oikonomos*] of the mysteries of God.

1 Cor. 4:2, “Moreover it is required in stewards [*oikonomos*] that one be found faithful.”

Titus 1:7, “For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward [*oikonomos*] of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,”

Col. 1:25, “of which I became a minister according to the stewardship [*oikonomia*] from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,”

- a. God is the One to whom men are responsible in discharging stewardship, 1 Cor. 4:1–2**

- b. Faithfulness is required of those to whom a dispensational responsibility is committed, 1 Cor. 4:2**

- c. A stewardship may end at some appointed time, Gal. 4:4–7**

Related Terms

ἄϊωνος, *aionos* a period of time in human history.

“age, ages, eternity, a segment of time as a particular unit of history, a long period of time without reference to beginning or end.”

Jude 25; 2 Peter 3:18; Titus 2:12; Ephesians 1:21; 3:9; Colossians 1:26; Matthew 12:32.

**χρόνος, *chronos*, “time, period of time;”
chronological time in its sequence of
events.**

**For example, the age of Israel has a
sequence of 3 main eras: period of the
patriarchs, law, and tribulation. Sometimes
it is referred to as “times” (1 Thessalonians
5:1; Galatians 4:4; 2 Timothy 1:9).**

καιρός *kairos*, time, especially a point of time, moment.

indicates an age, an epoch or an era; time marked by boundaries or occurrences; a definite fixed period of time; occasionally a point of time. Sometimes translated “seasons”.

**Romans 11:5; Luke 21:24; Ephesians 1:10;
1 Thessalonians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:5**

The Ages of Civilization

Creation

Abraham

Christ's 1st Coming

Christ's 2nd Coming

ETERNITY
PAST

ETERNITY
FUTURE



CATASTROPHE

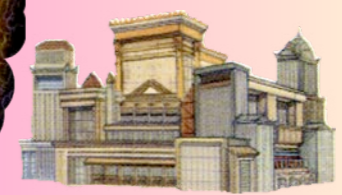
AGE OF THE GENTILES



AGE OF ISRAEL



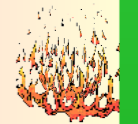
CHURCH AGE



Millennium



MESSIANIC AGE



JUDGMENT

Based on the use of the word in Scripture, a dispensation may be defined as *a stewardship, administration, or management of others' property*. This involves responsibility, accountability, and faithfulness on the part of the steward.

***Dispensation:* A distinct and identifiable administration in the development of God's plan and purposes for human history (Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25–26).**

Dispensations are connected with the mysteries of God, that is, with specific revelation from God (1 Corinthians 4:1; Ephesians 3:2; Colossians 1:25).

Eph. 3:2, “if indeed you have heard of the dispensation [*oikonomia*–administration, management, plan] of the grace of God which was given to me for you,”

1. A brief working definition:

Dispensationalism is a theological system which understands that God sovereignly governs the history of the human race through a sequence of divinely directed administrations marked by distinctive periods of time as He works out His plan to destroy sin and evil.

Three Essential Elements of Dispensationalism:

- 1. A consistent literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of the Bible.**
- 2. A distinction between God's plan for Israel and God's plan for the church.**
- 3. The overall purpose of God's plan for His creation is His glory.**

THE GOLDEN RULE OF INTERPRETATION

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths indicate clearly otherwise.

“The natural or usual construction and implication of a writing or expression; following the ordinary and apparent sense of words; not allegorical or metaphorical” (*Webster’s New International Dictionary*).

Abrahamic Covenant

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Genesis 12:1–13

“land”

“seed”

“blessing”

ISRAEL LAND COVENANT

Deuteronomy 29

“land”

