THE THREE RELIGIOUS DISPENSATIONS
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Introduction:

1. It is very important that the student of God's word keep in mind the different dispensations of religion under which man has lived.

2. God has had three great religions: (1) Patriarchal (2) Jewish (3) Christian.

3. Let us look at these three religious dispensations.

I. THE PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION.

1. The term "patriarchal" means "father rule".
2. The Patriarch was the father of a tribe.

   1. Stephen refers to the sons of Jacob as Patriarchs. Acts 7: 8,9
   2. Hebrews 7: 4 "Patriarch Abraham".

3. Under this system the patriarch was the prophet, priest and ruler.

   1. He directed the affairs of the family both religiously and politically.
   2. Abraham a good example. Genesis 18:19

4. This has been called the family system of religion.

   1. Each family was left free to carry on its own affairs under the guidance of God.
   2. What was a command to one, may not have been to the other patriarchs.
      (a) Noah to build an ark. Gen. 6:14
      (b) Abraham to slay his son. Gen. 22: 1-2

5. They had no written system of religion. God spoke to the head of the tribe orally.
   Gen. 3: 9; Gen. 6:13; Gen. 12:1

6. The patriarchal system was the religion of all people for the first 2500 years, from Adam to the giving of the law to the Jews at Sinai.

7. The institution of worship was the altar. (1) Abel. Gen.4:4; (2) Noah. Gen. 8:20;
   (3) Abraham. Gen. 22:13

II. THE JEWISH DISPENSATION:

1. The Mosaic law was given at Sinai and was for the descendants of Jacob. Ex. 20

2. Ten Commandments served as the constitution of that law.

   1. But many laws were appended to them.

3. This system grew out of the promise of the temporal and earthly blessing made to Abraham. Gen. 12:2; 22: 15-18; 12:7

4. The Law was an outgrowth of the promise, and was given 430 years after the promise
was made. Gal. 3:16, 17-19

1. That the promise might be kept, God gave them a government, the law of Moses, which guided them religiously and politically. Gal. 3: 19,24

5. The Jewish or Mosaic system was man’s first written system of religion. Ex. 20

6. The family system of worship was enlarged into a national system.

   1. They had one tribe to attend to this, Levites. Heb. 7:11
   2. They had one national altar and one national house of God.

7. One purpose of the Jewish dispensation was to keep Abraham’s posterity a separate race till the promised seed should come. Gal. 3: 16 - 19; Gen. 12:2

   1. This characteristic of the Mosaic dispensation has been called “the middle wall of partition.” Eph. 2:14

8. It was a shadow of the good things to come. Heb. 10:1

9. Another object of the law was to be a school-master or tutor to bring men to Christ. Gal. 3: 24

   (1) One God. (2) God’s way best. (3) Weight of sin (4) Prepared men for Christ.

10. The law was faulty. Heb. 8:7

   1. Paul said it was weak. Rom. 8:3
   2. None justified by the law. Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:20, 28

11. God intended for the Jewish dispensation to be temporary. Gal.3:19,16; II Cor. 3:7

III. THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION:

1. This dispensation grew out of the spiritual promise made to Abraham. Gen. 22:18

2. This is the New Covenant of which Jeremiah prophesied. Jer. 31: 31-33. Paul said fulfilled. Heb. 8:6-13

3. The change of priesthoods necessitated the change of laws. Heb. 7:12

   1. Christ is our priest. Heb. 9:11
   2. Every child of God is a priest. I Pet. 2:5

4. Christ came to take away the first. Heb. 10:9

5. He took away the law by nailing it to the cross. Col. 2:14; Eph. 2: 14-16

6. The New Testament could not become operative until after the death of Christ. Heb. 9: 16-17

7. The Christian dispensation has been given to all nations. Matt. 28:19 -20; Eph. 2: 14-16; Acts 10: 34-35; Gal. 3:28

CONCLUSION:

   1. Could have been baptized. Luke 7: 29-30

2. Plan of Salvation.
   1. Hear. Romans 10:17
   2. Believe. Mark 16:16
   3. Repent. Acts 17:30