



VIII. THE DISPENSATION OF THE LAW (Exodus 24:1-8)

A. The Contents of the Dispensation

1. The bookmark events
 - a. The beginning: the giving of the Law (Exodus 20:1-21)
 - b. The end: the life of John the Baptist (Luke 16:16)
2. The passage covered
 - a. From Exodus chapter 20
 - b. To Malachi chapter 4, but also seemed to cover at least a portion of the New Testament
3. The time period spanned: about 1500 years

B. The Conditions of the Dispensation

1. Gentiles
 - a. Outside the covenants (Romans 9:4-5; Ephesians 2:11-12, 19)
 - b. Ignorant (Acts 14:15-17; Acts 17:30)
 - c. Without law, but not without conscience (Romans 2:12-15)
2. The Israelites
 - a. Their privilege
 - (1) To be a holy people unto God (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:6-8)
 - (2) To be a great nation (Deuteronomy 4:5-10, 34; Deuteronomy 26:5-9)
 - (3) To receive the word of God (Deuteronomy 4:5-8, 32-36; Psalm 147:19-20; Romans 3:1-2)
 - b. Their responsibility
 - (1) To keep the commandments of the Lord (Leviticus 18:5)
 - (2) To keep all the words of the law (Deuteronomy 27:26)
 - (3) Summary of the law given to Moses
 - a) Moral Law—the ten commandments and the parts of the law that are morally right or wrong (Exodus 20:1-17; see Exodus 22:18-24)
 - b) Civil Law—laws about man's relationship with men (see Exodus 21:12-19; Exodus 22:1-15)
 - c) Ceremonial Law—laws about man's approach unto God
 - i) Tabernacle (see Exodus 26:1-3)
 - ii) Priesthood (see Exodus 29:5-10)
 - iii) Offerings (see Leviticus 1:1-9)

C. The Commission of the Dispensation (Exodus 19:3-6; Deuteronomy 26:16-19)

1. To be a special people (Exodus 19:5)
 - a. A peculiar people (Deuteronomy 14:2)
 - b. A people of inheritance (Deuteronomy 4:20; Deuteronomy 9:29; Deuteronomy 10:15)



- c. An holy and special people (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Deuteronomy 14:21; Deuteronomy 26:19; Deuteronomy 28:9-10)
 - d. A people unto Himself (Deuteronomy 29:10-15)
 - e. As the Lord's portion (Deuteronomy 32:9; Psalm 135:4; Isaiah 43:20-21)
2. To be a priestly nation (Exodus 19:6)
 - a. A priestly nation (Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6)
 - b. An holy nation (Exodus 19:6)
 3. To be a holy kingdom (Exodus 19:6)
 4. To be a testimony to the nations
 - a. Above all people and nations (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6; Deuteronomy 14:2)
 - b. To be admired by the nations (Deuteronomy 4:5-8)
 - c. To be sought out by the nations (Isaiah 42:6; Isaiah 49:6)
 - d. To bring God's kingdom to all the earth (Isaiah 2:1-4; Isaiah 60:1-5; Zechariah 2:10-13)

D. The **Covenant** of the Dispensation (Exodus 24:1-8)

1. Made through the mediation of Moses (Malachi 4:4)—thus called the Mosaic Covenant
2. Between the Lord and the people of Israel
3. A conditional covenant; that is, one in which both sides were bound to keep the agreement (Exodus 24:3, 7-8)
4. Made with the blood of animals (Exodus 24:5-8; Hebrews 9:18-23)

E. The **Crisis** of the Dispensation

1. Rejection of the Law (Jeremiah 6:19; Hosea 4:6)
2. Keeping the form without the heart (Isaiah 1:11-15; Isaiah 58:1-7; Amos 5:21-27; Micah 6:7-8)
3. Rejecting the Messiah (John 1:11; Acts 2:22-23; Acts 3:13-15; Acts 7:52)

