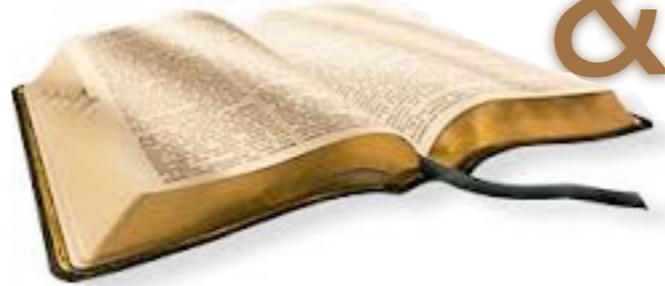


Old Testament & NEW TESTAMENT



The Old Testament, known as the Hebrew Bible, (39 books) and New Testament (27 books) divisions of the Bible represent the Old and New Laws. Christians today are under the New Law.

The Old Law covers the period of spoken law and written law or the Law of Moses. Jesus lived under the Old Law and came to fulfill it. The Old Law required those living under it to keep it perfectly and there was no provision for complete remission of sin. Only one could keep the law perfectly, therefore, He was the only one who could be the unblemished sacrifice for our sins, not His as He had no sins. Hebrews 8:7; Romans 8:3

Although Christians are not under the Old Law it is important to study it to know the mind of God, how He feels about things. It is also our “schoolmaster” to bring us to Christ and it is “the shadow of good things to come.” Galatians 3:24, Hebrews 10:1

————— “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and
————— the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.” —————

Oftentimes men’s divisions of the Bible bring as much confusion as help. The Old and New Testaments should be divided between the books of John and Acts. Instead, the 400 years between Malachi and Matthew is used as the point of division.

To add to the confusion sometimes there are New Testament Bibles that have Psalms and/or Proverbs inserted in the back. People unfamiliar with the Bible think these added books are part of the New Testament.

In studying the Bible it is necessary to know what law is in effect to properly determine if this is something Christians should heed.

In studying any passage determine the following:

1. What law is in effect here?
2. Who wrote the book?
3. To whom was this written?
4. Who is speaking? Inspired?
5. Who are they speaking to?
6. What are the circumstances?
7. Is this addressed to an individual or group?
8. Is there something that applies to New Testament Christians?

Be discerning!
Hebrews 5:14

The Three Dispensation Divisions

The Bible covers three periods of time and they are often called dispensations. A dispensation in this context means a period of time and how God dealt with His people during that particular period. You often see the word “forever,” especially in the Old Testament, regarding a law or feast day. The original intent of the word means its duration is during that dispensation or as long as the Old Law is in effect.

1

Dispensation: PATRIARCHAL

Period: Genesis 1 - Exodus 20
From the creation to the giving of the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai

Main Characters: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel)

Main Characteristics:

This period was before written law and God spoke directly to the father or head of the family or tribe---the patriarch.

Whatever God commanded a particular patriarch to do was not necessarily binding on everyone. This was a FAMILY type religion.

There was no formal type of worship to God. There are some instances of crude altars being built for sacrifices.

Some “pre-written law” commandments that are still in effect: institution of human government, capital punishment and not eating blood.
Genesis 9:3-6

2

Dispensation: MOSAIC or JEWISH

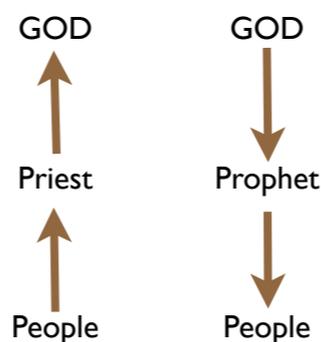
Period: Exodus 20 - Acts 2
From the giving of the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai to the beginning of the New Testament Church

Main Characters: Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, the prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ

Main Characteristics:

Worship was very formal and centered around the tabernacle and later the temple. Levi was the chosen tribe to be priests. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. The High Priests came from Aaron's family. The other families within the tribe supplied workers for the Tabernacle and Temple. The priests offered acceptable sacrifices on behalf of the people.

Israel was an infant nation and immature spiritually. Therefore, God had to bring them along slowly and have them express their worship in a more physical way---things they could touch, see and feel.



3

Dispensation: CHRISTIAN

Period: Acts 2 - 2nd Coming
From the beginning and spread of the New Testament church to the Judgement

Main Characters: Holy Spirit, Peter, Paul

Main Characteristics:

Worship “in spirit and in truth” and by “faith not by sight” John 4:23-24; II Corinthians 5:7

Examples of Christians (saints) coming together as a congregation to worship:

- partaking the Lord's Supper
Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:17 - 34
- “singing and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”
Ephesians 5:19, 20; Colossians 3:16-17
- preaching, teaching
Acts 20:7; Ephesians 4:11 - 13; II Timothy 4: 2-3
- giving as prospered and cheerfully
I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:7

Organization of the New Testament church is very simple.

Each congregation is autonomous, no central earthly head; members are called saints, priests, the flock.

Philippians 1:1; I Peter 2:4-5, 9-10

ELDERS--(pastors, shepherds, overseers, bishops, presbyters) to oversee the flock which is among them.

Must be a plurality. I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 20:17-38

DEACONS-- I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6

PREACHERS, evangelists --I & II Timothy

Again, by example, Christians gathered together on the first day of the week to worship---Sunday.