

Sisters in Christ,

One of my biggest challenges in understanding end times has been confusion over how God's story unfolds. The vast majority of learning experiences during my faith journey have been disjointed. There's absolutely nothing wrong with taking a single topic or a book and studying it! I encourage it. However, seldom do I see the teaching of God's story in chronological fashion as one continuous story unfolding. Once I was introduced to this style of teaching everything made so much more sense, and it finally had the connectivity I was lacking. I guess that is why I am passionate about teaching in this fashion, because there are many threads of truth woven throughout from Genesis to Revelation. We will spend a lifetime picking at each thread and trying to understand it all!

With this in mind, we will begin our study by reviewing God's timeline and boiling things down into its simplest form before digging into and grasping deeper theological truths. One of the keys to understanding prophecy will be getting clarification on how God deals with certain "people groups" throughout Scripture, namely the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church. With this basic understanding of each, it is easier to follow the threads of their past, present, and future.

This study has been prepared largely from the viewpoint of dispensational theology which is only a fancy word for man's attempt to understand the framework in which God operates and focuses on varying dispensations of time. Covenant theology differs in how it interprets the framework. My disclaimer is that both are manmade frameworks in an "attempt" to better understand God. Both have points I agree with. I don't believe we can fully comprehend the mysteries of God, therefore, I don't believe neither is fully accurate. I would say the same for Calvinism and Arminianism. The Bible speaks of both election and choice. Somehow...in God's infinite wisdom, splendor, and mystery...both concepts appear to be true. I have searched the Scriptures and this is my conclusion, not simply a copout.

As you walk through Scripture and attempt to understand God better and His purposes from a dispensational standpoint, you can come to your own conclusions as to what you believe. There are huge interpretive challenges with all that we will discuss in this study so let the Holy Spirit be your guide.

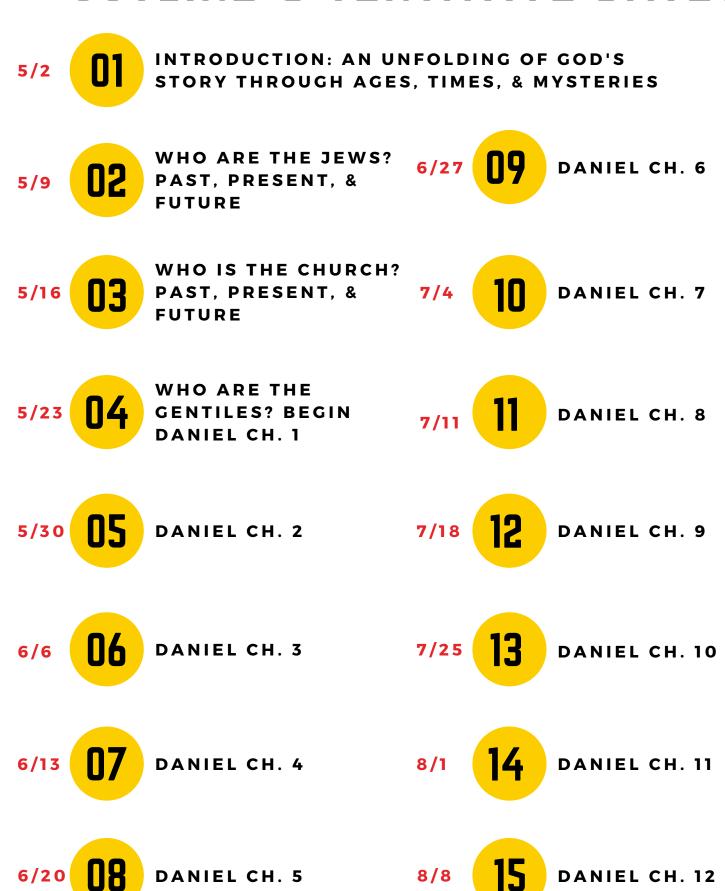
As it pertains to the rapture and end times, I believe Pre-Millennialism to be most accurate, meaning that Christ will return before the Millennium. Even so, there are further beliefs within Pre-Millennialism. I believe in the Futurist view using literal interpretation of Scripture except where it explicitly states there is symbolism, and so the Apocalypse in the book of Revelation from chapter four on is in the future and has yet to be fulfilled. This is also my belief about Daniel's corresponding 70th week. Studying and defining different theological interpretations or beliefs are beyond the scope of this study, but I felt it important to disclose the perspective from which I teach.

