

Q&A: The Issue of Overlapping Dispensations

By Jeremy Lucas

Question: How was it that Christ, knowing the dispensation of grace was coming, could preach the Kingdom was at hand in Matthew 4:17, 10:7, and 16:28?

If you both had knowledge that tomorrow was your last day on earth, but you weren't allowed to let anyone know (say, it was a mystery or a "secret"), would the things you do today be different than they would if you had 50 more years?

Perhaps you'll find the following analogy silly, but the film *Back To The Future* involved a character who inadvertently returned to the past during a time when he had already existed. Due to this circumstance, he was not allowed to let his "other self" see his current self or, as Doc would so often say, "it will disrupt the space-time continuum."

I share this concept because it illustrates the reality that Christ HAD come for a mission. To restore the nation of Israel to Himself. That mission, even with a foreknowledge of the mystery, could not change. Imagine if it did. Imagine that Christ's knowledge of the coming dispensation caused Him to say, "Well, what's the point of restoring Israel? There's another dispensation coming right around the corner... let's just jump right into it."

To take Doc's phrase..."It would disrupt the space-time continuum." In other words... it would screw up the entire plan and prophetic plan of God.

For instance, let's say Christ didn't continue on with His plan for Israel and just decided to jump into the teaching of grace without law. What recorded letters would we have by the Apostle Paul? What purpose would he have had? When would Israel have been offered the chance to accept the Holy Spirit as Christ suggested would happen in Matthew?

All the pieces happened in, as we often don't see, a perfect fit. What sometimes seems to be a jumbled mess of mixed gospels and backwards confusion was truly a magnificent work of art. It simply depends on how far you back up and look at the bigger picture.

Did Christ have foreknowledge of the days ahead in grace for the Gentiles? I believe He did. Could He have acted on that foreknowledge? Not at all. No more than God could have forced Adam to sin until the appropriate time came for it to happen under the watchful eye of the Creator. The Lord set the world in motion and has allowed everything to happen in its time as He knowingly pays close attention to all that takes place.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to

heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God." Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

Life is precious and if it is rushed, then its course cannot and does not bloom into natural progression.

It was necessary for both the heavens and the earth to perceive that the kingdom was "at hand." For if it were not to have been "at hand," then plenty of studied men of prophecy would have had reason to say, "Then what IS at hand if not what You've promised?" In which case, secrets would be revealed and prophecies would not be fulfilled.