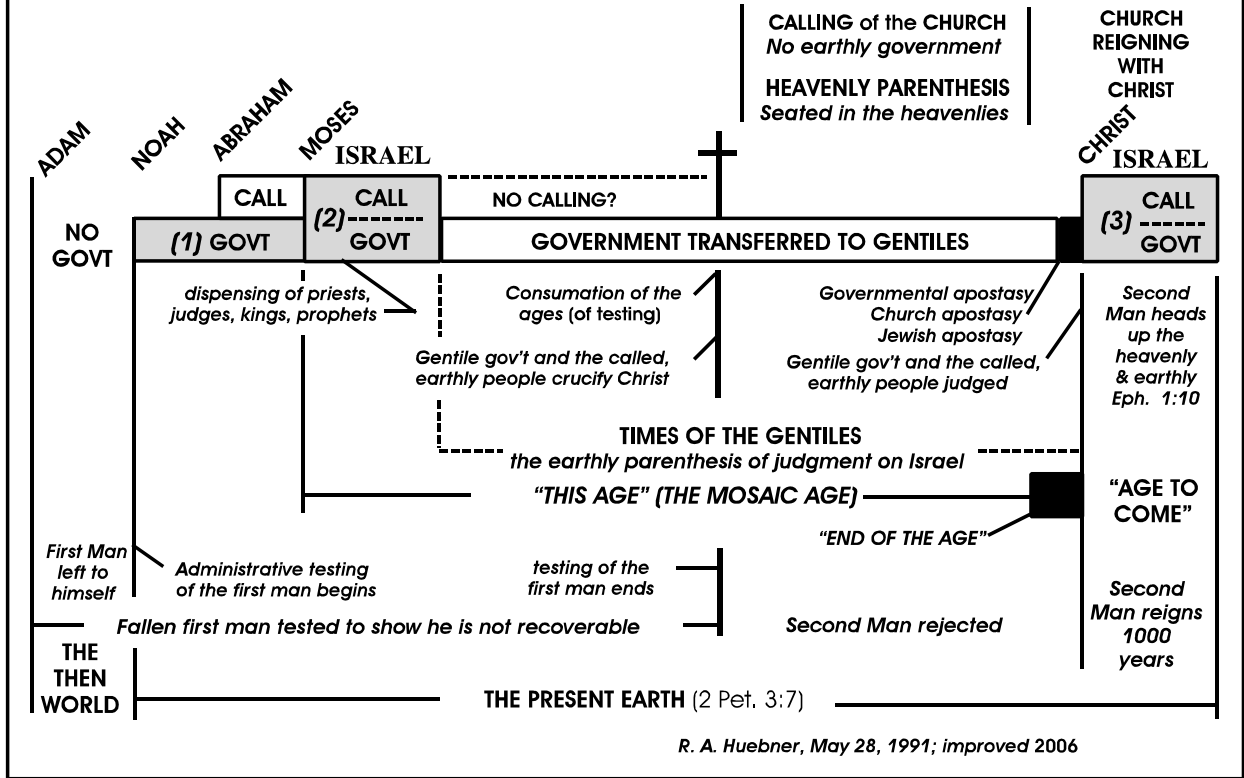


The Three Administrations

God's purpose to glorify Himself in Christ, in two spheres
 (A representation of some dispensational truth expounded by J. N. Darby)



Note for the Chart:

The Three Administrations

In the *Synopsis 2:207*, J. N. Darby in his introduction to the prophets wrote:

We enter, now, dear reader, on the field of prophecy; a vast and important one, whether in view of the moral instruction that it contains, or on account of the great events that are announced in it, or through its development of God's government, and, by this means, its revelation of that which He Himself is in His ways with men. Jehovah and His dealings, and the Messiah, shine through the whole. Israel always forms the inner circle, or chief platform, on which these dealings are developed, and with which the Messiah is immediately in relation. Outside of, and behind this, the nations are gathered, instruments and objects of the judgments of God, and finally, the subjects of His universal government made subject to the Messiah, who however will assert His especial claim to Israel as His own people {realized in the millennium}.

It is evident that the assembly and the Christian's individual place is outside this whole {earthly} scene. In *it* there is neither Jew nor Gentile; in it the Father knows the objects of His eternal election, as His beloved children; and Christ, glorified on high, knows it as His body and His bride. Prophecy treats of the earth, and of the government of God. For after personal salvation is settled, **there are two great subjects in scripture**,¹ the government of this world, and the sovereign grace which has taken poor sinners and put them into the same place as God's own Son as the exalted man, and as adopted into sonship, the divine glory, and that in Christ, being of course the center of all. If we measure things not by our importance, but by the importance of the manifestation of God, whatever develops His ways as unfolded in His government will have much importance in our eyes. There can be no doubt that the assembly, and the individual Christian, are a still more elevated subject, because God has there displayed the whole secret of His eternal love, and deepest present divine affections. But if we remember that it is not only the sphere of action that is in question, but He who acts therein, the dealings of God with Israel and the earth will then assume their true importance in our eyes. And these are the subjects of prophecy. For the others we must specially look to Paul and John. ❖

We must understand that the OT is the history of the (fallen) first man to show that he was not recoverable, with a view to setting him aside and introducing the second Man and last Adam, through Whom God's purpose to glorify Himself is carried out. The crowning act of the first man's implacable hostility to, and enmity against, God was the rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son (John 15:23, 24), nailing the Son to the cross. This terminated the testing of the (fallen) first man to show he was not recoverable. Of course, during that time of probation God acted in sovereign grace in the case of individuals, making saints of them. Moreover during that time God also brought in certain things (for example such things as dispensing government, priesthood, judges, kingship, etc.) wherein man failed, but Christ will take up all wherein man has failed and make those things good, redounding to God's glory.

It is not so, as Covenantists claim, that "Dispensationalism" holds to two purposes of God -- because of holding that there is a heavenly people and an earthly people. The unity of the Scriptures is seen in God's one purpose, to glorify Himself in Christ in the heavenly and earthly sphere (Eph. 1:9, 10) -- Christ in resurrection, as the second Man and last Adam, having displaced the first man, the first (fallen) Adam. That there is a heavenly people and an earthly people involved in this display of God's glory in Christ is not a valid basis to say that this means God has two separate purposes and claiming that this amounts to undermining the unity of Scripture. Such a conclusion is merely in the eye of the Covenantist beholder. It is his erroneous system which makes it appear that way to him.

Redemption by Christ's blood is the way God changes sinners into saints who participate in the display of His glory in Christ, in the two spheres. But redemption and covenant is not what unifies Scripture.

R. A. Huebner - Feb. 28, 2006

1. {Boldface added.}