

# "Giving Through the Dispensations"

## Dispensation defined:

- In the Bible, dispensations are methods or schemes that God uses to carry out his purposes for humans. The word *oikonomia*, which is translated as "dispensation" in the Bible, literally means "house-law" and can also be understood as "administration" or "method of dealing".
- Some say that dispensations are time periods when God has at least one authorized servant on Earth who has the authority to dispense the gospel to people. Others say that dispensations are periods of time when God deals with people in different ways. For example, God may have dealt with Israel differently than other nations, and some say that God's dealings with people have changed over time.
- Some say that dispensational Bible study can help people understand the Bible without feeling confused by its apparent contradictions. This type of study follows the Bible's timeline and the changing relationships between God and humans.

**Subtitle:** *God's Pattern of Stewardship from Eden to Eternity*

**Primary Texts:** *Genesis 4:3–5, Malachi 3:10, Matthew 23:23, 2 Corinthians 9:6–8 (HCSB)*

**Objective:** To understand how giving—tithes, offerings, and generosity—progressed across the seven biblical dispensations and how God transitioned His people through each phase with divine expectations and promises.

## 1. Dispensation of Innocence

**Timeframe:** Creation to the Fall (Genesis 1–3)

**Scripture Focus:** *Genesis 2:15–17 (HCSB)*

### Key Giving Principle:

Though no formal giving is recorded, **God gave creation freely**, and humanity was to **steward Eden** in obedience.

"The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it." (*Genesis 2:15, HCSB*)

## Turning Point:

**The Fall of Man** (Genesis 3:6) – Disobedience entered, and stewardship was broken.

**Lesson:**

Giving begins with **obedient stewardship**, not possession.

## 2. Dispensation of Conscience

**Timeframe:** Fall to the Flood (Genesis 4–8)

**Scripture Focus:** *Genesis 4:3–5, Genesis 8:20*

**Key Giving Acts:**

- **Abel’s offering:** Firstborn and fat portions (Genesis 4:4, HCSB)
- **Noah’s burnt offering:** Post-flood sacrifice (Genesis 8:20–21, HCSB)

“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.” (*Genesis 8:20*)

## Turning Point:

**The Flood** (Genesis 6:5–7) – God judged man’s wickedness but preserved a remnant.

**Lesson:**

God honors **faith-filled, sacrificial giving** even in an age of moral decline.

## 3. Dispensation of Human Government

**Timeframe:** Post-Flood to Babel (Genesis 9–11)

**Scripture Focus:** *Genesis 9:1–7; 11:4–9 (HCSB)*

**Giving Highlight:**

No major offerings recorded, but **human responsibility to govern and multiply** was emphasized.

The giving of life and authority was from God to humanity.

“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” (*Genesis 9:1, HCSB*)

## Turning Point:

**Tower of Babel** – man tried to exalt himself without honoring God (Genesis 11:4).

**Lesson:**

Without surrender and worship, self-glory corrupts governance.

### 4. Dispensation of Promise

**Timeframe:** Abraham to Moses (Genesis 12–Exodus 19)

**Scripture Focus:** *Genesis 12:1–3; 14:18–20; 28:20–22 (HCSB)*

**Key Giving Acts:**

- **Abram gives a tenth** to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20)
- **Jacob vows a tithe** if God keeps His promise (Genesis 28:22)

“And I will give You a tenth of all that You give me.” (*Genesis 28:22, HCSB*)

## Turning Point:

**Egyptian bondage and Exodus** – God raises Moses and begins law-giving.

**Lesson:**

Giving is tied to **covenant relationship**, not forced.

