

# Dispensational Clarity

## Part 2

## Position Statement # 4 – Dispensations

**DISPENSATIONS** - A Dispensation is a specific manner in which God governs during a particular period of time. We are a dispensational church. That is, we believe that God has chosen to administer or govern His purpose on earth through man under varying dispensations. These changes in government are a result of God's choice, and do not indicate that His character ever changes. At least three of these dispensations are mentioned in the Bible and are the subject of extended revelation, viz.: the Dispensation of the Mosaic Law, the present Dispensation of Grace, and the future Dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom. In interpreting the Bible, we believe that these are distinct and should not be intermingled or confused.

## Dispensation

With twenty occurrences in various forms, an examination of its usage in the New Testament demonstrates the lexical meanings of:

oikonomeō (verb-1): be manager; 2. manage, regulate, administer, plan

oikonomia (noun-9): management of a household, direction, office; 2. arrangement, order, plan

oikonomos (noun-10): (house) steward, manager

As Ryrie points out, “the central idea in the word dispensation is that of managing or administering the affairs of a household.”

## The Indispensable Positions of a Dispensationalist

1. A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the church distinct.
2. This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation.
3. The underlying purpose of God in the world is to manifest His divine glory.

## Literal Interpretation

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, and literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, clearly indicate otherwise.

David L. Cooper

Creation:

Six 24 hour days

It was Very Good

Adam was created

Eve was created from a part of Adam

## The Pre-flood World

- Global greenhouse, uniform warm temperature all over the world.
- No windstorms or mass wind movements.
- Comfortable uniform humidities in each day-night cycle.
- Lush vegetation all over the world, with no barren deserts or ice caps.
- No ultraviolet radiations, cosmic rays.
- Human and animal health and longevity.

## The Post-flood World

- Land areas less extensive than before the Flood, large portion uninhabitable.
- Strong temperature differentials leading snow and ice in the polar latitudes.
- Mountain ranges uplifted with many regions unfit for human habitation.
- Harmful radiation from space resulting in gradual reduction in human longevity.
- Tremendous glaciers, rivers, and lakes existed, gradually approaching its present state.
- Volcanic and seismic activity all over the world for many centuries.

## Edenic Covenant

### Dispensation of Innocence

- Responsibilities
- Failures
- Judgment
- God's grace. Gen. 3:15
- Sacrificial system