Much of my research has led me to the works of Clarence Larkin and his book "Dispensational Truth or God's Plan and Purposes in the Ages." I rely on it heavily (with Scripture as our guide, of course) because after years of study I tend to agree with what he has so intricately articulated what had already been churning in my heart. It is our duty to rightly divide the Word. It is my prayer that we understand the Scriptural text in its original meaning with an emphasis on knowing to "whom" it was written, and then from there, make appropriate application to our lives as Christian believers.

Grace and peace to you,



# **OUTLINE & TENTATIVE DATES**



01

# AN INTRODUCTION: AN UNFOLDING OF GOD'S STORY THROUGH AGES, TIMES, & MYSTERIES



THE **GENTILES** CHURCH

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth:
"While the 'Word of Truth' is written for all classes of people, and for our learning, it is not addressed to all peoples in general, but part is addressed to the Jews, part to the Gentiles, and part to the Church. These three constitute the three classes into which humanity is divided (1 Cor. 10:32)." Clarence Larkin

### **BOILING IT DOWN**

"And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding."

Daniel 2:21

Undeniably, God has appointed times along his timeline. However, Christians are often confused depending on which biblical translation they use and how different greek words are interpreted in the New Testament:

"AGES" AION G165 AN AGE; BY IMPLICATION THE WORLD; SPECIFICALLY A MESSIANIC PERIOD

Read: Colossians 1:26, Ephesians 2:7

What do these verses teach about God's mysteries as it pertains to the ages? What does tell you about God?

"TIMES" KAIROS G2540 OF UNCERTAIN AFFINITY; SEASON; A SET OR PROPER TIME

Read: Luke 21:24, Acts 3:19,21 & 17:26, Ephesians 1:10, Titus 1:1-3 How do you think times differ from ages? Do you believe one operates within the other?



ADMINISTRATION OF A HOUSEHOLD OR ESTATE; SPECIFICALLY A RELIGIOUS ECONOMY; DISPENSATION: STEWARDSHIP

Read: Colossians 1:24-27, Ephesians 1:10 & 3:2

What do you think of when you see the word dispense? What do these Scriptures teach about God's mysteries within the framework of His time?

THESE WORDS HAVE SUBTLE DIFFERENCES IN MEANING BUT APPEAR TO OUTLINE A LARGER FRAMEWORK WHERE TIMES HAVE BEEN PREDETERMINED WITHIN A PARTICULAR AGES. THE DISPENSATION OF EVENTS AND TRUTHS ARE SIMPLY HOW THEY UNFOLD AT THE SELECT TIME AS DETERMINED BY GOD. A STEWARD SUCH AS PAUL MAY BE ENTRUSTED TO TEACH OR PROCLAIM WHAT HAS BEEN "DISPENSED" OR REVEALED.

Ready to discuss God's narrative using this visual framework?

# THE AGES

#### Outside of "Time":

- Alpha, or Creative Ages (Before recorded time in Scripture)
- Omega, or Age of Ages (After what we are told about time)

#### Within "Time":

- Antediluvian Age (from earth's formless & void condition to the Flood)
- Present Age (from the Flood to Christ's Second Coming)
- Age of Ages (from Christ's Second Coming to the End of Time)
  - Millennial Age
  - Perfect Age

An "Age" in Scripture is from one "cataclysmic" or "climatic" change to another in the earth's surface or condition. This corresponds to what is called in Geology an "Age." So we see that Science and the Bible agree as to the meaning of the word "Age."

