

THE BIBLE IN CONTEXT

The vehicle for the correct division of Yahweh's word is the matter of dispensations (economies) – the Lord's sovereign arrangements in dealing with humanity throughout history. Dispensations are the way the Lord administers His creation, and brings to fruition His divine plan for humanity. If we survey the Scriptures from beginning to end, we can detect a beautiful ordination of themes that will illuminate our understanding of Scriptures and produce wisdom in us. But gaining wisdom for us is not the goal of our quest to understand Scriptures, rather it is to become a "joint of supply" to the members of the Body of Christ with whom we are attached. As we near that time when the era of the *ekklesia* (Christian congregations) comes to an end, and when the final seven years of Israel's history begins, wholesale changes in the world will throw a blanket of turmoil and confusion over the Earth. People, and particularly Christians, will demand answers, and the *only* answers come from the holy Word. Those who know and *understand* His Word will be highly sought after to deliver those answers. *We have to be those people!* This, therefore, is the intent of this disquisition. I'll try to explain my understanding of the proper divisions of the Word of God, aided much by a dear saint, E.W. Bullinger. First is a skeleton of his chart, and then a fleshed-out version with my notes.

A – The Primal Creation

B – Satan's First Rebellion

C – The Earth Restored and Blessed

D – Satan Enters, and the Consequence

E – Mankind Dealt With as a Whole

F – The Chosen Nation Called, and Blessed

G – The First Advent

H – The Kingdom Re-Offered

H – The Kingdom in Abeyance

G – The Second Advent

F – The Chosen Nation Re-Called, and a Blessing

E – Mankind Dealt With as a Whole

D – Satan Bound, and the Consequence

C – The Earth Restored and Blessed

B – Satan's Final Rebellion

A – The New Heaven and the New Earth

Notice that each of the two similar letters deal with the same subject, only on different sides of history. The top half leads to the first coming of Messiah when the kingdom is again offered to Israel through the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles. Israel's rejection of the offer puts the kingdom on hold, during which time the Ecclesia, or the Christian community of believers gathering in congregations, is incubating the Body of Christ. This process has been ongoing for almost nineteen and a half centuries. This puts us now in the second **H**, waiting for the Day of the Lord to begin in the second **G**. Chapters 1 – 3 of the Apocalypse deal with the Ecclesia of the second **H**. Chapters 4 – 20 deal with the second **G**, **F**, **E**, **D**, **C**, and **B**. Chapters 21 and 22 have to do with the second **A**.

A – The Creation of the Original Heaven and Earth. *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”* (Gen. 1:1). Everything about this creation was perfect because the Creator is perfect. We are not told how long ago this happened.

B – The Rebellion of the Leading Archangel. Being the administrator of creation, and, particularly, the Earth, this adversary set about to frustrate Yahweh’s plan for His creation. His tactic was to use the rebel angels who had joined his insurrection to corrupt the creation, especially Earth, and to make it uninhabitable, forcing the Lord to judge His creation with water. *“But the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep”* (Gen.1:2).

C – The Restoration of Earth. For six literal days the Lord worked to make the Earth habitable, ending His work with the creation of the first human on the sixth day. The seventh day was the Sabbath rest for the Creator Yahweh.
(Genesis 1 and 2)

D – Satan’s Attack upon the Humans. The result of this attack was the fall of the first couple into sin and their subsequent expulsion from the garden of Eden.
(Genesis 3)

E – The Judgment of Humanity. Satan unleashed his minions once again, to violate their boundaries and to copulate with human females to produce aberrant angelic/human creatures known as Nephilim in order to taint the pure human stock and to render humankind irredeemable. In the time of Noah the Lord sent a worldwide flood to terminate corrupt humankind. Only Noah, his wife, and his three sons – Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives, survived to repopulate the Earth. After the flood Nimrod rebelled and built the tower of Babel, creating a culture of idolatry from which Yahweh called Abraham, the first Hebrew.
(Genesis 4 – 11:30)

F – The Chosen Nation Called. Yahweh chose Abraham to be His vessel, and from him came the nation of Israel. Yahweh intended Israel to be the blessing to all the nations of the Earth. Through Israel the Messiah was to come, and He truly was to be the ultimate blessing to the nations.
(Genesis 11:31 – Malachi)

G – The First Advent of Messiah. The Son of God became the incarnated Son of Man, Jesus, who was offered to the nation as their Teacher, their Lamb, and their King. John

the Baptizer called out to the nation to “*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt. 3:2). Jesus taught the same message, and so did His disciples, but the nation refused their Teacher, murdered their Lamb, and rejected their King. Their 490-year dispensation ended here in the 483rd year, leaving 7 years to come in the future. (The four gospels and Romans 15:8)

H – The Kingdom Re-Offered to Israel. For forty years the appeal went out to the nation. Through the apostles and through the Holy Spirit with many signs and wonders, the kingdom was urged upon the nation. “*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know*” (Act 2:22); and “. . . by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people” (Acts 5:12). But to no avail. The kingdom and its King were rejected by the nation. (The Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Peter, James, and Jude)