F. The **Condemnation** of the Dispensation

1. Taken into captivity
2. Jerusalem destroyed (Matthew 24:1-2)
3. Broken off from the tree (Romans 11:11-21)
4. Blinded as to the truth (Romans 11:7-10, 25; John 12:37-41)

G. The **Compassion** of the Dispensation

1. A remnant of grace (Romans 11:1-5)
2. A promise of salvation and restoration (Romans 9:27; Romans 11:22-29)

H. The **Change** of the Dispensation—John the Baptist, the Transitional Man



I. Special Note on Dispensational Salvation

1. Reasons for rejecting works salvation for any dispensation
 - a. Because it did not happen when man had his best chance—the dispensation of innocence
 - (1) God created a perfect man.
 - a) As the representative of all man, he must have been the best man who ever lived until the coming of Jesus Christ.
 - b) He had great wisdom and a perfect moral character.
 - c) He had no sin nature and was perfectly innocent.
 - (2) God placed man in a perfect environment.
 - a) The entire earth was climate-controlled.
 - b) There was no sin, no bars, no hospitals, no wars, no famine and no reason to have any of these.
 - c) Adam was given a help meet for him and had daily fellowship with God.
 - (3) God made obedience a very simple thing.
 - a) All Adam had to do was avoid eating of the forbidden fruit.
 - b) The sin and its consequences were clearly defined.
 - c) There was no mistake about when that line was crossed.
 - d) Adam had no reason to want to cross that line.
 - (4) Yet, Adam sinned in the one forbidden thing and lost his place in the earthly paradise.
 - a) He did it willingly and with full knowledge of what he was doing.
 - b) Satan's one temptation was enough to bring mankind to his knees and ruin him inside and out.
 - (5) Conclusion: If works-salvation did not happen under these best of circumstances, there is certainly no chance for it to work under the less favourable circumstances.
 - b. Because of the testimony of Elihu concerning imputation of righteousness based upon repentance (Job 33:26-28)
 - c. Because it did not happen under the Law, the most works-oriented of the dispensations
 - (1) The Law provided two ways for man to approach God through his own works:
 - a) By initial obedience to the commandments (Exodus 24:1-8; Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 27:26)
 - b) By the making of sacrifices (Leviticus 1:1-4; Leviticus 4:27-35)
 - (2) Obedience to the commandments could not save man because no man could keep all the commandments (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:12-14, 19-20; Romans 8:3; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:10-12, 21-22; Hebrews 7:18-19). Note: Even during the Lord's earthly ministry the people did not keep the Law (John 7:19).



- (3) The making of sacrifices could not save man, because the blood of animals could not put away sin.
 - a) Old Testament teaching (Psalm 51:16; Isaiah 1:11; Hosea 6:6)
 - b) New Testament teaching (Hebrews 9:8-10, Hebrews 10:1-4, 11)
- (4) The Jews missed the law of righteousness because they sought it by works rather than by faith (Romans 9:30-33).
- (5) Jesus had to die for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament (Hebrews 9:15).
- d. Because the imputation of God's righteousness without the law was witnessed by the law and the prophets (Romans 3:21-22)
 - (1) By the law (Deuteronomy 7:6-9; Deuteronomy 9:4-6)
 - (2) By the prophets (Psalm 35:24; Psalm 71:1-3; Psalm 119:40; Isaiah 45:24-25; Isaiah 54:17; Isaiah 61:10; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Daniel 9:16)
- e. Because the utter sinfulness of man makes him absolutely incapable of having any part in earning his own salvation (Romans 3:10-18, 21-23; Psalm 14:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 64:6)
- f. Because no man will have any right to boast or claim merit in heaven (Romans 3:27-28; Romans 4:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - (1) If merit allows a man to glory in earning his salvation and this kind of glorying is wrong, then why is it wrong for us but all right for those in other dispensations?
 - (2) If merit was wrong for Abraham (Romans 4:2), the great Old Testament saint who was called the friend of God (James 2:23), then why is it acceptable for other Old Testament saints?
- g. Because works-salvation makes God a debtor to man, something He can never be (Romans 4:3-5; Romans 11:35)
- h. Because Paul applied faith-salvation to Old Testament saints
 - (1) Abraham (Romans 4:2-3; Galatians 3:6-7)
 - (2) David (Romans 4:6-8)
- i. Because works-salvation doctrine for other dispensations does not remove doctrinal difficulties
 - (1) There are verses in Paul's Gentile epistles that are used by some to teach works salvation (Romans 2:1, 6-10; Romans 6:16-17, 21-22; Romans 8:1 [compare 1 John 1:7]; Romans 8:12-14; Romans 13:2; Romans 14:22-23; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 11:29; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 [compare Hebrews 3:6, 14]; 1 Corinthians 16:22 [compare Hebrews 9:28]; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; Galatians 5:4, 19-21; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Timothy 5:11-12; 2 Timothy 2:12; Titus 3:10-11). Note: Paul certainly did not teach a works-based salvation. The point is that there are difficult verses found in Paul's epistles and the presence of difficult passages does not necessitate dispensational problems.



