

CHAPTER TWO

TIME LINE OF BIBLE PROPHECY

INTRODUCTION

It is important for the student of Bible prophecy to have an overall view of the time frame of scripture. It is not our intent to set specific dates or to specify numbers of years except where scripture or history specifically indicates. It is our purpose to help you understand the progressive revelation of God as revealed in His Word. As we have stated before the primary purpose of God is redemption. The coming of Christ and the cross are central and primary in the scope of history. It is obvious to all that God has dealt with man before the cross and continues to deal with man after the cross. It is also obvious that God has dealt differently with man before the cross than after the cross. Since these things are true and if we are to interpret literally-historically, then we must acquaint our- selves with these historic differences.

History is HIS-STORY. As we scan the epoch of history we are simply following the footsteps of God as he has walked with man his creation through time which He, God, created. Through this period of time God has chosen to reveal Himself to man in various ways. It seems only reasonable that these ways are progressive. Each method of revelation adds to and builds upon the previous yet each one is specific unto itself.

These periods of time we call dispensations. By definition, a method of rule or management. A dispensation as we will be using the term is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Each of these dispensations are accompanied by a covenant by God.

I. INNOCENCY

The first dispensation we call "Innocency." Man was created in innocency, placed in a perfect environment. Adam and Eve were subject to a simple test, and warned of the consequence of disobedience. Eve fell through pride, Adam, sinned deliberately.

(Rom 5:12 NNAS)

Therefore, just as through one man sin
entered into the world, and death through sin,
and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--

God restored His sinning creatures, but the dispensation of innocency ended in the judgment of the Expulsion.

(Gen 3:24 NNAS)

So He drove the man out; and at the east
of the garden of Eden He stationed the
cherubim and the flaming sword which
turned every direction to guard the way
to the tree of life.

We have no idea how long this dispensation lasted. It is quite apparent it was not long. We do not know how long Adam was in the garden before Eve was created. They were instructed to be fruitful and multiply and were expelled from the Garden of Eden before any children were born.

THE EDENIC COVENANT

As the foundation of these dispensations, we have a covenant of God. I should say a covenant by God. We have two types of covenants by God, first is the conditional covenant. The conditional covenant is the "if" covenant. God is under no obligation unless the recipients of the covenant fulfill their part. There is the unconditional covenant which God alone is responsible for. A covenant is not an agreement by two equal parties. This is a contract or agreement. A covenant is made by the "Greater" and extended to the "Lessor." The keeping of the unconditional covenant is the responsibility of the "Greater." Conditions of conduct are set for the "Lessor." Blessings and punishments are set forth in the covenant. The first of the great covenants of Scripture is, The Edenic Covenant. This covenant sets forth the conditions of life and salvation and about this covenant all Scripture crystallizes.

The Edenic Covenant has seven elements.

1. To replenish the earth.
2. To subdue the earth.
3. To have dominion over the animal creation.
4. To eat herbs and fruits.
5. To till and keep the garden.
6. To abstain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
7. The penalty for disobedience to the one probation, "death."

(Gen 1:28-30 NASB)

And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." {29} Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; {30} and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given every green plant for food*"; and it was so.

(Gen 1:27 NASB)

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

II. CONSCIENCE

The second dispensation is Conscience. By disobedience man came to a personal and experimental knowledge of good and evil. Through that knowledge conscience awoke. Expelled from Eden and placed under the second or Adamic Covenant, man was responsible to do all known good, to abstain from all known evil, and to approach God through sacrifice. The result of the second testing is stated in Gen 6:5 NNAS "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." and this dispensation ended in the judgment of the flood.

THE ADAMIC COVENANT

The Adamic Covenant sets forth the conditions of life for sinful man. These conditions will remain in effect until the Kingdom Age. Not only is sinful man under the curse of sin but the entire creation is affected by man's sinful condition.

(Rom 8:21 NNAS)

that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

The elements of this covenant are:

1. The serpent is cursed (all nature likewise).
2. The virgin birth of Christ is prophesied.
3. The ultimate atonement is promised.
4. The state of women is changed.
5. The inevitable sorrow of life.
6. Man's lot in life to be a laborer.
7. Physical death becomes the experience of all men.

