

# God's Plan for the Ages Series

## Lesson #003

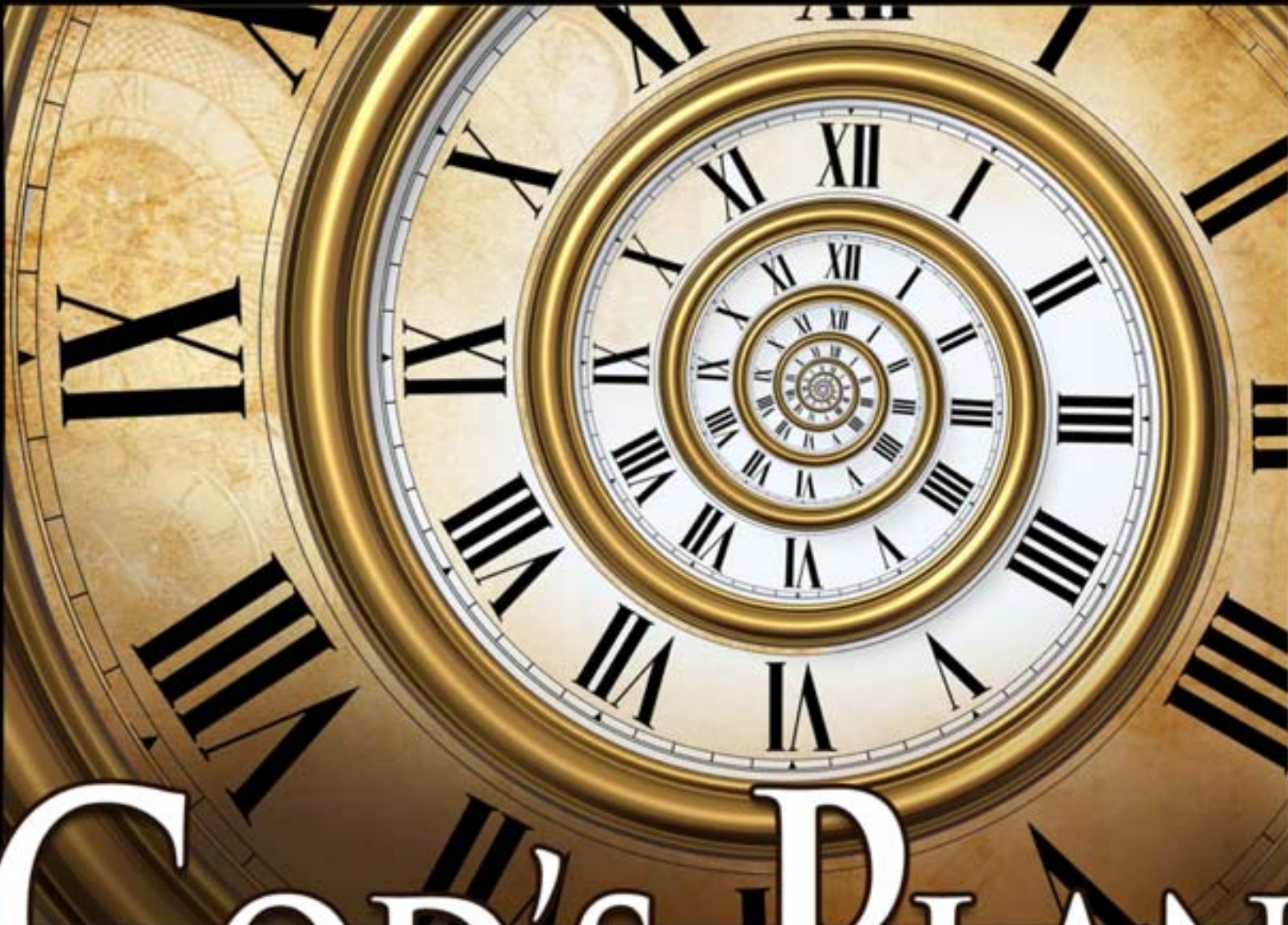
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**GOD'S PLAN**  
FOR THE **AGES**  
**DISPENSATIONS**

**WHAT IS A DISPENSATION?**



# **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 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**



# **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.**



**Acts 1:6–7, “And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, ‘Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you [pl] to know **times [χρόνος, *chronos*]** or **epochs [καιρός, *chairo*]** which the Father has fixed by His own authority;”**

**1 Thess. 5:1, “Now as to **the times [χρόνος, *chronos*]** and **the epochs [καιρός, *chairo*]**, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.”**



- 1. God has a plan which includes different time periods that have different characteristics.**

**The apostles clearly saw that there was a distinction between the time in which they were living and the kingdom which had been prophesied in the Old Testament and which Jesus had proclaimed.**



**2. Jesus' answer indicates that the temporal boundaries (the time limits to these ages) are determined in the decrees of God, "which the Father has fixed by His own authority."**



**3. Paul clearly taught about prophecy and God's plan for the ages, even in the short period of time he had in Thessalonica.**



**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.**



# Related Terms



**ajiwno", *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 three 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**



**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) nomoj (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.**



***Dispensation:* A distinct and identifiable administration in the development of God's plan and purposes for human history**

**Ephesians 3:2; Colossians 1:25–26**



- 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**



- a. 2 parties involved, 1 party has authority to delegate responsibilities; the other has the responsibilities to carry the duties out. (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.**