Read: Genesis 7:11 & Zechariah 14:4,10

To demonstrate this concept, what event and geological/physical changes do you see that separate the ages within time?



### ALPHA CREATOR: BEFORE TIME BEGAN TO GENESIS 1:1

Because we aren't given accounts of events prior to Genesis 1:1, it is mere speculation to expound on certain schools of thought. Certain thoughts include whether the earth had once been inhabited by spiritual/non-human beings, destroyed, & re-created for man (Jeremiah 4:23-26). This stems from the interpretation of the Hebrew word mala (H4390) in Genesis 1:28 when God commands man to multiply and fill the earth. That same word could also mean replenish...which would completely change the meaning or implication. Also 2 Peter 3:5-6 reads as if the world perished but we know that a remnant was saved through Noah. However, a previously inhabited & destroyed earth could be an erroneous interpretation. Nevertheless, we do get less controversial glimpses of the spiritual realm in Isaiah 14:12-14, Revelation 12:4, and Ezekiel 28:12-19 as they describe the fall of Satan. Was the referred to "Eden" the same one created in Genesis 1 or perhaps one prior? One thing is certain...that is not disclosed in absolute terms. Therefore, I resolve to accept it as one of the great mysteries of God.

#### Read: Genesis 1:2

- God created in Genesis 1:1, but we don't know how much "time" had elapsed between the 1st and 2nd verse...or any particular events. We can only begin developing our timeline with the details in verse 2.
- How is the earth described in verse 2?
- What was the Spirit of God doing?
- Describe how Genesis 1:7 fits with verse 2?

PHYSICAL CHANGES AT EARTH'S CREATION WOULD END THE "ALPHA/CREATIVE AGE" AND MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE "ANTEDILUVIAN AGE."

# 7 DISPENSATIONS OF TIME

### In the Antediluvian Age:

- 1. Edenic (Innocence) Ends with the Fall
- 2. Antediluvian (Conscience) Ends with the Flood

### In the Present Age:

- 3. Post-Diluvian (Human Government) Ends at Babel
- 4. Patriarchal (Family) Ends with Egyptian Bondage
- 5. Legal (Law) Ends with Crucifixion of Christ
- 6. Ecclesiastical (Grace) Ends based on time in prophecy
  - Includes a mystery, THE CHURCH
  - A parenthetical dispensation of Judgment (Tribulation)

### In the Age of Ages:

• 7. Millennial, Messianic (Righteousness)



### 1. EDENIC DISPENSATION (INNOCENCE) - FROM CREATION TO THE FALL

In this time, Adam and Eve were created innocent...but that does not mean they were righteous! Innocence cannot become righteousness until it has been TESTED. From their innocence, they were only one step away from either righteousness or sin.

The Edenic dispensation was characterized by an absence of sin and the presence of God.

#### Read: Genesis 3:22-24. Revelation 21:3

- What was the consequence/curse of man's sin?
- When will the curse be reversed and God tabernacles with men again?
- One could argue that Adam had no conscience prior to the Fall since he had no knowledge of good and evil. How does Genesis 2:25 describe them? How are they described in Genesis 3:8 after failing the test and eating of the forbidden fruit?
- God dealt with Adam on a basis of innocence, but now that sin had entered the
  world He can never again treat man on the same basis until the curse is removed.
  Remember, the Law had not been given at this point. So, what does this tell you
  about man's nature even when he was created innocent?
- What is the triumphant highlight of this time period....the cure for the curse? Hint: see Genesis 3:15. What does this tell you about God's desire for man?



# 2. ANTEDILUVIAN DISPENSATION (CONSCIENCE) - FROM THE FALL TO THE FLOOD

The purpose of this dispensation was to demonstrate what happens when man is guided only by conscience. Recall, mankind has an inherent sin nature and now has knowledge of good and evil. There are no nations in this dispensation so mankind was treated as a whole. Acts 17:30 refers to these as "times of ignorance."

