



IV. KEY COMPONENTS TO UNDERSTANDING DISPENSATIONALISM

A. The Identification of the Spokesmen

1. Understanding the principle
 - a. Simply put, God spoke to men; these men spoke the words, but it was ultimately God who was speaking to the end recipients (Hebrews 1:1).
 - b. As Haggai testified, every spokesman was simply “the LORD’S messenger in the LORD’S message” (Haggai 1:13).
 - c. Each of God’s spokesmen had a message for a specific audience living in a particular time. Unfortunately, this presents two very real dangers for the misguided Bible student:
 - (1) Following any spokesman appointed to a previous time period or people group
 - (2) Ignoring any spokesman intended for the student’s generation, people, or time period
 - d. Most sections of scripture have multiple spokesmen, and those sections containing several contemporaneous spokesmen generally have one spokesman serving as the primary spokesman at any given time.
2. Identifying spokesmen in the various sections of scripture
 - a. The Pentateuch (Genesis—Deuteronomy)
 - (1) This section covers nearly 2,500 years.
 - (2) Obviously, such a lengthy time frame means that this period contained several different spokesmen.
 - (3) Some of the primary spokesmen include Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc.
 - (4) Each of these men received a particular God-given message and, as God’s spokesman, presented his message to his respective audience(s).
 - (5) There is no doubt that, at least in content, Moses was the primary spokesman during this period.
 - b. History (Joshua—Esther)
 - (1) This section and the one following it (*Prophets—Old Testament*) overlap each other by approximately 300 years.
 - (2) This period covers a period of approximately 1,000 years.
 - (3) Some of the most prominent spokesmen include men like Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, etc.
 - (4) Unlike the previous section with Moses, this portion did not have one predominate spokesman.
 - c. Poetry (Job—Song of Solomon)
 - (1) This section is grouped more for the type of its content than for any chronology.
 - (2) The spokesmen included Job, David, and Solomon, along with lesser known figures like Elihu and Asaph.



- d. Old Testament Prophecy (Isaiah—Malachi)
 - (1) This portion of scripture provided several different and crucial spokesmen.
 - (2) Every book in this section bore the name of its spokesman with the exception of Lamentations, which contained the lamentations of the weeping prophet Jeremiah.
- e. The Gospels (Matthew—John)
 - (1) Although one might think that Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John would be the primary spokesmen during this time period, the major part of their influence took place through the pen.
 - (2) These four men are the names of the four books in this section; however, the primary spokesmen were John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- f. The Acts of the Apostles
 - (1) The book of Acts is not necessarily more transitional than all other portions of scripture; however, the transitional aspects must be emphasized by any true Bible teacher.
 - (2) The primary spokesmen of this book are predominantly Peter and Paul.
- g. The Epistles (Romans—Jude)
 - (1) Although the Church Age is approaching two millennia (2,000 years), its spokesmen are comparatively few in relation to the other lengthier periods.
 - (2) Historically within the Bible, this portion of scripture covered approximately fifty-five years; but doctrinally and practically, its coverage continues to the present day.
 - (3) The apostle Paul indisputably served and serves as the chief spokesman for this section (writing over 80 percent of the chapters).
- h. New Testament Prophecy (Revelation)
 - (1) The book of Revelation uniquely contains portions of scripture pertaining to several time periods.
 - (2) The first few chapters are addressed to seven literal and historical churches in Asia Minor and reveal a spiritual application to the entire period covered in the previous section (*The Epistles*).
 - (3) The remaining chapters of Revelation prophesy of events yet in the future (events that follow the period covered by the Epistles)—the post-Church Age period.
 - (4) In the first few chapters, it is obvious that John was God's primary spokesman to the churches.
 - (5) After Christ's return for the Church and its removal from earth, the Lord again turns His focus primarily upon the Jewish people.
 - (6) At that time, God will again have His various spokesmen in two distinct witnesses along with a group referred to as the 144,000.



