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Week 5: The Dispensation of Grace Acts 2:1 to Revelation 19:21

One of the most important things in understanding the Bible is **rightly dividing the word of truth (Second Timothy 2:15 NJK).** There are a number of ways we can divide the Bible to understand the different parts of the whole. One of the ways is by the dispensations contained in **God's** Word. To understand what a dispensation is, we need to take a look at two Greek words. The first word is *oikumenei* from which we get our English word ecumenical. It means *to manage*, *to regulate*, *to administer*, or *to plan*. The second word is *aion* and it means *age*. It emphasizes the time element of the dispensation. So the term *dispensation* refers to a specific way by which **God** administers **His** program, **His** will, **His** rule and **His** authority. Each dispensation is an age, because each dispensation covers a period of time. Dispensations are periods of time in which **God** governs in a different way than **He** did previously.

There are seven dispensations described in the Bible: (1) the Dispensation of Innocence or Freedom **(Genesis 1:28** to **3:5)**; (2) the Dispensation of Conscience or Self-Determination **(Genesis 3:6** to **8:14)**, (3) the Dispensation of Civil Government **(Genesis 8:15** to **11:32)**, (4) the Dispensation of Promise or Patriarchal Rule **(Genesis 12:1** to **Exodus 18:27)**, (5) the Dispensation of Torah **(Exodus 19:1** to **Acts 1:26)**, (6) the Dispensation of Grace **(Acts 2:1** to **Revelation 19:21)**, and (7) the Dispensation of the Messianic or Millennial Kingdom **(Isaiah 4:2-6, 11:1** to **12:6, 54:11-17, 60:1-22).**

The sixth dispensation is called the Dispensation of Grace. While **grace** was evident in all other dispensations, it is in this dispensation that a very unique display of **grace** was manifested that was different from all former displays of **grace**. Concerning this dispensation, **John 1:17** states: **For the Torah was given through Moshe; grace and truth came through Messiah.** Certainly, **God** was gracious before the coming of **Jesus**, for there are many evidences of **YHVH's grace** throughout the pages of the TaNaKh. However, with the coming of **Messiah**, there was a totally unique display of **grace**. This is why it is called the Dispensation of Grace, and it is in effect at this present time.

This dispensation extends from **Acts 2:1**, with the beginning of the indwelling ministry of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** at Shavu'ot, through **Revelation 19:21**. It covers the entire period of the Church Age, and also the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

At the beginning of each dispensation there is one ***key person*** through whom **God** reveals the new features of that particular dispensation. The key person in the sixth dispensation was the apostle **Paul** after **his** Damascus Road experience (see my commentary on **Acts, to see link click Bc – Sha'ul Turns from Murder to Messiah**). It was **Sha'ul** who uniquely received the revelation concerning the Dispensation of Grace. It was no accident that **he** received more revelation than any other apostle. **Sha'ul** wrote most of the letters of the B'rit Chadashah. It was **he** that received that special revelation concerning **the dispensation of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:2 KJV)**. **Sha'ul**, the apostle **to the Goyim (Acts 22:21** and **Ephesians 3:1-13)**, more than any other apostle, is the key person for this dispensation.

Each dispensation also had a specific ***responsibility***. Our responsibility during the Dispensation of Grace is obedience to the Jewish New Covenant (see my commentary on **Jeremiah Eo – I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el**). Obedience to the B'rit Chadashah means to accept the gift of righteousness that **ADONAI** offers to everyone through **the Messiah** of Isra'el.

Not only does each dispensation come with a responsibility, but each also comes with a ***test***. The specific test of this dispensation is simply this: Will you accept the gift? Will humanity, as a whole, accept **the LORD's** offer of the free gift of salvation by the simple act of **faith** in the person of **Yeshua Messiah**? **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).**

There will also be a ***failure*** during this dispensation. As with all the previous dispensations, the present one will also end in failure, and this can be seen in two ways. First, most will reject the free gift of salvation (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Dw – The Narrow and Wide Gates**). The majority of humanity will not come to a saving knowledge of **Yeshua Messiah** in our own day, any more than it was true before our time. The second way that failure is going to be seen is that the very organism that has a knowledge of the truth, the unbelieving visible church, will become apostate, and will even turn away from the truth (see **Revelation Bf – The Church at Laodicea**).

After the failure there is the ***judgment***. This dispensation will also end with judgment, the judgment of the Great Tribulation (see my commentary on **Isaiah Eu – The Rapture and the Great Tribulation**). The Great Tribulation will fall upon the whole world in general, because humanity has failed to accept the free gift of salvation offered through **Yeshua Messiah**. Also, the unbelieving visible church will go into the Great Tribulation and suffer the wrath of **God**. But the believing invisible Church, the true believers in **Yeshua Messiah**, will be taken out of this earth before the Tribulation ever begins.

In every dispensation there is also the display of **God's *grace***. It is in this area that we also see the facet of **grace**. Grace will be seen through the Rapture of the Church in that the invisible Church, the true Body of **Messiah**, composed of **Jews and Gentiles**, all true believers, will be raptured out of this earth (see my commentary on **Revelation By – The Rapture of the Church**). Even for those who have died, their bodies will be resurrected, so that even their bodies will not be on this earth during the seven years of the Great Tribulation. The rapture will be a unique display of **grace** during the Dispensation of Grace.