#### Read: Romans 1:20, 2:15, 3:20

- Describe man's conscience.
- Romans 3:20 tells us that the law gives us knowledge of what? Had the law been given at this point? Romans 2:12 would describe this era "without law."
- How do you think Romans 1:20 correlates with God's response to Cain's offering in Genesis 4? Should Cain have known what pleased God?
- As time progressed in this era, we see how man's conscience guided him. In Genesis 6:5, how is man described?
- What boundary had been crossed in Genesis 6:2? The phrase "sons of God" is the same one as in Job 1:6. What can you infer about the sons of God?
- Who was on guard at the garden of Eden protecting the tree of life (Genesis 3:24)?
   Perhaps the angelic beings saw the beautiful daughters of men and performed forbidden acts. Regardless of where they came from, what was the consequence for these beings in 1 Peter 3:18-20?
- To understand the purpose of the cataclysmic flood, you must understand the significance of the wickedness and corruption of this time. In Genesis 6:12, what did God see (with the exception of v.8)?



### 3. POST-DILUVIAN DISPENSATION (HUMAN GOVERNMENT) - FROM THE FLOOD TO THE TOWER OF BABEL

"If ever the human race had an opportunity to work out the theory of 'human government' it was right after the Flood. Noah was an old man over 600 years of age, full of wisdom and experience, and his family, all of whom had reached manhood and womanhood, for the youngest, Shem, was 98 years old, were qualified for government. Behind them was the Flood with all its warnings, and in addition the accumulated knowledge from Adam down to their day. They also had the advantage of a New Covenant, called the "Noahic Covenant" Genesis 8:20-22. Noah also re-established the true mode of worship by erecting an altar and sacrificing thereon, but the dispensation was a failure like its predecessors."

#### Read: Genesis 8:17. Genesis 11:1-9

- What did God command Noah and his family to do after the Flood?
- In contrast, what were they doing at Babel?
- How does this remind you of man's tendencies in the Garden and before the Flood?
- How does Acts 2:4 seem to reverse the curse placed on man at Babel?



### 4. PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION (FAMILY) - FROM BABEL TO THE END OF EGYPTIAN BONDAGE

The descendants of Noah became idol worshippers. Joshua 24:2 tells us that even Abraham came from people who served other gods. There was nothing special about Abraham other than the fact that God decided to single his family out and start a nation, Israel. The "Abrahamic Covenant" is given in this era. From Abraham, we see much dysfunction in his son Isaac and grandson Jacob, and we ultimately see them being slaves in the brickyards of Egypt.

#### Read: Genesis 12:1-3 & 15:13-16

- What was promised to Abram in Genesis 12? What additional detail about the promise did God give in Genesis 15:4?
- What did God tell Abram would happen to his descendants for a period of time?
- After the set time of 400 years was up, what would happen to his people? What would they acquire in verse 14? What does this tell you about God?
- We learned in a previous era that man's conscience never leads to righteousness on its own. Now, consider the four major attacks by Satan in Genesis against God's plans for mankind (Temptation in the Garden, Sons of God before the Flood, Building a city at Babel, oppression and killing the firstborn in Egypt). How does Satan feel about God's plans for man? Why do you think Satan is so persistent in trying to corrupt mankind? (Hint: consider Genesis 3:15)



### 5. LEGAL DISPENSATION (LAW) - FROM THE EXODUS TO THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

God's intention has always been that He would be the ruler for His people Israel. God miraculously revealed Himself to Israel through the tabernacle and the pillar of cloud and fire as well as through His prophets and appointed representatives. He defended Israel as they conquered inhabitants of the promised land and establish their kingdom. The government was to be "theocratic." He gave the Law at Mt. Sinai, and unlike generations before, Israel finally had a written law based on the justice of God to guide them. Unlike the unconditional promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant was conditional with blessings based on obedience and curses based on disobedience. Time and time again Israel played the harlot returning to other gods and worshipping idols. Finally the time had come when God's glory departed from the temple and He handed them over to their enemies. When Jesus, the Promised Seed, had been delivered, Israel not only rejected Him as their Messiah, but sent Him to the cross to be crucified. Fortunately, God had made another promise...the Davidic Covenant.