H – The Kingdom Suspended. When Paul arrived in Rome and was placed under house arrest, he debated with the leaders of the Jews, who represented the nation, for a full day concerning Jesus and the kingdom of God. It was the last appeal, but they rejected it, and this rejection became the great fulcrum upon which the dispensations of Israel and the *ekklesia* rested. Paul told them that because of their intransigence, “*Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it*” (Acts 28:28). This was the beginning of Paul’s ministry dealing exclusively with the Body of Christ comprised of two people groups – the Jews and the Gentiles. This combination in Christ is the one New Man of Ephesians 2:15. “*Having abolished in his flesh the enmity (between Jews and Gentiles) . . . for to make in himself of the two one new Man, so making peace.*” Shortly thereafter, Israel lost its city Jerusalem and its Temple, and eventually was expelled from the land and dispersed into the world in what is known as the Jewish Diaspora. It must be emphasized, *this was only temporary*. The final seven years of her

last dispensation is yet to come. When Jesus taught of the end of times, He said of the fig tree: *“When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh. So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled”* (Matt. 24:32-35) The fig tree (Israel) put forth leaves in 1948 with its statehood.

The community of Christians – the *ekklesia* – became the focus of the Lord’s gracious work to produce a Body for His Son. This work, known as the *“mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God”* (Eph. 3:9), has been unfolding since Paul’s debate in Rome, and continues to this day. The age of the Ecclesia will end at the upward call in Rev. 4:1, the prize that motivated Paul: *“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:14). He further explained to the Thessalonians: *“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds”* (4:16-17). Once the *ekklesia* is taken up, the age, or dispensation, of grace for the *ekklesia* will end, and the final seven years of Israel’s dispensation will begin. (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:1-4; Colossians 1:5 – 2:3; 1 Timothy 3:16)

G – The Second Advent. This is the “Day of the Lord” mentioned in Isaiah 2: 17, 13:6-10; Zechariah 14:1-3, 20; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Cor. 1:8, 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Tim. 1:18, 4:8; 2 Peter 2:9, 3:10; and Rev. 1:10. It is a prolonged period of time that begins with the commencement of the final seven years of Israel and ends with the appearance of Messiah to deliver Israel. Joel 2 presents vivid details of that day, as does Jesus in Matthew 24. The Day of the Lord, which ends with the descent of the King on the Mount of Olives to deliver His chosen people, ushers in the millennial kingdom.

F – Israel Restored to be the Blessing to the Nations. This is the one-thousand-year age of the kingdom, the Lord’s Sabbath rest, the seventh one-thousand-year day of the ordained

“week” that began with the restoration of Earth in Genesis 1:2. Israel’s status and activity as a kingdom of priests to the nations is detailed in the following passages: Isaiah 61 and 62; Jeremiah 30 and 31; Amos 9:11-15; Zechariah 12, 13, and 14; and Romans 11:11-36.

E – The Judgment and Salvation of Humanity. Unlike the first wholesale judgment on humankind when all but eight souls survived, this judgment determines the nations’ participation in the millennial kingdom or their perdition. The timing of this judgment is during the final seven years of Israel’s dispensation when Antichrist is on the scene. Those who follow him will end up in the winepress of the wrath of God. Joel 3:2 says this: *“I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”* When Messiah comes He will gather the nations for judgment and separate out the sheep from the goats, based on their treatment of His people Israel. The sheep enter the millennial kingdom; the goats go into perdition. (Matt. 25:31-46) Paul speaks of the salvation of the Gentiles in Romans 15:8-12: *“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.”* The council in Jerusalem took note of the Gentiles with this: *“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David . . . That the rest of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called . . .”* (Acts 15:16-17).

D – Satan Bound. At the end of the seven years of tribulation (Jacob’s Trouble – Jeremiah 30:7), after Satan, the Dragon, through his two servants, the Beast and the False Prophet, has attempted to destroy the chosen nation, he is banished to the Abyss for one thousand years. (Revelation 20:1-3)

C – The Earth Renewed and Blessed. This is the Millennial Kingdom long prophesied for Israel, which had been offered to the nation during the time of John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles. What was then rejected is now fulfilled. Israel takes responsibility to teach the nations, her mission from the Lord at her calling in the beginning.

(Isaiah 35 and Revelation 20:1-4)

B – Satan’s Final Rebellion. At the end of the Millennial Kingdom, Satan is released from the Abyss to test the nations one last time. He goes to the remote areas of Earth, those furthest from Jerusalem and the teachings of the chosen nation, to gather his armies for one last effort to defeat his Creator Yahweh. He encompasses Israel and Jerusalem, exhausts Yahweh’s longsuffering, and is consumed by fire from heaven. He is then cast into the lake of fire forever.
(Revelation 20:7-10)

A – The New Heaven and the New Earth. Peter summarized this final event in this phase of the Lord’s plan for His creation: *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness”* (2 Pet. 3:10-13). The Day of the Lord began at the beginning of the final seven years of Israel’s dispensation and ended at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. Eternity, with the new heaven and new Earth, is the Day of God.