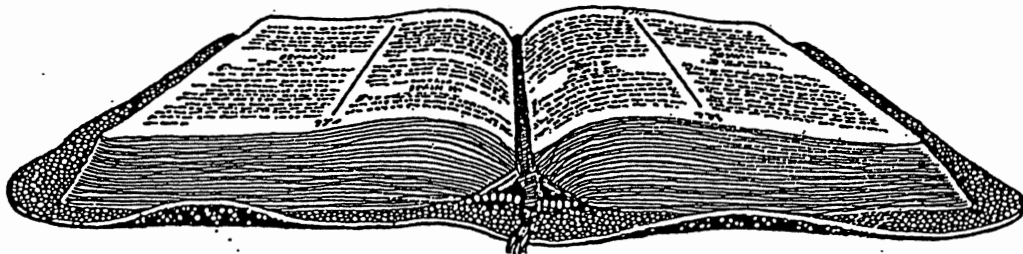
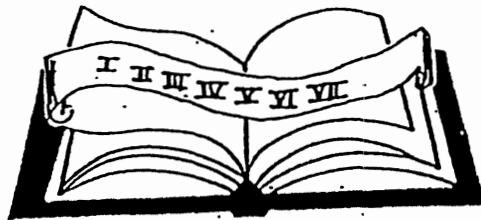
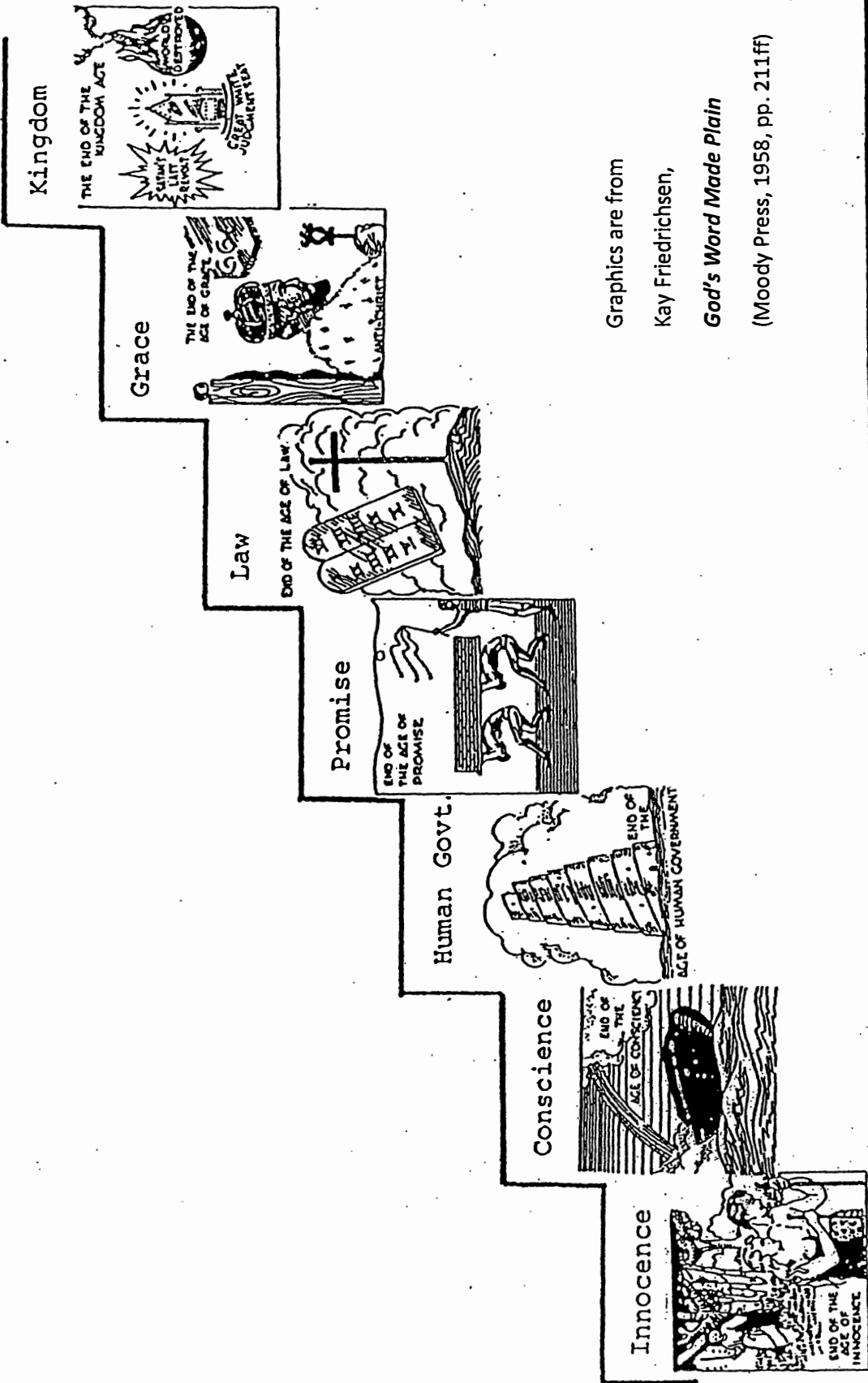


SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT  
FOR  
DISPENSATIONALISM



*Manfred E. Kobex, Th.D.*

# THE DISPENSATIONS



Graphics are from  
 Kay Friedrichsen,  
*God's Word Made Plain*  
 (Moody Press, 1958, pp. 211ff)

# GOD'S GLORIOUS PLAN FOR THE AGES

## IA. THE DEFINITION OF DISPENSATIONALISM

### 1b. The definition of "dispensation":

It would be difficult to improve on Ryrie's definition, "A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose" (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 29).

### 2b. The etymology of the word:

#### 1c. *Dispensatio*, the Latin term

"To weigh or dispense"

#### 2c. *Oikonomia*, the Greek term

*Oikos* = house; *Nomos* = law

The Greek term, *oikonomia*, thus means "the managing of a household"

### 3b. The usage of Scripture:

#### 1c. The general usage:

#### 1d. The usage of the word dispensation:

The various forms of the word *dispensation* are used in the New Testament twenty times. The verb *oikonomeo* is used once in Luke 16:2 where it is translated "to be a steward." The noun *oikonomos* is used ten times (Luke 12:42; 16:1, 3 8; Rom. 16:23; I Cor. 4:1, 2; Gal. 4:2; Titus 1:7; I Pet. 4:10), and in all instances it is translated "steward" except "chamberlain" in Romans 16:23. The noun *oikonomia* is used nine times (Luke 16:2, 3, 4). In these instances it is translated variously ("stewardship," "dispensation," "edifying"). The Authorized Version of Ephesians 3:9 has "fellowship" (*koinonia*) whereas the American Standard Version has "dispensation" (Ryrie, 25).

#### 2d. The Lucan passage Luke 16:1ff

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

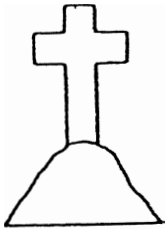
<sup>2</sup> And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

<sup>3</sup> Then the **steward** said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the **stewardship**: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

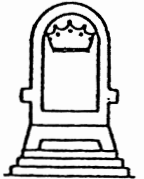
- 3d. The inference from the usage:
- 1e. A stewardship involves two parties.
  - 2e. A stewardship involves an obligation of one party to the other.
  - 3e. A stewardship involves accountability.

- 2c. The specific usage of the word dispensation:

Interestingly, the Bible uses the term dispensation exactly as we would use it in reference to three distinct dispensations.