## Adamic Covenant

### Dispensation of Conscience

- Responsibilities
- Failures
- Judgment
- New beginning

## Noahic Covenant

### Dispensation of Human Government

- Responsibilities
- Failures
- Judgment



## Edenic responsibility

Be fruitful and multiply

Women to help man

Subdue harmonious Earth

Rule over animals

Every plant for food

Not to eat of tree

## The curse for unbelief

Pain in childbirth

Authority struggle

Earth antagonistic to man

Man irresponsible to animals

Plants of field for food

Spiritual death to physical death

## Noahic responsibility

Be fruitful and multiply

Institute government

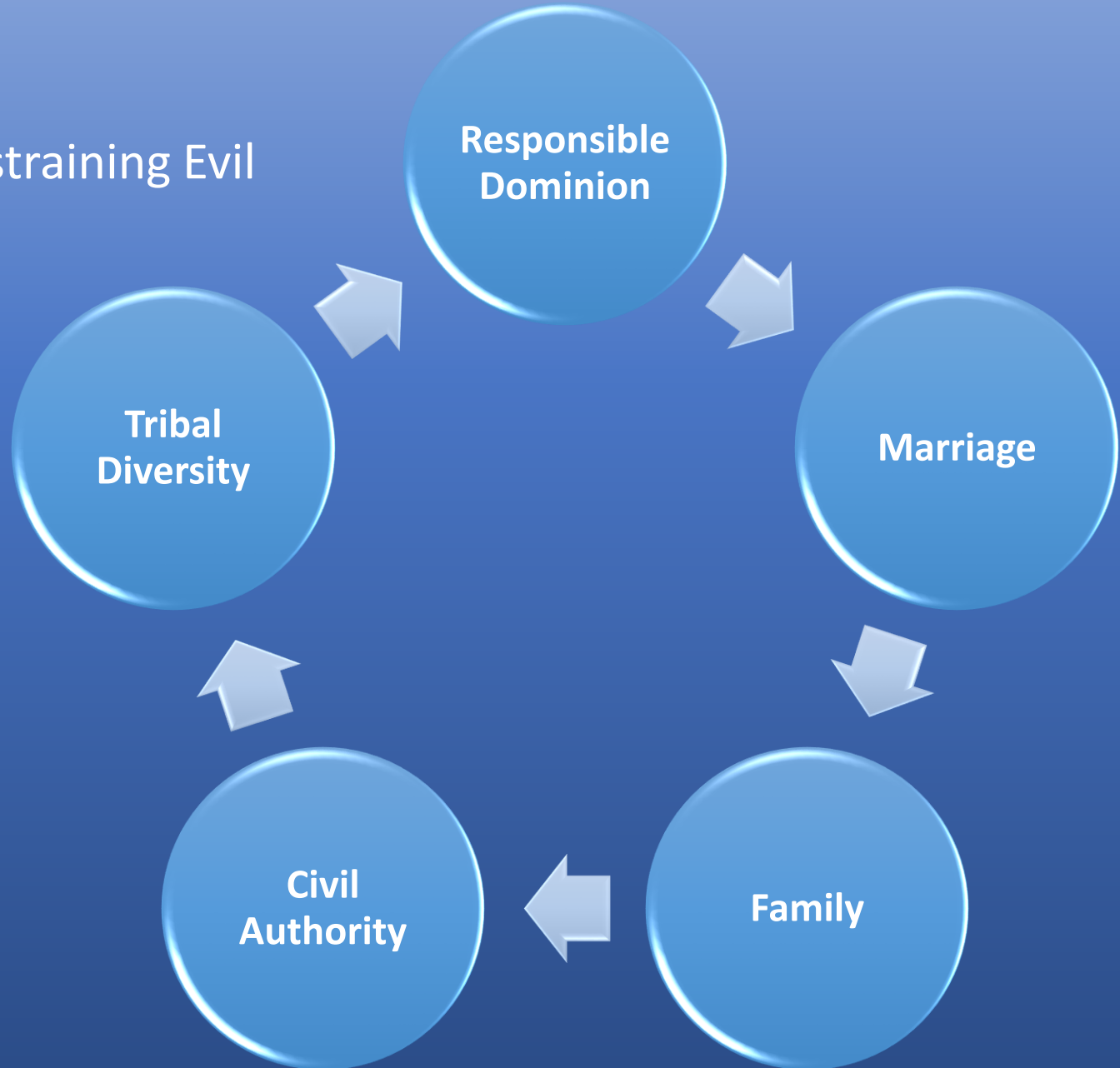
Seasons are introduced

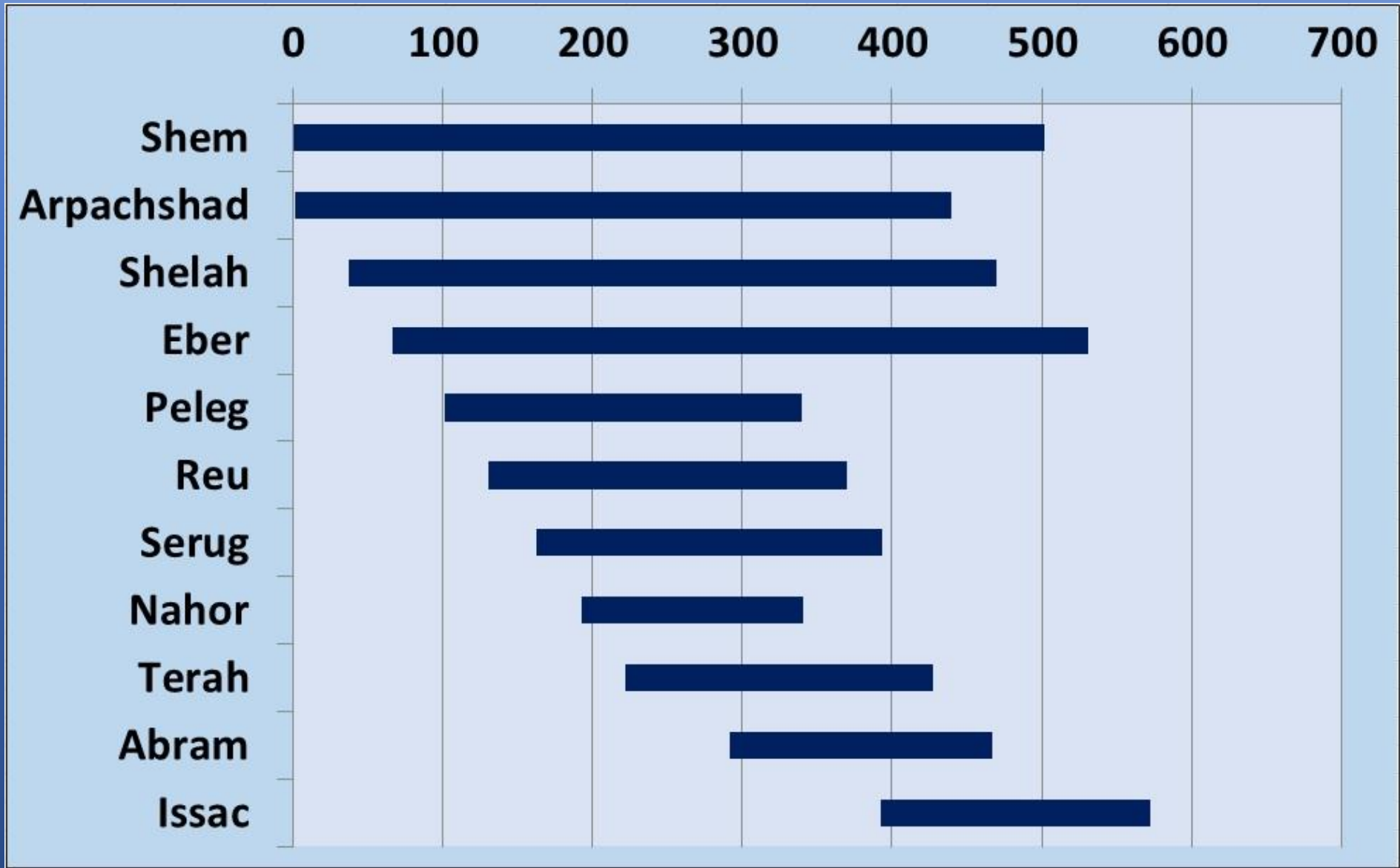
Man feared by animals

Meat for food

Capital punishment

# Divine Institutions for Restraining Evil





## Example of Job

Job lived around the same period as Abraham during the Dispensation of Human Government. Job, like the rest of humanity, was under the Noahic Covenant. By faith, Job was required to believe in God's future Messiah, God's Anointed One that will remove the curse of Adam's fall. The promise that dates back to Genesis 3:15. As a witness of that faith, Job was also to offer up a blood atonement that dates back to Genesis 3:21. This knowledge of the true God was corrupted by most of civilization, yet there were some such as Job that were faithful to the one true God.

## Example of Job

### Job 1:1–5 (NASB95)

“There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil ... and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east. ... Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.”

