

What is a *dispensation* ?

"Dispensations" are ... time periods in which the Lord placed on the earth the necessary knowledge, priesthood, and keys of authority to implement his Plan of Salvation for his children. This plan, along with priesthood, was first given to Adam, but as a consequence of later apostasy and fragmentation among his descendants, it did not remain constantly upon the earth. Hence, from time to time the Lord called new prophets and again revealed the plan and bestowed the necessary priesthood authority, creating a new dispensation.

Each new dispensation, or period of restored truth, presents men and women with a divine stewardship in performing the Lord's work on earth. The recipients become custodians and coworkers with God in bringing to pass his purposes. They work according to his orderly and revealed design. His plan takes into account human weaknesses and provides for times of renewal following apostasy, just as it provides for a redemption from individual failings through repentance and obedience. ...

Prophets are stewards who preach and organize the work of redemption in each dispensation. It has become traditional in some unofficial LDS commentaries to refer to seven major dispensations named after the principal prophet of each: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ (who led the dispensation of the meridian of time), and Joseph Smith (who introduced the dispensation of the fulness of times; see Acts 3:21.) However, this list does not take into account other dispensations, such as those among the Jaredites, the Nephites, and the ten lost tribes of Israel. ...

Several fundamentals are common to all dispensations: priesthood authority, baptism by immersion and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, the sealing power, and temple worship. Basic gospel doctrines, including the Fall of Adam, faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and the need for an infinite Atonement, were taught in each era from Adam's day onward whenever there were living prophets selecte by the Lord. (Encyclopedia of Mormonism)

Gospel Dispensation Walk-Through

We start under a **TREE** in the Garden of Eden with **ADAM**.

Walking away from the tree we see a beautiful **CITY**. It's the city of **ENOCH**.

On the other side of the city we board an **ARK** and set sail with **NOAH**.

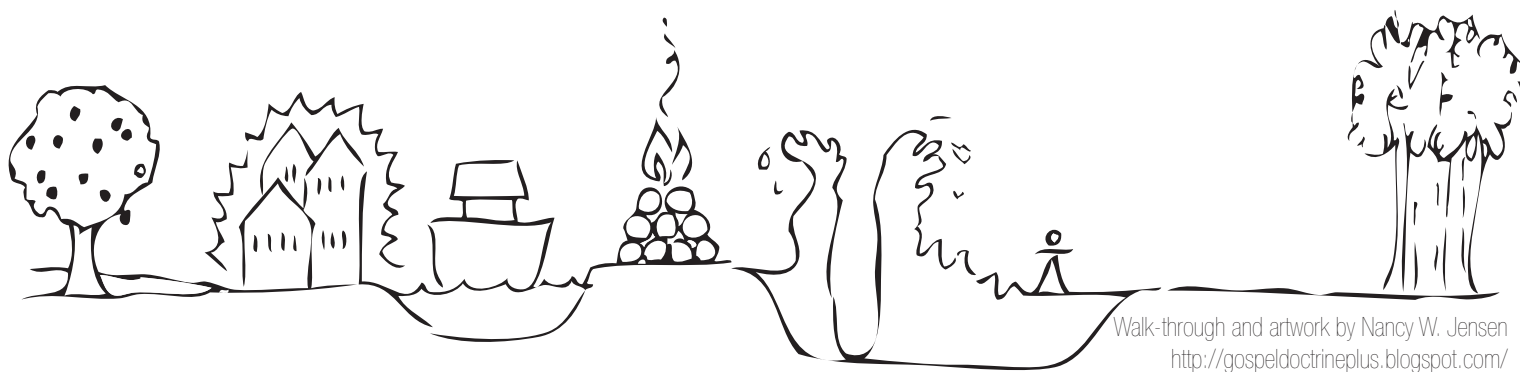
Arriving on dry land, we gratefully set up an **ALTAR**, where we worship with **ABRAHAM**.

Guess what? On the other side of the altar is more water -- this time it's the **RED SEA**, which **MOSES** has just parted.

Huge waves disturb the sea, but they **CALM** as **JESUS** speaks the words, "Peace, be still."

Now we come to a barren **DESERT**. Nothing is growing here, because it's the **GREAT APOSTASY**.

After struggling through the desert, we see a green oasis. It's the **SACRED GROVE** where **JOSEPH SMITH** has knelt to pray.



Tree	City	Ark	Altar	Red Sea	Calm Waves	Desert	GROVE
ADAM	ENOC	NOAH	Abraham	MOSES	JESUS	APOSTASY	JOSEPH SMITH
4000 BC	3300 BC	3100 BC	2000 BC	1400 BC	1AD		1830 AD

* All dates approximated, though I did use the Old Testament Seminary Timeline Bookmark for the dates.
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