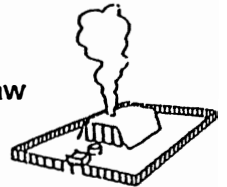
- 1d. Ephesians 1:10—“**Dispensation of the fullness of time**”  
That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:



- 2d. Ephesians 3:2—“**Dispensation of the grace of God**”  
If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

- 3d. Colossians 1:25-26—“I am . . . a minister, according to the dispensation of God”  
Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;  
<sup>26</sup> Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Paul implies a prior dispensation, i.e., the **dispensation of law**



## **2A. THE DISTINCTIVES OF A DISPENSATION:**

- 1b. The characteristics of a dispensation:
- 1c. Primary characteristics:
- 1d. God’s change in governmental relationship:  
God initiates a new stewardship on earth.
  - 2d. A new responsibility for man:  
Man receives new obligations as a steward.
  - 3d. God’s revelation to that end:  
Before God can expect man to function under his new responsibility, added revelation is necessary.

## 2c. Secondary characteristics:



- 1d. Divine test:  
Each dispensation is a test to see whether man under whatever circumstances can please God.
- 2d. Human failure:  
Invariably man falls short of God's expectations.
- 3d. Eventual judgment:  
Each dispensation concludes with a divine judgment.
- 4d. Divine Grace:  
God's justice is tempered by His love and despite miserable human failure and inevitable judgment, God manifests His grace.

2b. The *sine qua non* of a dispensationalist:

## 1c. Negatively: A dispensationalist is not one who

- 1d. Uses the word "dispensation."
- 2d. Subscribes to a certain number of dispensations.
- 3d. Believes in a premillennial return of Christ.

## 2c. Positively: A dispensationalist is one who

- 1d. Consistently distinguishes Israel and the Church.

A dispensationalist sees two eternal purposes of God, expressed in His dealings with Israel and the Church. Israel is always Israel; the Church is the Church, not spiritual Israel.

- 2d. Uses literal hermeneutics:

Dispensationalism practices consistent literal interpretation of the Bible.

- 3d. Sees the underlying purpose of God as His glory.

God's overall purpose in the universe is to manifest His glory through salvation and other means. (This is Ryrie's *sine qua non*, opposed by the "progressive dispensationalists.")

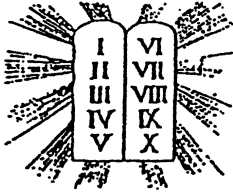
## 3b. The number of dispensations:

## 1c. The importance of the number:

The number and names of dispensations are of relatively minor importance. It is possible to have between 3 to 8 dispensations. Covenant theologians only see the Old and the New dispensation.

## 2c. The inference from Scripture:

## 1d. The New Testament refers to three dispensations:



- 1e. The millennium: Eph. 1:10
- 2e. Grace: Eph. 3:2
- 3e. Law: Col. 1:25-26



These three dispensations, Law, Grace and Kingdom are the subject of extensive Scripture.

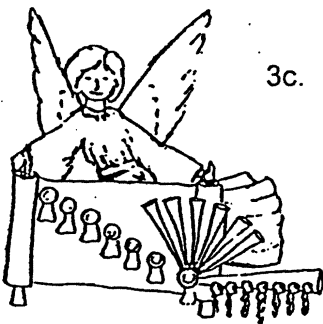
## 2d. The Old Testament implies five dispensations:

- 1e. A dispensation before the fall: Man's life under innocence.
- 2e. A dispensation after the fall: Man's life under conscience, offering sacrifices.
- 3e. A dispensation after the Flood:

In Gen. 9 four new features are found for man's stewardship:

- 1f. The fear of man upon animals, v. 2.
- 2f. The eating of meat, v. 3.
- 3f. Capital punishment, v. 6
- 4f. A promise of never causing another flood, vv. 8-17.
- 4e. A dispensation beginning with Abraham, involving a covenant of promise.
- 5e. A dispensation commencing at Mt. Sinai with the giving of the Mosaic Law.

## 3c. The inconclusiveness of some periods:



## 1d. Should the tribulation be a separate dispensation?

The tribulation is probably not a separate dispensation, but the climactic judgment concluding grace. The 70 weeks of Daniel began about 1,000 years after the law was given and are completed during the tribulation, but are not necessarily the same as the dispensation of the Law.