## The character of Job:

Blameless (1:1)

Upright (1:1)

In fear of God (1:1)

Turning away from evil (1:1)

Continually offering burnt offerings on behalf of his children (1:5)

Fully recognized God's sovereignty (1:21; 2:10)

Holds fast his integrity (2:3)

Confident in the next life (3:11-26)

Assured that God is righteous and just (13:15-16)

Faith in the Redeemer who will stand on earth (19:25)

The ultimate knowledge of humility (42:5-6)

## The example of Abraham:

God first spoke to Abram – Gen 12:1

Abram obeyed God and left Haran at the age of 75 – Gen 12:4

Abram built an altar to God – Gen 12:7

Abram called upon the name of the Lord – Gen 13:4

Abram gave a tenth of possessions to Melchizedek the priest – Gen 14:20

Abram believed what God had promised and was reckoned righteous – Gen 15:6

Abram name changed to Abraham – Gen 17:5

Abraham obeyed God concerning circumcision – Gen 17:24

Abraham received the Incarnate Christ – Gen 18:8

Abraham obeyed God concerning offering Isaac – Gen 22:10

## Unconditional Covenant

### **Genesis 15:10–18 (NASB95)**

“Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other ... Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him ... It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram”



## Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3)

Parties to the  
Covenant

- God and Abram as the father of the Jewish race

Conditions of  
the Covenant

- Fourteen provisions including the token of circumcision

Token of the  
Covenant

- Circumcision

## Promises made to Israel

- Become a great nation
- Become innumerable
- Possess the Promised Land
- Victory over enemies

## Promises to Gentiles

- Blessings for blessing Israel
- Cursing's for cursing Israel
- Spiritual blessings through the seed of Abraham – The Messiah

## Promises made to Abraham

- Father of great nation (Israel)
- Possess the Promised Land
- Father of other nations
- Many descendants became kings
- Receive personal blessings
- Be a blessing to others
- Name to become great



## Dispensation of Promise (Genesis 11:10 to Exodus 18:27)

### Man's Responsibilities

- The responsibility of the patriarchs was simply to believe and serve God. The Promised Land was theirs, and blessing was theirs as long as they remained in the land. The people of the promise; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the children of Jacob (Israel) were to stay separate from the nations around them.

### Man's Failures

- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons continued to intermingle with the Canaanites and surrounding nations.

### The Resulting Judgment

- God sent the family down to Egypt where the surrounding Egyptians would not associate with them. Soon after they would be enslaved.

## Example of God's Sovereignty

### **Genesis 15:13–16 (NASB95)**

“Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years ... But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions ... Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

## The First Passover – Salvation through Faith

### Exodus 12:21–24 (NASB95)

“ “Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb. “You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; ... when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.

## Entering into the Mosaic Covenant

### Exodus 19:5–8 (NASB95)

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ ... So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do!”

## Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20:1 – Deuteronomy 28:68)

Parties to the  
Covenant

- God and Israel with Moses acting as a representative

Conditions of  
the Covenant

- Law of Moses which contained a total 613 commandments. Being a conditional covenant, it provided blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. (Ex. 15:26) The key element of the entire Mosaic Law was the blood sacrifice. (Lev. 17:11)

Token of the  
Covenant

- Sabbath



## Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20:1 – Deuteronomy 28:68)

“In contrast to the other covenants, the Mosaic covenant, though it had provisions for grace and forgiveness, nevertheless builds on the idea that obedience to God is necessary for blessing. While this to some extent is true in every dispensation, the Mosaic covenant was basically a works covenant rather than a grace covenant. The works principle, however, was limited to the matter of blessing in this life and was not related at all to the question of salvation for eternity.”

John F. Walvoord, “The New Covenant,” in *Integrity of Heart, Skillfulness of Hands*, pp. 191–92.

Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ex 18:24.



## Dispensation of Law (Exodus 19:1 – Acts 1:26)

### Man's Responsibilities

- The responsibility of the Nation of Israel along with Gentile proselytes was to keep the Mosaic Law.

### Man's Failures

- The Nation of Israel was continually disobedient and God continued to bring them back through discipline. They continued to reject the ordinances of God. (2nd Kings 17:7-23)

### The Resulting Judgment

- As a result, there were many judgments throughout this long period. The ten tribes were carried into Assyrian captivity; the two tribes were carried into Babylonian captivity; and later, because of their rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, the people were dispersed into all the world (Matt. 23:37–39).



Land

- Real Estate Covenant
- Deut. 29:1-30:20

Seed

- Davidic Covenant
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sam. 7:11b-17
- 1<sup>st</sup> Chron. 17:10b-15