#### Read: Romans 7:7, 12, Hebrews 7:19, 2 Samuel 7:12-17

- Describe the purpose of the Law.
- Describe the Davidic Covenant. How does it compare with the Abrahamic Covenant? How does it differ? What parts of each have yet to be fulfilled?
- When you consider Genesis 3:15, how does Christ's crucifixion fall into God's plan?
- When you consider all Satan's attempts to hinder God's plan as well as any future attempts, what hope does the Davidic Covenant bring?



### 6. ECCLESIASTICAL DISPENSATION (GRACE) - FROM CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION TO THE RAPTURE...THEN THE TRIBULATION

The church era begins with a New Covenant (Luke 22:20) uniquely inclusive of Jews and Gentiles. This particular era of time falls between Daniel's 69th and 70th week (Daniel 9:24) and is a dispensation of time that the Jews did not foresee through the Old Testament prophets. Unlike the ceremonial law of the Jews, man's responsibility in this time is to believe in Jesus as the Messiah (John 3:18). The Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost and indwells man as promised by Jesus (John 14:16-26). It will end with the rapture of the church as discussed in 1 Thessalonians 4 & 5. The rapture of the Church will mark the beginning of the 7 year tribulation on earth. The Church will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ and will not endure the tribulation period on earth. The Jews will remain on earth during the tribulation and be judged during that time under Antichrist. The Gentiles/Nations also remain on earth during the tribulation and will be judged at the end of the period when Jesus descends from Heaven. According to Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus will judge the nations where the righteous sheep inherit the kingdom and the unrighteous goats depart into everlasting punishment. Jesus sits on His earthly throne at Jerusalem, and thus the Millennial Kingdom is ushered in.

#### Read: Romans 6:14 & 11:25, 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 2 Peter 3:9

- Is the Law in effect in this time? How does the doctrine of grace in the New Covenant differ from what was required in the Law? Is the New Testament church bound by the Law?
- Since Israel rejected Jesus as the Messiah, what has happened to them during this time of grace and the mystery which is the church?
- Scripture tells us that God cannot lie. As we consider the timing of the rapture we must consider how Scripture describes end times:
  - Luke 18:8 faith would not be found
  - 2 Tim. 3:1-5 perilous times shall come
  - Matt. 24:27-39 it will be like the days of Noah
  - 2 Pet. 3:3-4 men will scoff at God's promises

According to 2 Pet. 3:9, why does God allow these things to happen? What does this teach you about God?



# 7. MILLENNIAL DISPENSATION (RIGHTEOUSNESS) - FROM THE TRIBULATION TO THE END OF THE 1000 YEAR REIGN

After the rapture of the church, the seven year tribulation period, and the judgment of the nations, the "Revelation" of Christ will be realized when He returns to earth and sets up His Millennial Kingdom. This time will fulfill Jewish prophecy for Christ's return where He will be their King and they will be the head of the nations. Just as in times past where man's innocence was tested in the Garden of Eden, and his conscience tested before the flood, and human government tested up to Babel, and headship of the family tested under the Patriarchs, and his testing under law before Christ, and his current testing under grace, the Millennial Kingdom will also include a type of testing.

Satan will be bound to entertain man's excuse that he sins simply because of Satan's influence, but will man pass the test in Satan's absence proving mankind really is good? Similar to previous periods of time ending in failure, Scripture indicates "no" simply because there will be a final judgment (Revelation 20:11-14). At that time, Satan is briefly unbound and then cast into the lake of fire...forever (Finally!). The old world will be destroyed/renovated by fire and the new Heaven and Earth will be created marking the end of "time" and the "beginning" of the Omega/Eternity perfect age.

#### Read: Revelation 20:1-10

- In verse 3, where is Satan? After he is released, what does he go out to do? Describe this war he is preparing.
- What happens to him in verse 10?