

WHEN THIS DISPENSATION BEGAN

IDENTIFYING THE MOST RECENT CHANGE IN GOD'S WAYS

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."

~ Ephesians 3:7

1. Why it is important?

- a. The opposition thinks its an insult to say we are the logical conclusion of disp. thinking
- b. Ryrie says it is important because of church practice, scripture relevance/interpretation
- c. Ruckman says the key issue is "when the body began" thinking baptism is the issue
- d. Mid-Acts Pauline right division affects many things: tradition, church, gospel, pattern
- e. When do they say it began? Matt 16, the cross, Acts 2 - though no one knew it yet.

2. What is 'it'?

- a. The question posed is always: when did the church begin? But that would be wrong.
- b. Which church? Which gospel? An age is a period of time, the church is not an age.
- c. If we are looking for church ages we might accept Matt 16:18, or Acts 2:47, 5:11
- d. The church is many members joined together by one gospel -1Co 12:13, Eph 3:6, 4:16
- e. What comes before the church, is the message; the revelation of the mystery.
- f. The question should be "when was this dispensation given?" – Eph 3:1, Col 1:25
- g. 'It' is the dispensation of grace, not when faith came, Christ came, the Spirit came

3. Distinguishing the Dispensation of Grace

- a. A dispensation is a revelation from God that describes his dealings with us, and our responsibility toward him
- b. The dispensation of the grace of God is the same as the revelation of the mystery
- c. If man does not know it, then it is of no use to us at all, and is not a dispensation.
- d. The church is just one aspect of it, others include:
 - i. 1) Israel is fallen Rom 11:25; (2) salvation to the Gentiles w/o Israel Col 1:27
 - ii. (3) the preaching of the cross 1 Cor 2:7-8, 9:17;
 - iii. (4) the riches of God's grace Col 1:27, Eph 3:8-9
 - iv. (5) Christ over all things, heavenly places Eph 3:9-10, Eph 1:10
- e. When we are trying to determine when 'it' began, we must know what 'it' entails

4. When did it start? Answer: With the revelation given to Paul.

- a. Ryrie says, "If it can be proven that to Paul exclusively..."
- b. To Paul, "last of all" – 1 Corinthians 15:8-10, Acts 9:15
- c. To Paul, "first of all" - 1 Timothy 1:12-16
- d. Israel's fall - before Acts 28 (Rom 11:11), after Acts 3:26
- e. Apostle to the Gentiles – Peter was not this apostle - Acts 10:28, 11:19; Gal 2:7-9
- f. The preaching of the cross – not at Pentecost, not with Peter - Acts 2:38, Acts 15:1-2
- g. Riches of grace – forgiveness now? Col 2:13; or later? Acts 3:19, 1 John 1:9
- h. Christ over all heavenly places– they sought an earthly kingdom–Heb 13:14, 2Pe 1:11