- (2) There are verses in the Jewish Epistles that clearly teach grace salvation (Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 2:9-11; Hebrews 4:2-3; Hebrews 5:9; Hebrews 6:18-20; Hebrews 7:19, 25-27; Hebrews 9:13-14, 24-26; Hebrews 10:10-14; James 1:18; James 2:1; James 4:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 9, 18-23; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Peter 1:1, 5; 2 Peter 3:15 [teaches same salvation as taught by Paul]; 1 John 1:7; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 3:1-2; 1 John 4:9-10; 1 John 5:1, 4, 10-13; Jude 3-4, 24).
 - j. Because supposedly works-salvation passages in non-Pauline scripture are seldom hard to understand as grace-salvation doctrine. The exceptions are just that—exceptions. Any man-made doctrinal system will always have problem texts.
2. Purposes for the Law
 - a. To define God’s standard of righteousness (Deuteronomy 4:8; Deuteronomy 6:24-25; Psalm 19:7; Romans 7:12, 14)
 - b. To offer temporal purification for the Jews (Hebrews 9:13-14)
 - (1) Israel, as a nation, had a special relationship with God (Deuteronomy 4:7; 5:26; Psalm 147:19-20).
 - (2) God would meet with Israel and their priests in a special way (Exodus 25:21-22; Exodus 29:42-44; Exodus 30:6, 36; Numbers 17:4 [thou (singular)...you (plural)]; cp. Exodus 20:18-21; Exodus 33:7).
 - (3) God was to dwell among them (Exodus 25:8; Exodus 29:45-46; Leviticus 26:11-12).
 - (4) As such, there was a great danger of defiling God’s tabernacle among them (Leviticus 15:31; Numbers 19:11-13, 20).
 - (5) This explains the special significance of the commands for Israel to be holy (Leviticus 11:44-45; Leviticus 19:1-2).
 - (6) The sacrificial system allowed them to cleanse themselves from their filthiness so God could dwell among them (Leviticus 1:1-4; Leviticus 4:35; Leviticus 16:30; Hebrews 9:13-14).
 - (7) They needed the sacrifices so that God would “accept” them (Ezekiel 20:40-41; Ezekiel 43:27).
 - c. To provide a source of earthly blessing
 - (1) The blessing (Leviticus 26:3-13; Deuteronomy 28:1-14)
 - (2) The blessing required potential cursing as its opposite
 - d. To typify the elements of salvation (like the sacrificial death of Christ)
 - (1) The typical elements (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:4-5; Hebrews 9:6-10; Hebrews 10:1)
 - (2) The blindness of Israel (2 Corinthians 3:6-16)
 - e. To reveal sin in its total sinfulness (Romans 3:20; Romans 5:12-14; Romans 7:7, 12)
 - f. To condemn the sinner (Romans 3:19; Romans 4:15; Galatians 3:10, 21-22)
 - g. To prepare the heart of the Israelites for the faith of Christ (Galatians 3:23-26)