## 2d. Should the eternal state be a separate dispensation?

It seems that when temporal history ends, so do God's stewardship arrangements with men.

### 3A. THE BENEFITS OF DISPENSATIONALISM:

1b. It answers the need for biblical distinction:

Everyone faces problems in practicing some kind of consistent interpretation. Every expositor needs to account for the differences between the Old Testament economy and this dispensation in areas such as:

1. The inheritance of the land.
2. The keeping of the Passover and Sabbath.
3. Animal sacrifices.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said that one is a dispensationalist, whether he realizes it or not, if one does not claim or practice the above.

2b. It answers the need for a philosophy of history:

- 1c. Dispensationalism recognizes progressive revelation.
- 2c. Dispensationalism provides a unifying factor to history. Whatever God does is for His glory, that is, it serves a doxological purpose.
- 3c. Dispensationalism provides for a goal of human history, the millennium.

3b. It provides a consistent procedure in hermeneutics:

1c. The two Great Commissions: Matthew 10; Matthew 28

In Matthew 10, Christ demands the disciples not to preach to the Gentiles or Samaritans. In Matthew 28, He commands the same disciples to go and disciple all nations. Only a dispensational distinction will help solved the apparent discrepancy.

2c. The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5-7

Certain commandments in this passage cannot possibly be practiced literally in the Church Age, such as turning the other cheek and giving to anyone who asks of us. Seeing that part of the Sermon on the Mount applies to the Kingdom Age relieves apparent hermeneutical tensions.



#### 4A. THE DETAILING OF THE DISPENSATIONS:

- 1b. The listing of the dispensations:
  - 1c. ***Innocence:*** Creation to Fall
  - 2c. ***Conscience:*** Fall to Flood
  - 3c. ***Human Government:*** Flood to the call of Abraham
  - 4c. ***Promise:*** Call of Abraham to Mount Sinai
  - 5c. ***Law:*** Mount Sinai to the Cross
  - 6c. ***Grace:*** Pentecost to Rapture
  - 7c. ***Kingdom:*** Second Advent to Great White Throne
- 2b. The features of each dispensation:
  - 1c. The beginning:
  - 2c. Related Scriptures:
  - 3c. The state of man:
  - 4c. Human responsibility:
  - 5c. Human failure:
  - 6c. Divine judgment:
  - 7c. Divine grace:
  - 8c. Divine covenant:
- 3b. Concluding general observations:
  - 1c. Innocence has devoted only 37 verses to it.
  - 2c. Law and grace have the most Scripture relating to them.
  - 3c. It is best to see seven dispensations.
  - 4c. Our GARBC fellowship is the largest dispensational group in the USA.

**XVIII. Israel**

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37.

(General Association of Regular Baptist Churches 1988 Church Directory, p. 16, pages 13-16 "Articles of Faith")

**XIX. Rapture and Subsequent Events**

We believe in the premillennial return of Christ, an event which can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20, 21; Rev. 3:10.

