

## Seek First – Timeline Part 4

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**Mat.6:33** *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..."*

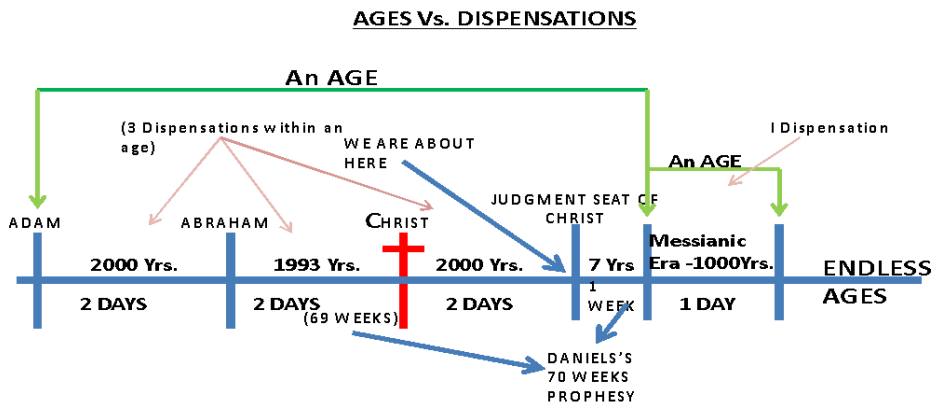
- ✓ *In our last lessons, we saw that we* are not to be (worried) distracted from seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness by being preoccupied with the things of this life, as our Father knows that we need them.
- ✓ This kingdom that we are to seek, is it a literal kingdom and should we even ask this question?
- ✓ The first man, the first Adam with the woman in the beginning of Scripture were created to rule over this same kingdom, a purpose which he failed to realize due to his fall in the Garden of Eden. But God, through His comprehensive redemption plan for man, will yet establish the kingdom, which will be the culmination of His revealed design for man and this earth.
- ✓ During Christ's first advent, this same kingdom was being offered to the Jews when John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples appeared to Israel with the message, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"
- ✓ Israel rejected their King and the kingdom of the heavens being offered to them. Hence, attention was diverted to a new nation, those expected to bring forth fruits.

**Mat. 21:43** *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

**1Pet. 2:9** *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

- ✓ During this current dispensation, this same kingdom is now on offer to us and the culmination of it is when Christ and His bride will take on the ruler ship.
- ✓ The second Man, the last Adam, near the end of Scripture, is therefore seen returning back to this earth to take over the ruler ship as the coming age begins.
- ❖ I would like us to see the timing of all these events in this Ages & Dispensations slide.

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- ✓ **“Dispensation”** is the term used in Scripture to show distinctions in God’s dealings with different groups of mankind during Man’s Day, along with the Messianic Era.

***1 Cor. 10:32... to Jews or Gentiles or the church of God.***

One age covers the whole of Man’s Day, and another age covers the succeeding Messianic Era; but, there are **more than two dispensations within the scope of these two ages**.

The word “dispensation” is the translation of the Greek word, *oikonomia*. A cognate form of the word is *oikonomos*, which is made up of two words — *oikos* (house) and *nemo* (to manage). Thus, *oikonomos* has to do with the management of a house — a central person placed in charge, with others holding responsible positions in the house under this person. And *oikonomia* (the word used for “dispensation”) carries the same basic meaning.

*Oikonomia* has been translated “stewardship” in three instances in the New Testament (***Luke 16:2-4, KJV***); and the word actually only appears six other times, translated “dispensation” (KJV) four of the six times (***1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4***).

“Stewardship” has to do with household management. Christians are stewards in this respect since they are members of a household. They have been placed in charge of a portion of the Owner’s goods, and are expected to manage those goods within the household (under the leadership of the Holy Spirit) after such a fashion that there will be an increase (***cf. Matt. 25:14ff; Luke 19:12ff***).

Thus, “a dispensation” simply has to do with the management of the Lord’s household affairs through those whom He has placed in His house (stewards). And when there is a stewardship change within God’s dealing with mankind, there is, correspondingly, a change in the dispensation. This would have to be the case, for **stewardship and dispensation are synonymous in this respect**.

Within the scope of the 7,000 years set forth through that foreshadowed by the seven days in ***Gen.***

***1:2b-2:3***, there are at least four different dispensations. There is a **present dispensation** (during which God is **dealing with Christians**), there were at least **two past dispensations** (one in which **God dealt with Israel**,

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and the other in which He dealt with mankind at large prior to His dealings with Israel), and there is a future dispensation (the Messianic Era/the age to come).

**(Eph. 3:2, 3a, 9-11)** The words “age” and “dispensation” do NOT, at all, refer to the same thing. An “age” has to do with a period of time, but a “dispensation” does not refer to time. Rather, the word refers to a “stewardship,” which occurs within time — within part of an age, a complete age, or even possibly a sequence of ages. Thus, there are ages, and there are dispensations within the framework of time.

- ✓ To understand an **AGE** within its Scriptural framework, note **Matt. 12:31, 32**. In these verses, reference is made to **two ages**, connected with what is called “the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit [attributing to Christ and exercise of supernatural power emanating from Satan rather than from the Holy Spirit].” And the sin of committing this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit by the religious leaders in Israel was such that it would not be forgiven them, “neither in this **world [‘age’]**, nor in the **world [‘age’ to come]**” (v. 32). That is, there would be no forgiveness during either the age in which **they lived or in the age which would follow**. And, the action by the religious leaders in Israel (looked upon in a larger sense as action by the entire nation), followed by Christ’s announcement to them, forms the major turning point in Matthew’s gospel (**Mat. 21:43**).

The two ages referred to in **Matt. 12:32 cover 7,000 years of time** — the age covering **Man’s Day, and the age covering the Lord’s Day (Messianic Era)**.

- ✓ As you read scriptures, you will be able to tell what age is being referenced and what group of people the word is referring to based on the dispensation in question. Please read all the given scriptures for easier understanding and of course as the Holy Spirit enlightens you.
- ✓ As we said earlier, our focus next will be the nation of Israel and since the nation originated from Abraham, we will need to start from the beginning. Let us review the slide again to see the timing of when Abraham is seen - at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dispensation in this age.
- Note: As we continue to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, our focus is the, ‘Age to come, the Messianic Era, the Lord’s Day, or the 7<sup>th</sup> Day’.

May we all remain diligent as we prepare for the Lord’s return.

**1John 3:2** *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

**Heb. 9:28** *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

**Phil. 3:20** *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

- Let us be like the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, who confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They also declared plainly that they sought a homeland. Are we declaring so and are we dwelling here like pilgrims and strangers? Or, are we living here as though this is our permanent residence? May the Lord help us! Remain blessed!!!