(Gen 3:14-19 NNAS)

The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; {15} And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." {16} To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." {17} Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. {18} "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; {19} By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

III. HUMAN GOVERNMENT

The third dispensation is Human Government. Under conscience as under innocency man utterly failed and the punishment and consequence of that sin was death. God brought desolation by flood upon the whole earth destroying the entire civilization except for that preserved by God in the ark. God has proven that man cannot live in innocency, he cannot be controlled by his own conscience, so the third test is the imposition of Human Government to control the actions of man and to punish the evil doers.

THE NOAHIC COVENANT

Noah and his family are delivered from the flood by the ARK , God's demonstration of Grace. With Noah, the second progenitor of the human race, God establishes a covenant.

The elements of this covenant are:

1. The relationship of man to the earth under the Adamic Covenant is confirmed.
2. The order of nature is confirmed.
3. Human government is established.
4. God promises not to use a flood as judgment again.
5. A curse on Ham.
6. A blessing on Shem.

7. A prophetic declaration is made that Japheth will be the father of the "enlarged" nations.

(Gen 8:21-22 NNAS)

The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. {22} "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease."

(Gen 9:1-19 NNAS)

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. {2} "The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. {3} "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as *I gave* the green plant. {4} "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood. {5} "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from *every* man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. {6} "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. {7} "As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." {8} Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, {9} "Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; {10} and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. {11} "I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." {12} God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; {13} I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. {14} "It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, {15} and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. {16} "When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." {17} And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth." {18} Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. {19} These three *were* the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

(Gen 9:25-27 NNAS)

So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers." {26} He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. {27} "May God enlarge Japheth, And let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant."

IV. PROMISE

The fourth dispensation is Promise. For Abraham and his descendents it is evident that the Abrahamic Covenant made a great change. They became the heirs of *promise*. The covenant is wholly gracious and unconditional. The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing. The dispensation of promise ended when God gave the law to Moses. The dispensation must be distinguished from the covenant. The dispensation is a mode of testing, the covenant is everlasting because it is unconditional. The Law did not negate the Abrahamic Covenant, but was an intermediate disciplinary dealing "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made". (Gal. 3:19-20; 4:1-7) Only the dispensation, as a testing of Israel, ended at the giving of the law.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional and eternal covenant. This covenant lays the ground work for much of the prophecies of Scripture. When considering prophesies pertaining the future, Israel the land and blessings God promised must be taken into consideration.

The following are the elements of this covenant:

1. "I will make of thee a great nation."
2. "I will bless thee."
3. "And make thy name great."
4. "And thou shalt be a Blessing."
5. "I will bless them that bless thee."
6. "And curse them that curseth thee."
7. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

(Gen 12:1-4 NNAS)

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; {2} And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; {3} And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." {4} So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

V. ISRAEL - LAW

The fifth dispensation is Israel or Law. The Law extends from Sinai to Calvary---from the Exodus to the Cross. The dispensation however concludes at the end of the tribulation with the return of Christ to this earth. The history of Israel under Law is one long record of the violation of the law. In the five dispensations to this point we see nothing but failure. Man has failed every test God has put him too and therefore God is justified in saying for all have sinned.

THE MOSAIC COVENANT

The mosaic covenant was given to Israel in three divisions, each essential to the others, and together forming the Mosaic Covenant.

1. the *commandments*, expressing the righteousness will of God. (Ex. 20:1-26)
2. the *judgments* governing the social life of Israel. (Ex. 21:1-24)
3. the *ordinances* governing the religious life of Israel (Ex. 24:12-31)

The text of the Mosaic Covenant is far too extensive for us to include here. The references are given above for your consideration. The commandments and ordinances formed one religious system. The commandments "were a ministry of condemnation" and of "death" (2 Cor. 3:7-9); the ordinances gave, in the high priest, a representative of the people with Jehovah; and in the sacrifices a "cover" for their sins in anticipation of the Cross (Rom. 3:25-26).

(Exo 20:1-17 NNAS)

Then God spoke all these words, saying, {2} "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. {3} "You shall have no other gods before Me. {4} "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. {5} "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, {6} but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. {7} "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. {8} "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. {9} "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, {10} but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. {11} "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. {12} "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. {13} "You shall not murder. {14} "You shall not commit adultery. {15} "You shall not steal. {16} "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. {17} "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

VI GRACE - CHURCH

The dispensation of Grace is as Paul stated *that mystery hidden in times past but now revealed*. The Church age or Dispensation of Grace is prophesied in the old testament but was only revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. John wrote:

(John 1:17 NNAS)

For the Law was given through Moses;
 grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

As we come to this dispensation we are looking at current time. We now live in that time frame known as the Dispensation of Grace and all who believe in Jesus Christ are members of His Body the Church. The Church age or Dispensation of Grace is actually a parentheses in time. The Messiah comes to Israel, the Kingdom is offered, the Kingdom is rejected, and God sets Israel aside and turns to the Gentiles to call out a people for His name. When God the Father in His infinite wisdom determines the time is right the Church age will close and

those believers who are alive at that time will join with the believing dead in meeting the Lord in the Air. At that time the seven year period of time known as the Tribulation, or Daniel's seventieth week, or the time of Jacob's trouble will begin.