B. The Awareness of Dispensational Divisions

1. The presence of multiple entities (1 Corinthians 10:32)
 - a. Generally speaking, the Bible identifies three main people groups: *Jews*, *Gentiles*, and the *church of God*.
 - b. All scripture is addressed to or intended for one or more of these three groups. Here is a very brief description of who they are:
 - (1) *Jews* (born into Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's genealogy)
 - (2) *Gentiles* (born into any genealogy other than the previous one)
 - (3) The "*church of God*" (those who have been born again). Note: A man's identity in Christ trumps and negates classifications of his natural birth. Whether Jew or Gentile, he loses his distinction within the "*church of God*" because all are one within that body (Galatians 3:28).
 - c. Information intended specifically for one group may (or may not) be *directly* applicable to either of the other two groups. Likewise, information intended for one person or group within the larger group may not be *directly* applicable to others within that audience.
2. The presence of multiple gospels
 - a. Understanding multiple gospels
 - (1) Many treat the multiple Bible references to the *gospel* as they would an algebraic equation where they simply plug in a constant. The plugged-in constant suggests that "gospel" in the Bible always equals Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.
 - (2) There are three Old Testament passages (Isaiah 52:7; Nahum 1:15; Isaiah 61:1) quoted in the New Testament that implement the word gospel. In each case, the quotation from the Old Testament into the New reveals the phrase "good tidings" as equivalent to "gospel." Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15 are found in Romans 10:15, and Isaiah 61:1 in Luke 4:18.
 - b. Scriptural examples of differing gospels
 - (1) The gospel preached unto Abraham (Galatians 3:8)
 - (2) The gospel preached unto the wilderness Jews (Hebrews 4:2)
 - (3) The gospel of the kingdom preached to both Jews and Gentiles during the earthly ministry of Christ (Matthew 4:23); It should be understood that the focus of this gospel was clearly toward the Jewish people.
 - (4) The gospel of the grace of God preached to both Jews and Gentiles preached by Paul and others (Acts 20:24)
 - (5) The everlasting gospel preached during Daniel's seventieth week (Revelation 14:6)
3. The presence of multiple baptisms
 - a. Understanding baptism
 - (1) Generically, baptism involves placing one person, place, or thing entirely in another person, place, or thing.
 - (2) As such, there are several different types of baptisms in the Bible (Hebrews 6:2).



- b. Examples of baptisms
 - (1) Baptism unto Moses (1 Corinthians 10:2)
 - (2) Water baptism (Matthew 3:6-7, 11, 13-17; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 1:4-9; Luke 3:3, 7, 12, 16, 21; John 1:26, 28, 31, 33; John 3:23; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 8:12-16, 36-38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 19:3-5; 1 Corinthians 1:13-17)
 - (3) Baptism with the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16)
 - (4) Baptism into Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27)
 - (5) Baptism with fire (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16)
 - (6) Baptism of suffering (Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50)
- 4. The presence of multiple comings
 - a. Many people clearly understand this principle in its most basic sense of distinguishing between Christ's incarnation (John 1:14) and Christ's second coming (Revelation 19:11).
 - b. However, there is also a distinction between Christ's coming for the church where He does not step foot on the earth (1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) versus His return to the earth to establish His future millennial kingdom (Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-46).
- 5. The presence of multiple judgments
 - a. Historically, many believers assumed there to be one general judgment to come. This assumption was based upon passage like John 5:29.
 - b. However, those who study the scripture in its entirety can see and understand multiple end-time judgments.
 - (1) The judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
 - (2) The judgment of the nations (Psalm 9:17; Matthew 25:31-46)
 - (3) The great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-12)
- 6. The presence of multiple natures
 - a. The Bible distinguishes between three types of people: the natural man—unsaved (1 Corinthians 2:14), the spiritual man—saved and walking with God (1 Corinthians 3:1), the carnal man—saved, but walking after the flesh (1 Corinthians 3:1).
 - b. For the natural man, he has one nature and this nature is typically called the old man (Ephesians 4:22).
 - c. For both the spiritual man and the carnal man there exists two natures within. These are typically identified as the old man and the new man (Colossians 3:9-10).
 - (1) Positionally, the old man is dead and only a new man has been put on (Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:9-10).
 - (2) Practically, the old man has to be put to death and the new man has to be put on (Ephesians 4:22-24).
 - (3) This dichotomy is described very well in Romans 7:14-25.