### 5. Dispensation of Law

**Timeframe:** Sinai to the Cross (Exodus 20–Matthew 27)

**Scripture Focus:** *Leviticus 27:30–32; Malachi 3:8–12; Matthew 23:23 (HCSB)*

**Key Giving Principles:**

- **Tithe of everything** belongs to the Lord (Leviticus 27:30)
- **Support for Levites, festivals, and the poor**
- **Malachi’s challenge:** Bring the whole tithe

“Bring the full tenth into the storehouse... I will open the floodgates of heaven for you.” (*Malachi 3:10, HCSB*)

“These things should have been done without neglecting the others.” (*Matthew 23:23, HCSB*)

## Turning Point:

**Christ's death and the veil torn** (Matthew 27:50–51) – Grace replaces legalism.

### Lesson:

Under law, giving was **structured, holy, and enforceable**. Under grace, it becomes personal and Spirit-led.

## 6. Dispensation of Grace (The Church Age)

**Timeframe:** Pentecost to the Rapture (Acts 2–Present)

**Scripture Focus:** *Acts 2:44–47; 2 Corinthians 9:6–11; Philippians 4:15–19 (HCSB)*

### Giving Principles:

- **Spirit-led generosity** (Acts 4:32–37)
- **Cheerful, grace-based giving** (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- **Ministry support & mutual supply** (Philippians 4:18–19)

“Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (*2 Corinthians 9:7, HCSB*)

## Future Turning Point:

**Rapture of the Church** – the bride is taken up, Tribulation begins.

### Lesson:

We give out of **love, not law**, and receive grace upon grace.

## 7. Dispensation of the Kingdom (Millennial Reign)

**Timeframe:** Return of Christ to Final Judgment (Revelation 20)

**Scripture Focus:** *Isaiah 60:11; Zechariah 14:16; Revelation 20:4–6 (HCSB)*

### Key Giving Insight:

- **Nations will bring their wealth and honor to Jerusalem**
- Giving becomes **global worship and tribute** to King Jesus

“Your gates will always be open; they will never be shut day or night, so that the wealth of nations may be brought into you.” (*Isaiah 60:11, HCSB*)

## Final Turning Point:

**Satan loosed one last time**, then **judged forever** (Revelation 20:10).

**Lesson:**

Under Christ's direct rule, giving will reflect **honor, peace, and divine order**.

**Final Reflection**

*"From Eden to Eternity, God has been the ultimate Giver. Every dispensation reveals a deeper invitation to trust Him with our treasure, because He first trusted us with His."*

## Summary Table: Giving Across Dispensations

Dispensation	Timeframe	Key Giving Act	Turning Point	Lesson
Innocence	Creation – Fall	Stewardship of Eden	Fall of Man	Obedience is the root of giving
Conscience	Fall – Flood	Abel’s & Noah’s offerings	The Flood	Sacrifice accepted by faith
Human Government	Flood – Babel	Governing responsibility	Tower of Babel	Self-glory corrupts stewardship
Promise	Abraham – Egypt	Abraham & Jacob’s tithes	Exodus from Egypt	Giving flows from covenant
Law	Sinai – Cross	Legal tithes, offerings, first fruits	Christ’s death & resurrection	Giving required and regulated
Grace	Pentecost – Rapture	Grace-giving, support for ministry	Rapture (future)	Cheerful giving reflects grace
Kingdom	Christ’s Return – Judgment	Worship through tribute to Christ	Final rebellion & judgment	Giving becomes global glory

## Dispensational Overview

Dispensation	Timeframe	Start Scripture	End Scripture
<b>Innocence</b>	Genesis 1–3	Genesis 1:26–30	Genesis 3:24
<b>Conscience</b>	Genesis 4–8	Genesis 4:1–7	Genesis 8:20–22
<b>Human Government</b>	Genesis 9–11	Genesis 9:1–7	Genesis 11:9
<b>Promise</b>	Genesis 12–Exodus 19	Genesis 12:1–3	Exodus 19:6–8
<b>Law</b>	Exodus 20–Matthew 27	Exodus 20:1–17	Matthew 27:50–51
<b>Grace</b>	Acts 2–Present	Acts 2:1–4	1 Thessalonians 4:16–17
<b>Kingdom</b>	Revelation 20	Revelation 20:4–6	Revelation 20:15