(Acts 1:7 NNAS)

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

(1 Th 4:16-17 NNAS)

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. {17}
Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE

The Covenant of Grace is referred to as a "better" Covenant. The new covenant is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We are no longer dealing with the "letter" but with the "Spirit."

(John 2:24 NNAS)

But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,

This new Covenant is a blood covenant. It is provided by and secured by the blood of Jesus Christ. It can be said that the shed blood of Jesus is the New Covenant.

(1 Cor 11:25 NNAS)

In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

Most assuredly the New Covenant is secured by the blood of Christ and is mediated by a new and better High Priest.

(Heb 8:1-2 NNAS)

Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, {2} a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

This covenant is the culmination of God's redemptive plan. In this we have the fulfillment of all the types in the tabernacle of the covenant of Law. In this covenant we have the completion of all the promises of previous covenants. All past covenants look forward to this covenant and even though there is much yet to come all the future looks back to this covenant.

VII. THE MILLENNIAL DISPENSATION

The Millennium or The Kingdom age is the seventh and last dispensation. With the conclusion of this dispensation the redemptive plan of God is complete. The word *millennium* means thousand. The millennium begins at the end of the tribulation period. It begins with the return of Christ to this earth. It continues one thousand years and concludes with the Great White Throne Judgment, followed by New Heavens and New Earth.

(Rev 19:11-16 NNAS)

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

{12} His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself.

{13} *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. {14} And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.

{15} From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. {16} And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

(Rev 20:1-6 NNAS)

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. {2} And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; {3} and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. {4} Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. {5} The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. {6} Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

THE KINGDOM COVENANT

The Kingdom Covenant is also referred to as the New Covenant. It is that covenant that brings into existence the Kingdom of God as set forth in prophecy. It establishes the conditions that will exist when Jesus sits on the throne of David and rules this world with a rod of iron. It will be a time of unparalleled peace. The power and effect of sin will be removed, and all injustice will cease.

(Heb 8:7-13 NNAS)

For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. {8} For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS

ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; {9} NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. {10} "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE . {11} "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. {12} "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE." {13} When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

ADDITIONAL COVENANTS

THE PALESTINIAN COVENANT

The Palestinian Covenant gives the conditions under which Israel entered the land of promise. It is important to see that the nation has never, as yet, taken the land under the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant, nor has it ever possessed the whole land.

The Palestinian Covenant is in seven parts:

1. Dispersion for disobedience, v.1
2. The future repentance of Israel while in the dispersion, v.2
3. The return to the Lord, v.3
4. Restoration to the land, v.5
5. National conversion, v.6
6. The judgment of Israel's oppressors, v.7
7. National prosperity, v.9

(Deu 30:1-10 NNAS)

"So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, {2} and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, {3} then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. {4} "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. {5} "The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. {6} "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. {7} "The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who

hate you, who persecuted you. {8} "And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. {9} "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; {10} if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

The Davidic Covenant. This is the covenant on which the glorious kingdom of Christ, "of the seed of David according to the flesh," is to be founded.

1. A Davidic "house"
2. A royal "throne"
3. A Kingdom
4. In perpetuity
5. And the fourfold covenant has but one condition: Disobedience in the Davidic family is to be visited with chastisement, but not to the abrogation of the covenant.

This covenant was re-confirmed to Mary by Gabriel:

(Luke 1:31-33 NNAS)

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. {32} "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; {33} and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

(2 Sam 8:7-15 NNAS)

David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. {8} From Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a very large amount of bronze. {9} Now when Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer, {10} Toi sent Joram his son to King David to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him articles of silver, of gold and of bronze. {11} King David also dedicated these to the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued: {12} from Aram and Moab and the sons of Ammon and the Philistines and Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah. {13} So David made a name *for himself* when he returned from killing 18,000 Arameans in the Valley of Salt. {14} He put garrisons in Edom. In all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went. {15} So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.