Blessing

- The New Covenant
- Jer. 31:31-34

## Land (Real Estate) Covenant (Deut. 29:1-30:20)

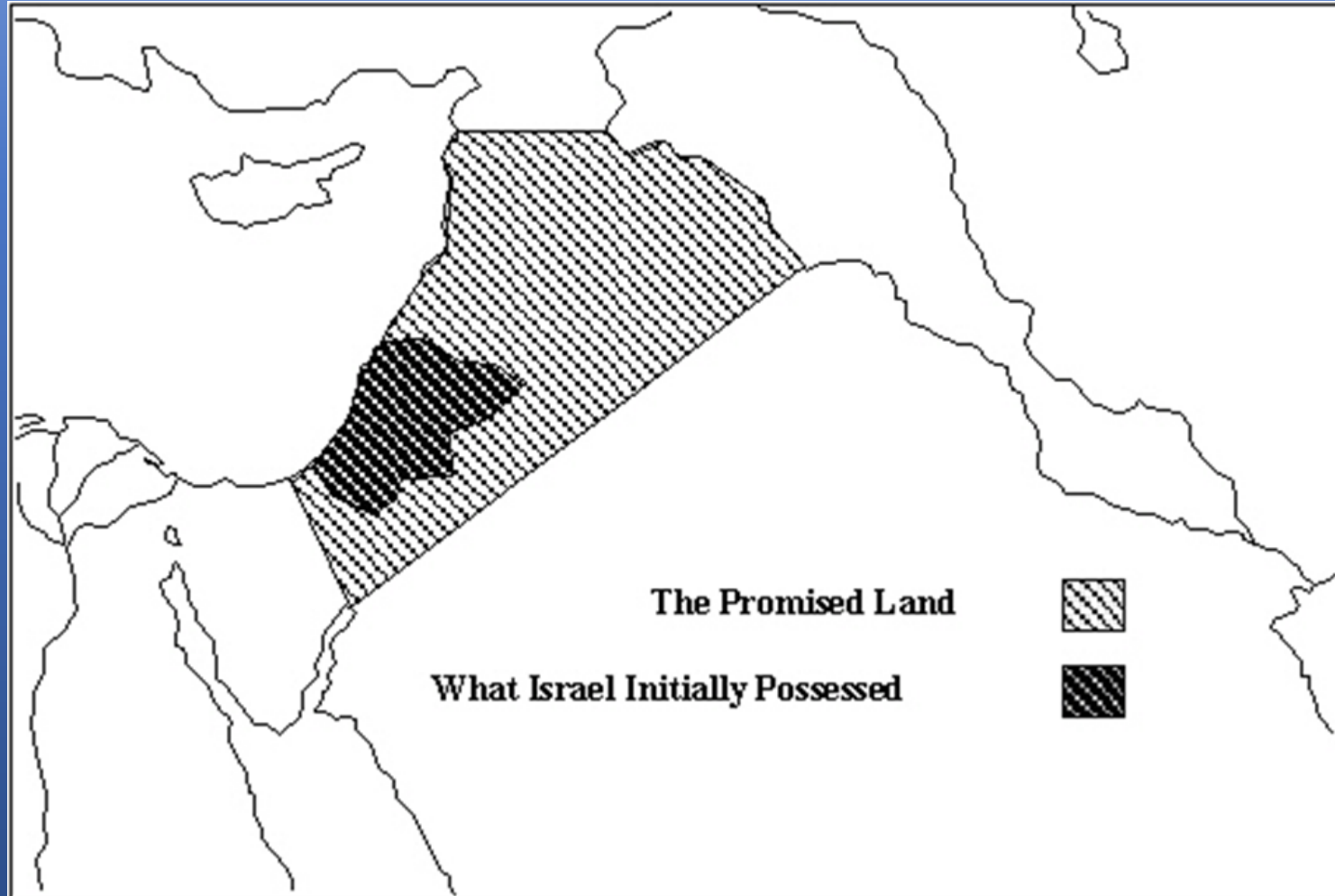
### Parties to the Covenant

- God and Moses as the representative of National Israel

### Provisions of the Covenant

- The nation will be plucked off the land for its unfaithfulness.
- There will be a future repentance of Israel.
- The Messiah will return.
- Israel will be restored to the land.
- Israel will be converted as a nation.
- Israel's enemies will be judged.
- The nation will then receive her full blessing.

## Land (Real Estate) Covenant (Deut. 29:1-30:20)



## Seed (Davidic) Covenant (2nd Sam. 7:11b-17 and 1st Chron. 17:10b-15)

### Parties to the Covenant

- God and David as the representative for the House of Israel

### Provisions of the Covenant

- David's child, yet to be born, shall succeed him and establish his kingdom.
- This son, Solomon, shall build the temple instead of David.
- The throne of his kingdom shall be established forever.
- The throne will not be taken away from him (Solomon).
- David's house, throne, and kingdom shall be established forever.

## Luke 1:30–35 (NASB95)

- The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. “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**; and He will reign over the **house of Jacob** forever, and His **kingdom will have no end.**” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God

## 2 Samuel 7:12–16 (NASB95)

- “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. “Your **house** and your **kingdom** shall endure before Me forever; your **throne shall be established forever.**”



## Blessing (New) Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

### Parties to the Covenant

- God and David as the representative for the House of Israel

### Provisions of the Covenant

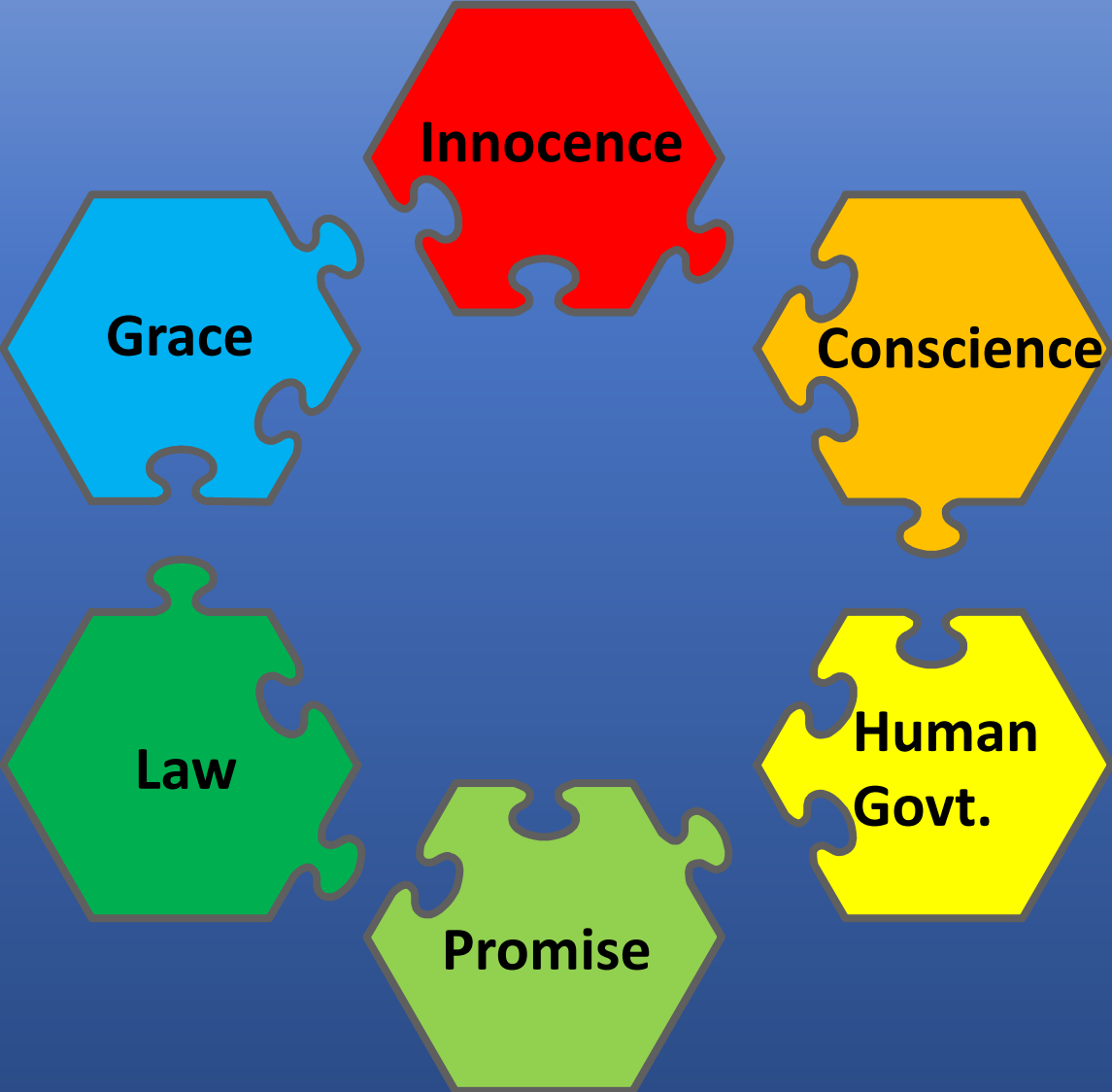
- Unconditional covenant
- Distinct from the Mosaic Covenant
- The universal regeneration of Israel
- The forgiveness of sin
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- Israel showered with material blessings
- The sanctuary will be rebuilt
- The Law of Christ