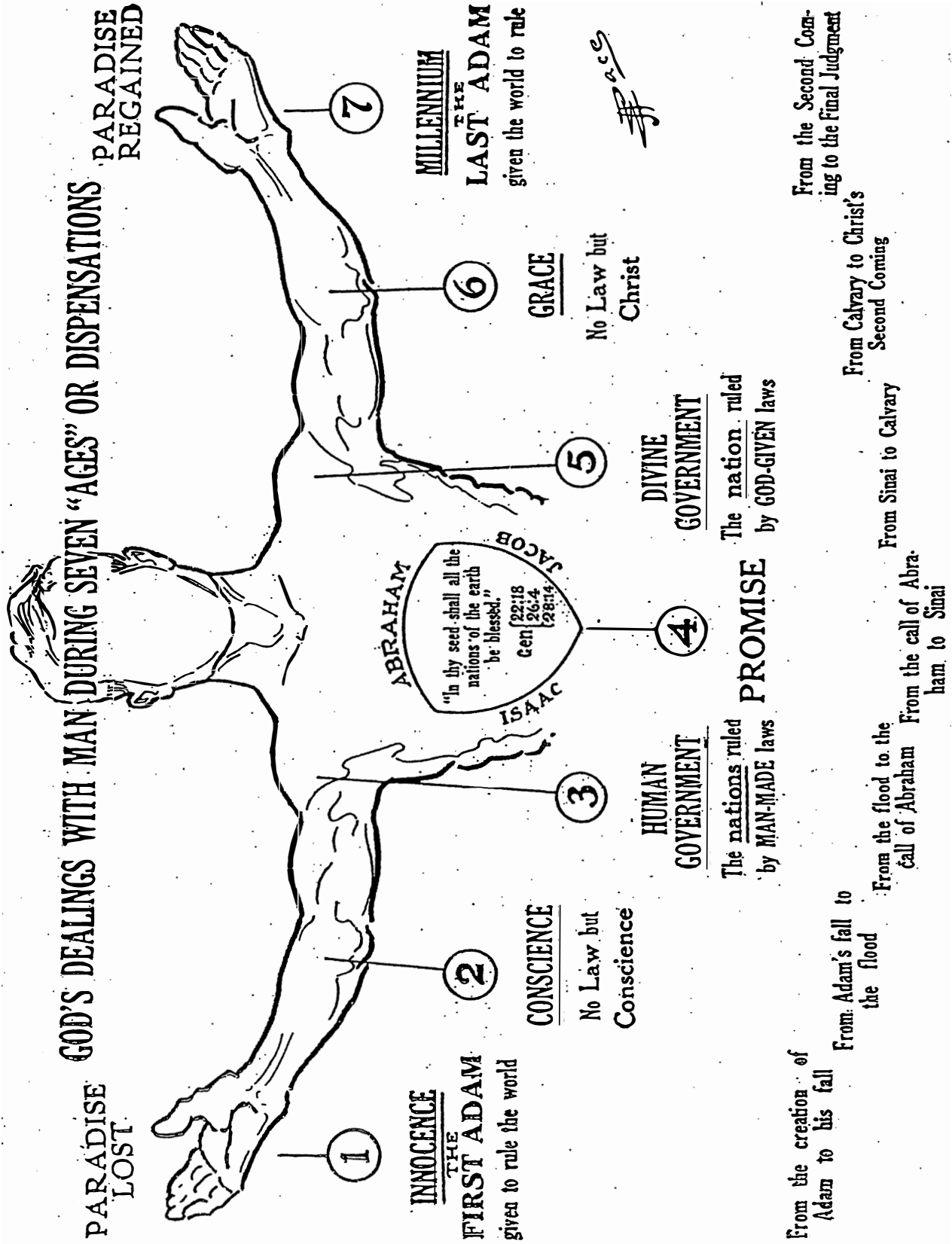
We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom. Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29, 30; Rev. 20:1-4, 6.

This writer recalls Dr. John F. Walvoord repeatedly observing in his classes that when he went held meetings in churches and his ministry was in a Regular Baptist church, he could always be sure he was among dispensational friends. He observed that the GARBC is the only fellowship of churches where the churches are consistently dispensational.

**FBBC's statement of faith:****Dispensations**

We believe that the dispensations are not ways of salvation, which has always been by grace through faith, but are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on earth through humanity under varying responsibilities; that changes in dispensational dealings depend upon changed situations in which humanity is found in relation to God due to human failures and God's judgments; that, though several dispensations cover the entirety of human history, only three of these are the subject of extended revelation in Scripture; that these three (Mosaic Law, Grace, and millennial Kingdom) are distinct and are not to be intermingled or confused.