DAVIDIC COVENANT

2 Samuel 7

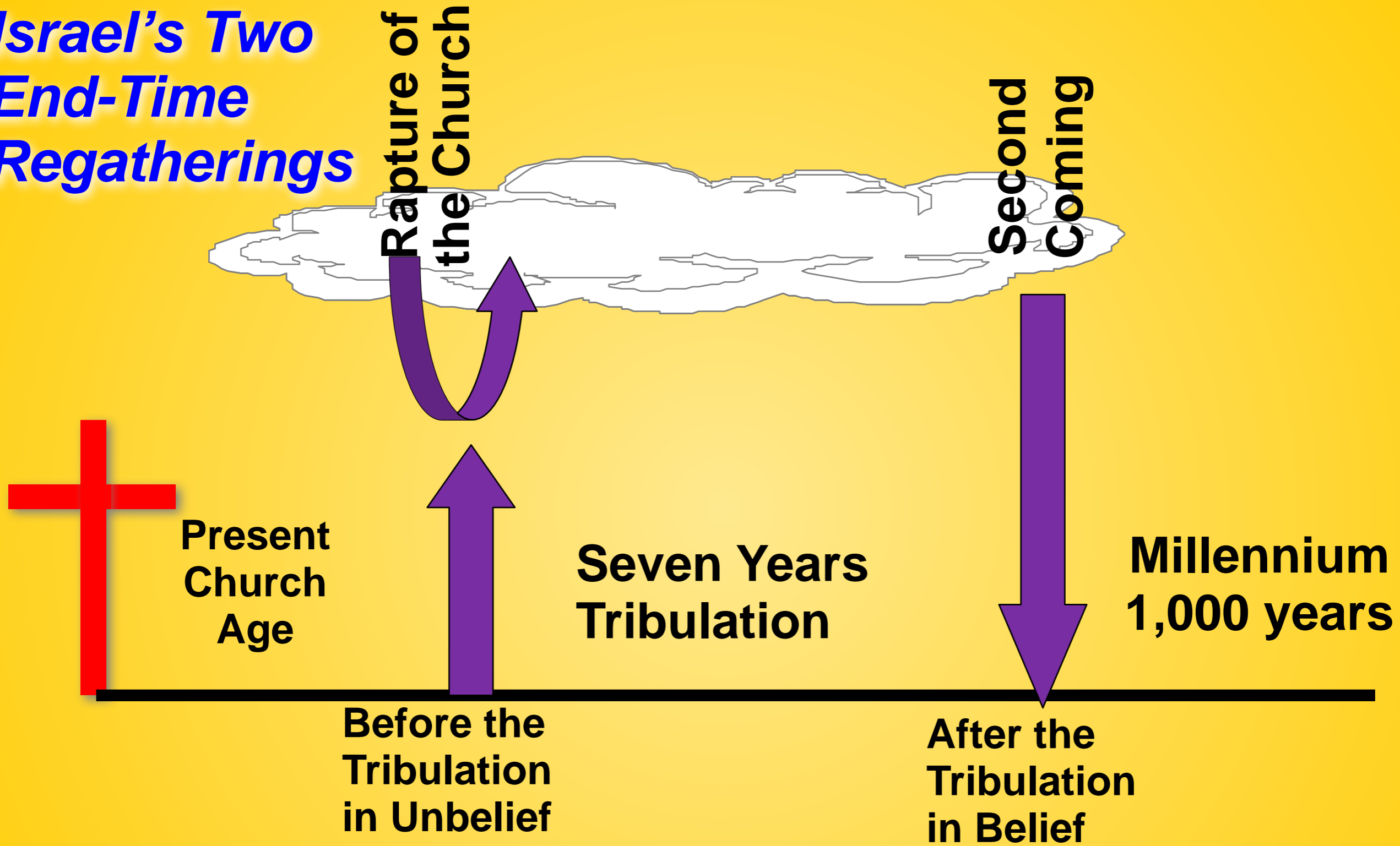
“seed”

NEW COVENANT

Jeremiah 31

“blessing”

**Israel's Two
End-Time
Regatherings**



**Ezek. 20:33–38; 22:17–22;
36:22; Isa. 11:11–12;
Zeph. 2:1–2; Ezek. 37**

**Ezek. 20:33–38; 22:17–22;
36:22; Isa. 11:11–12;
Zeph. 2:1–2; Ezek. 37**

In Covenant Theology as well as other systems, the overall purpose of God in history is redemptive. This excludes the angels as well as other aspects of God's plan. Thus, though they talk about the glory of God as man's chief end and purpose, they do not consistently apply this to their understanding of God's plan, which includes all of His creation, including angels and humans.

Eph. 3:2, “if indeed and you have heard of the dispensing of the grace of God which was given to me for you Gentiles,” [~RD]

the grace of God given to me =

the mission and message about the new man, new body, new temple =

a new dispensation based on the grace gift and message God revealed to the apostle Paul.