## Blessing (New) Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

The New Covenant that was first announced in Jeremiah 31:31-34 was ratified when Christ died. Moreover, the epistles make it clear that the church participates in at least some of the New Covenant's blessings. However, just because the church shares in some of the New Covenant's blessings, it should not be concluded that the church is a party to the New Covenant ... Only through the adoption of an allegorical method of interpretation is it possible to argue that the church is currently fulfilling these provisions. Dispensationalists believe that Israel will fulfill these provisions during the millennial age.

## Kingdom Postponed

“The millennial kingdom was to be the fulfillment of the unconditional and eternal covenants that God gave to the nation of Israel. In His covenant promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 13:14–17; 15:18–20; 17:4–8), God said that Abraham’s physical descendants would inhabit the land God had permanently deeded to Abraham. In His covenant with David (2 Sam. 7:16), God promised that a descendant of David would sit on David’s throne and rule over his house. This covenanted program was offered to Israel, but was rejected by the nation. Because the covenants are eternal, unconditional, and therefore irrevocable, the Davidic kingdom program would not be cancelled. It could, however, be postponed.



## Dispensation of Grace (Acts 2:1 to Revelation 19:21)

### Man's Responsibilities

- Under Grace the responsibility on man is to accept the gift of righteousness that God freely offers to all (Rom. 5:15–18).

### Man's Failures

- The vast majority have rejected Him and as a result will be judged. The dispensation will end at the second coming of Christ since

### The Resulting Judgment

- The judgment to non-believers is death. The judgment to believers for not walking with Christ is a loss of rewards. The earth, which was to be controlled by Adam and handed over to Satan, will be ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ.



## Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Conscience – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

Literal translation: Genesis 4:1-2a

1. And the man knew Eve his wife, she conceived and bare Cain and said  
“I have gotten a man: Jehovah.” 2. Again she bare his brother: Abel.

Few Bible translators really understand what Eve is saying here, which is why our English translations do not read as given above. Eve has clearly understood from God’s words in Genesis 3:15 that the serpent will be defeated by a God-Man. She obviously thinks that Cain is Jehovah. Her basic theology is correct: Messiah would be both man and God. Her mistake is in her application of that theology.

Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Messianic Christology: a Study of Old Testament Prophecy Concerning the First Coming of the Messiah* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1998), 15.

Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Conscience – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Genesis 5:29**

“Now he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed.”



Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Human Govt. – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Job 19:25–26 (NASB95)**

“As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. “Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

## Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Promise – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

### **Exodus 4:30–31 (NASB95)**

“and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.”

Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Law – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Joshua 2:9–11 (NASB95)**

(Rahab) “said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you ... “When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Law – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Jonah 3:4–5 (NASB95)**

“Then Jonah began to go through the city one day’s walk; and he cried out and said, “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them.”

Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Law – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Isaiah 43:10–11 (NASB95)**

“You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. 11 “I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.

Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Law – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**John 3:16–18 (NASB95)**

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Grace – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Acts 8:35–37 (NASB95)**

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” [And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”]”

Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Grace – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Acts 10:43–45 (NASB95)**

“Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.” 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”



Salvation in each Dispensation

Dispensation of Grace – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Romans 1:16 (NASB95)**