<http://www.faith.edu/about-faith/position-statements/doctrinal-statement-2015>



# PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH, 740 - 680 B.C.

## PREDICTION

**Is. 7:14**  
Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.



## FULFILLMENT

**Mt. 1:22-23**  
Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

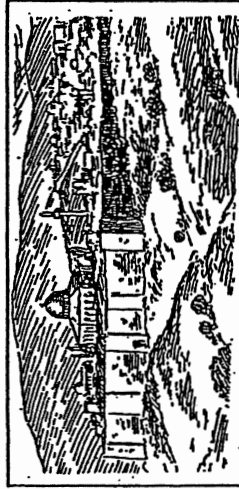
**Is. 61:1**  
The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; and the opening of the prison to [them that are] bound;



**Lk. 4:18, 21**

The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,... And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

**Is. 2:3**  
And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.



Many of Isaiah's hundreds of prophecies have been fulfilled, and that, literally.

**Is. 11:6**  
The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall lead them.



It is reasonable to suppose that the unfulfilled prophecies will also see an exact, literal fulfillment.

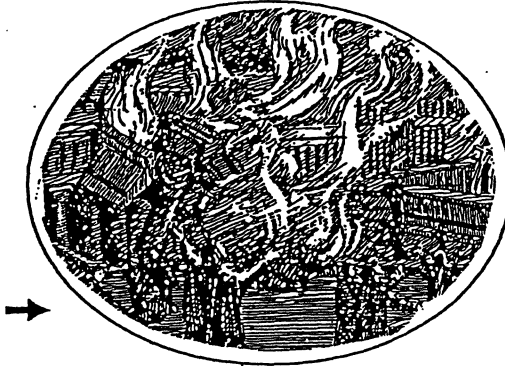
## JEREMIAH'S FULFILLED AND UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES

### PREDICTION

#### JER. 50:13

Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.

**DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON**



### FULFILLMENT

#### DAN. 5:30-31

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

#### JER. 29: 10

For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

**RETURN OF ISRAEL TO THE LAND**



#### EZRA 1:1

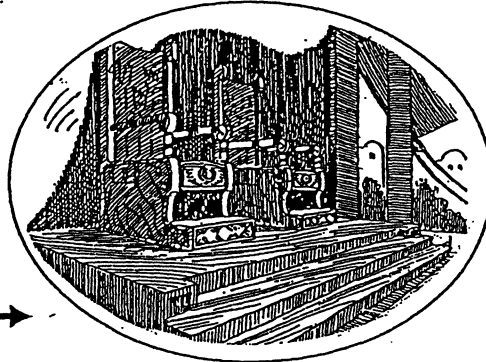
Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing...

**(2:1)**

#### JER. 33:21

Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

**CHRIST IS ON THE THRONE**



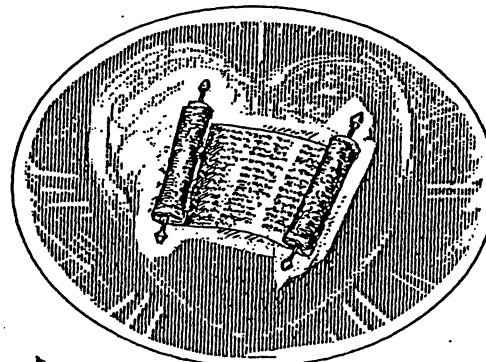
#### REV. 3:21

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

#### JER. 31:33

But this shall be the covenant that I will make . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**GOD'S LAW IN THE HEART**



#### HEB. 8:10

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

# MICAH'S FULFILLED AND UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES

## PREDICTION

### Micah 4:10

Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

### The Babylonian Captivity



## FULFILLMENT

### Jeremiah 39:9

Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.

### Micah 5:2

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

### The Birthplace of Christ



### Matt. 2:4-5

And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.  
<sup>5</sup> And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet  
 (Luke 2:4)

### Micah 4:2

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

### The Presence of the Lord



### Matt. 14:28

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

### Micah 4:3

...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

### The Cessation of Warfare



### Psalms 2:8-9

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. <sup>9</sup> Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

All fulfilled prophecies were fulfilled literally. The believer has every right to expect unfulfilled prophecies be fulfilled literally. It is hermeneutically illegitimate to spiritualize unfulfilled prophecies, as Reformed theologians are doing.