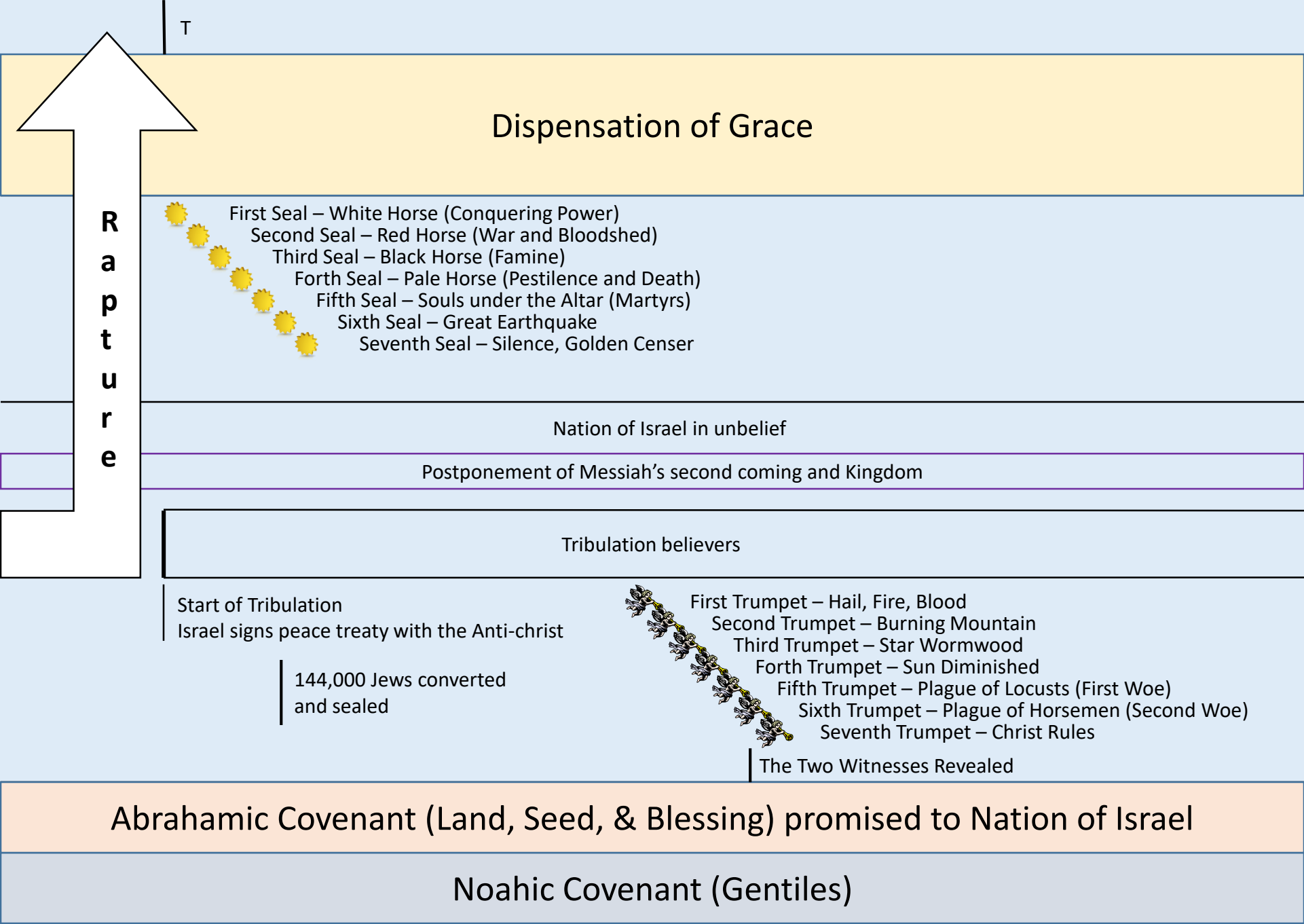
“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Salvation in each Dispensation

Every Dispensation – Saved by faith in the promised Deliverer

**Hebrews 11:1–40 (NASB95)**

By faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.

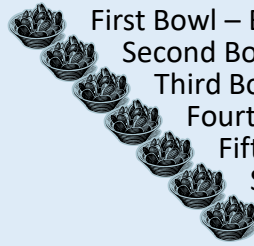


T + 3 ½ years (42 months)

T + 7 years

### Dispensation of Grace

### Dispensation of the Kingdom

- 
- First Bowl – Boils
  - Second Bowl – Sea to Blood
  - Third Bowl – Rivers to Blood
  - Fourth Bowl – Great Heat
  - Fifth Bowl – Darkness
  - Sixth Bowl – Euphrates Dried Up
  - Seventh Bowl – Hail

Nation of Israel in unbelief

Israel in belief

Postponement of Messiah's second coming and Kingdom

The Messiah reigns from Jerusalem

Tribulation believers

The Abomination of Desolation

Assembling of Antichrist Armies

National Regeneration of Israel

Destruction of Babylon

Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Fall of Jerusalem

Battle from Bozrah to the Valley of Jehoshaphat

Antichrist Armies at Bozrah

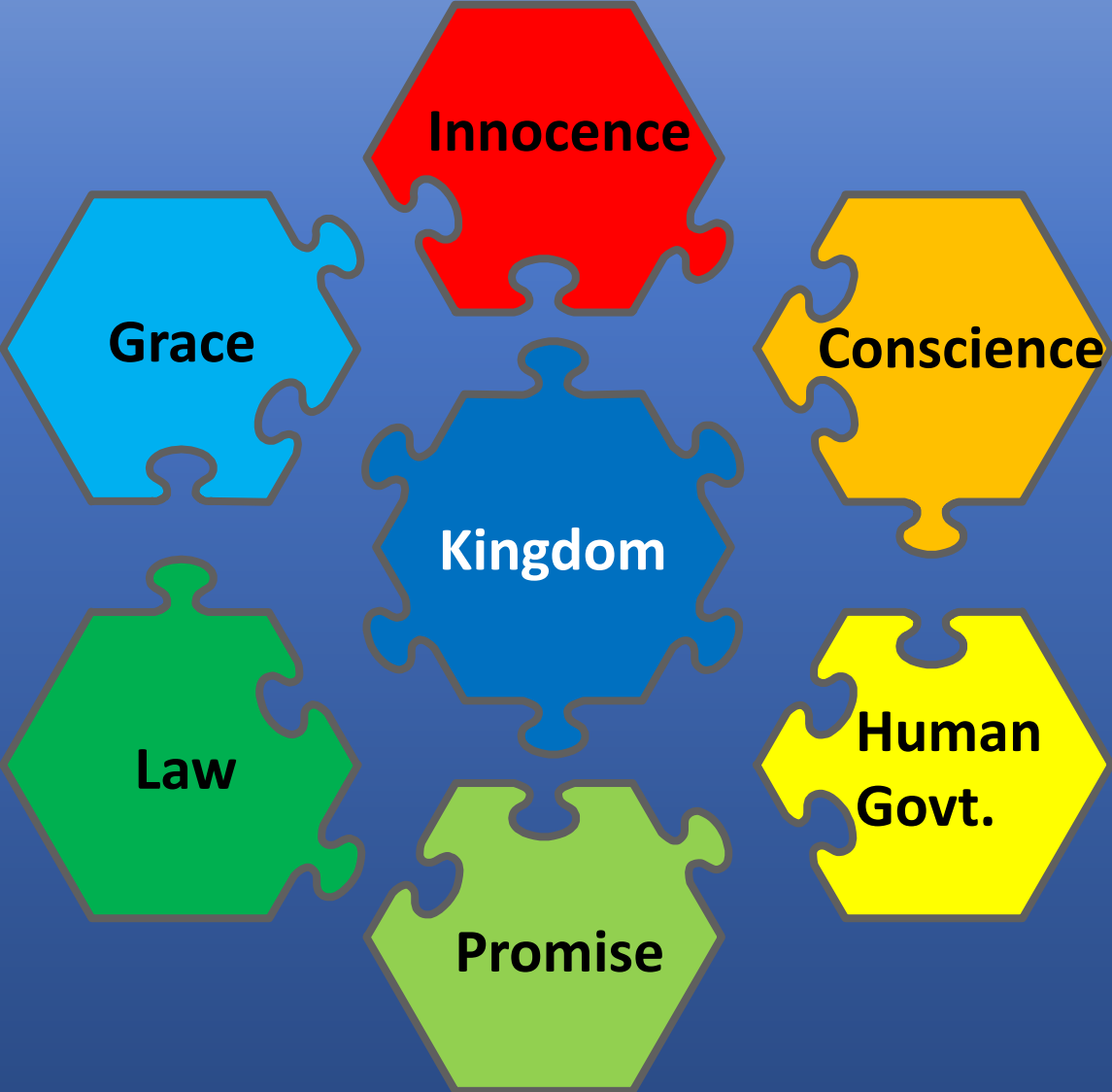
Victory ascent upon the Mount of Olives

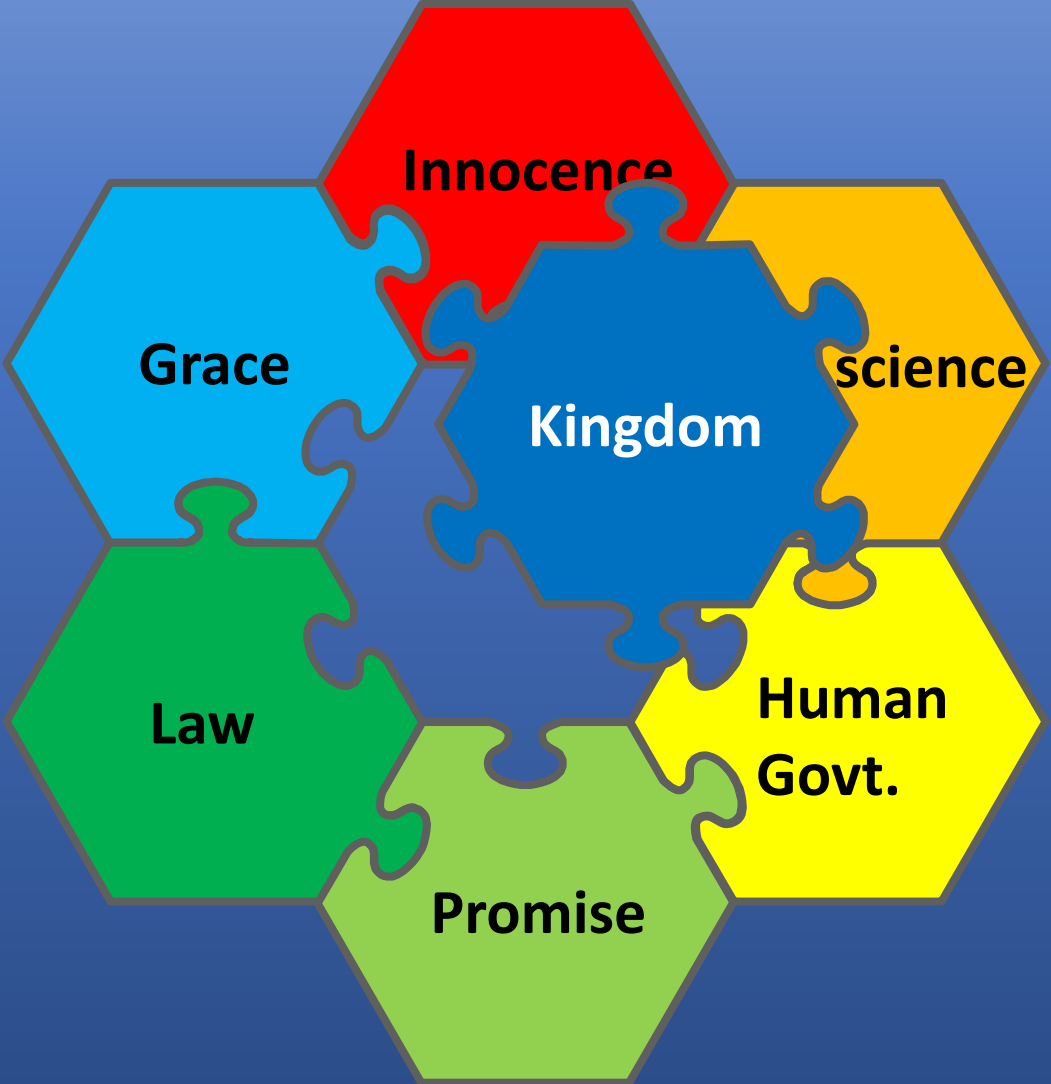
Abrahamic Covenant (Land, Seed, & Blessing)

Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled

Noahic Covenant (Gentiles)

Earth's curses rolled back





**Innocence**

**Grace**

**science**

**Kingdom**

**Law**

**Human  
Govt.**

**Promise**



## Dispensation of the Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-15)

### Man's Responsibilities

- Man will be responsible for obedience to the King and His laws. Satan will be bound, Christ will be ruling, righteousness will prevail, overt disobedience will be quickly punished.

### Man's Failures

- At the end of the period enough rebels will be found to make a formidable army that will dare to attack the seat of government (Rev. 20:7–9). The revolt will be unsuccessful, and the rebels will be cast into everlasting punishment.

### The Resulting Judgment

- The Great White Throne Judgment



## Dispensation of the Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-15)

### Life Under the Perfect King

- The Millennium Will Begin With the Second Coming
- Christ Will Judge the Nations and Separate the Sheep (Saved) From the Goats (Lost) so only saved people will enter the Millennium, namely, the remnant of the 144,000 Jews who are saved, plus the multitude they win to Christ (see Rev. 7:4–9).
- Some Children Born During the Millennium Will Not Believe
- Resurrected Humans Will Take Part in the Heavenly New Jerusalem

## Dispensation of the Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-15)

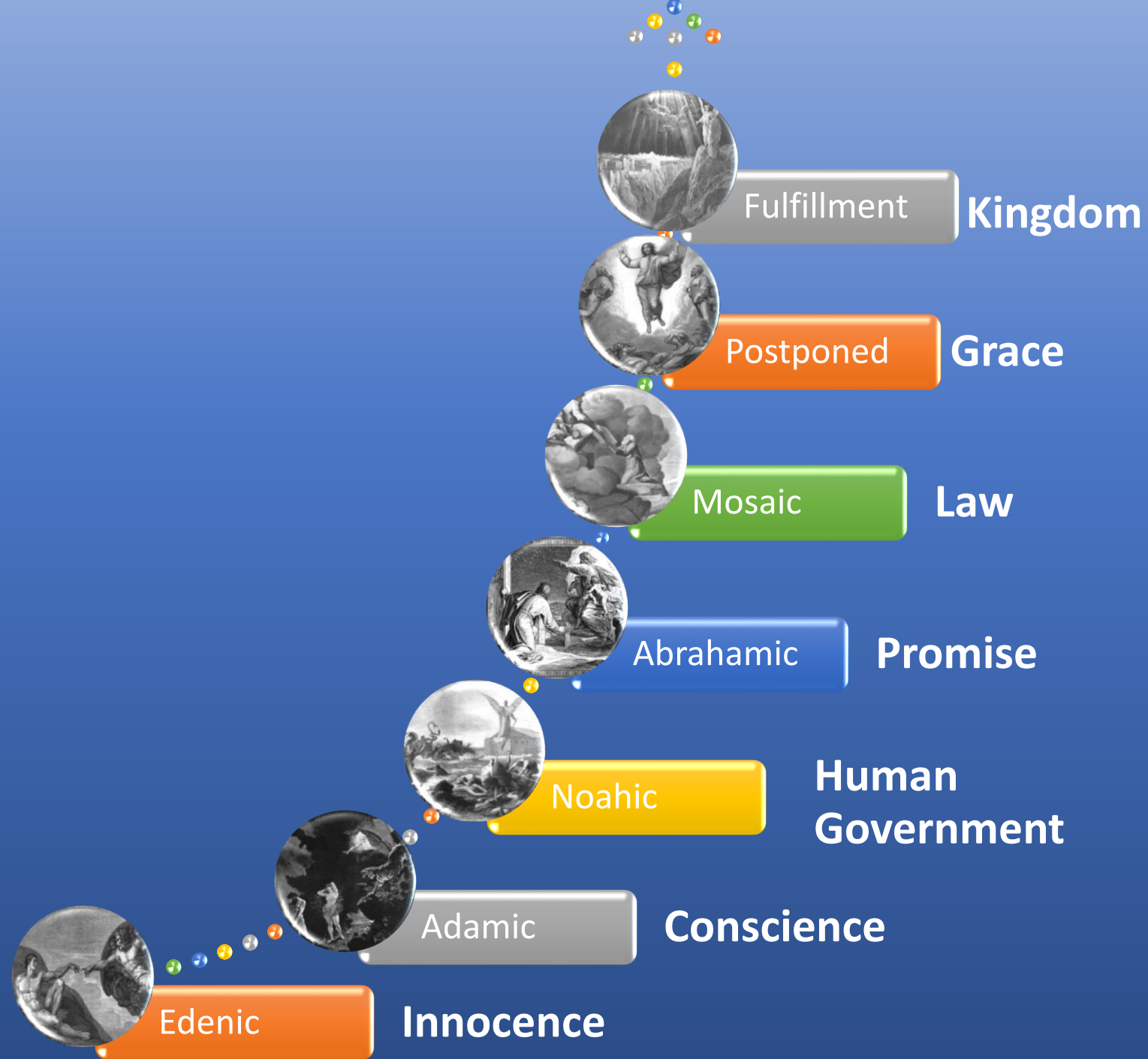
### Life Under the Perfect King

- Christ Will Reign on a Throne in Jerusalem
- Christ's Followers Will Be Positionally Rewarded in His Reign
- One Faith Will Be Established Over All the Earth
- Peace Will Be Restored to the Earth
- Prosperity Will Be Restored to Earth

## Dispensation of the Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-15)

### Life Under the Perfect King

- Creation Will Be Delivered From Bondage
- There Will Be No Carnivorous Animals
- Longevity Will Be Restored
- Death Will Result From Rebellion and Punishment
- Continued Sinfulness of Mankind



# Conclusion

For Further Study on the Dispensations, Visit:  
[www.refiningacreation.org](http://www.refiningacreation.org)