

A
CONCISE EXPLANATION
OF THE
FOUR GREAT DISPENSATIONS
OF THE
ONLY TRUE CHURCH, ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL

From The Ancient Patriarchs

TO

THE PRESENT APPEARANCE OF CHRIST

Who is Manifested in the True Followers and Witnesses of the Living Savior

Presented by the First Order

At

**Zion's Center of Union
Sabbathday Lake "Chosen Land"**

TOGETHER WITH A LETTER FROM FATHER JAMES WHITTAKER TO HIS NATURAL PARENTS

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**Come and see us at
Zion's Center of Union in
the Kingdom of God on Earth:**



The Shakers of Sabbathday Lake "Chosen Land"

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Have you already read The Sacred Roll From God To All Nations?

THE ONLY TRUE CHURCH

This is a short explanation regarding what we believe pertaining to the dispensations of *God's Grace to Fallen Man*. This explanation explains the manner in which man has found acceptance with God and salvation from sin in each progressive dispensation of this earth. Particular reference is made to the present display of God's peculiar grace unto us. We also share the manner in which we have presently found acceptance with God and hope of ***Eternal Life*** through our ***Lord Jesus Christ*** in obedience to the gospel of his ***Present Appearance***.

We believe that the first light of salvation was given or made known to the Patriarchs by faith in God's promise to them of a future Savior. They that believed in the promise of Christ and were obedient to the command of God made known unto them, were the true people of God and were accepted by Him as righteous, or perfect in their generations; according to the measure of light and truth which had been manifested unto them. This first dispensation was as the waters to the ankles signified by Ezekiel's vision of the Holy Waters (Ezekiel chapter 47:3). They could not receive the gift of regeneration, or the fulness of salvation from the fleshly or fallen nature in this life; because the perfectly preordained time had not yet come, a time where they should receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire; which leads to the destruction of the body of sin and purification of the soul. But Abraham, being called and chosen of God to be the Father of the faithful; was received into Covenant relation with God through a promise; that in him (and his seed which was Christ) all the families of the earth should be blessed. These earthly blessings, which were promised to Abraham, were a shadow of gospel or spiritual blessings to come and circumcision (though it was a true seal of Abraham's faith) was simply a sign of the mortification and destruction (or separation and cutting away) of the flesh by the gospel in a future day. Understand and consider that circumcision or an outward cutting of the foreskin of the flesh did not cleanse the man Abraham from any sin; but was a sign of the future baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire. This Holy Anointing of Fire, administered by the power of God, was manifested in diverse operations and gifts of the Spirit in the days of the Apostles. **The baptism of Fire truly destroys the body of sin, or fleshly nature and in time purifies man from all sin both in soul and body.** Yet again, in this first dispensation, Abraham could only express faith in the promise through an outward and powerless circumcision; not receiving the substance of the thing promised. He had his complete faith in God's promise of a future Christ, who would usher in Eternal Salvation. Faithful Abraham believed wholeheartedly that this salvation would come through a gospel lived and preached by this same Christ, leading to the resurrection from the dead works of sin and death.

The second dispensation was the dispensation of the Law that was given of God to Israel, by the hand of Moses; which was a further manifestation of that future salvation which was promised to come through Christ by the Gospel. This Law was the shadow and giving of the outward order and ordinances (or shadow of the final substance revealed when Christ would come) which were instituted and given to Israel. Israel, being the recipient and adherer to these ordinances from God, became the true Church and people of God according to that dispensation; which was as waters to the knees (Ezekiel 47:4). Again, by living out these Holy

orders and ordinances, they became distinguished from all families of the earth. For, while they were strictly **obedient** to all of the commands, ordinances and statutes that God gave them, they were approved of God according to the promise of life and peace. Blessing and life was promised unto them in the line of obedience, while Cursing and death in disobedience: for God, who is ever jealous for the honor and glory of His own great name, always dealt with them according to His word. While they were obedient to the command of God and purged out sin from amongst them, God was with them, according to His promise. But when they disobeyed the command of God and committed sin, becoming like other people and nations, the hand of the Lord was turned against them; and those evils came upon them which God had threatened. We can see from the Bible, that they were in general obedient to the will of God made known in that dispensation and were accepted as just and righteous: yet, they did not attain that salvation which was promised in the future dispensation of the gospel; as respected and pertained to the new-birth, or real purification of man from all sin. The second dispensation of the Law made nothing perfect, but was a shadow of good things to come. Their only hope of eternal redemption and resurrection from the dead works of sin remained in the future promise of the coming Christ, by the gospel (See Acts 26:6, 7).

The third dispensation was the gospel of Christ's first appearance, in the flesh: and that salvation which took place in consequence of his life, death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father. Being accepted in his obedience as the first born among many brethren; he received power and authority to administer the substance and true power of the resurrection and eternal judgment to all the children of men. He became the author of eternal salvation to all that would obey him; and as Christ has this power in himself, he did administer power and authority to his Church on the day of Pentecost. He was head and the Church was his body, receiving all of the gifts that he had promised them. The first and greatest gift received was the Holy Ghost, as an indwelling comforter to abide with them forever: and by which they were baptized into Christ's death. This death was death to all sin; and they were constantly abiding in the hope of the resurrection from the dead through the operation of the power of God, which wrought in them. And as they had received the substance of the promise of Christ come in the flesh, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost; they had power to preach the gospel in Christ's name to every creature;—and to administer the power of God to as many as believed and were obedient to the gospel which they preached. They also had power to remit or retain sins in the name and authority of Christ on earth. They that believed in the gospel and were obedient to that form of doctrine which was taught to them; choosing to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; became entirely dead to the Law by the body of Christ, or power of the Holy Ghost. It was these who were on the straight and narrow path which led to the resurrection from the dead; or the redemption of the body. However, all who took up a full cross against the world, flesh and the devil; and forsook all for Christ's sake; choosing to willingly follow him in the regeneration by persevering in that line of obedience to the end; soon found that the resurrection from the dead and eternal salvation in that dispensation was only as water to the loins (Ezekiel 47:4). Indeed, they began to understand that the mystery of God was still yet to be completed. There was another day prophesied by the Apostles and Leaders called the second appearance or coming of Christ, or final and last display of God's grace to a lost world: in which the mystery of God should be finished as He had spoken through

his servants, the Prophets since the world began. This day could not come, unless there was first a great falling away from that faith and power that the Church then stood in; in which time Antichrist was to have his reign, which Christ should destroy with the spirit of his mouth and brightness of his appearance. This falling away began soon after the deaths of the Apostles and gradually increased in the Church, until about four hundred and fifty seven years or so after Christ's birth at which time the power of the Holy People, or Church of Christ, was scattered or lost by reason of their transgression. After this great falling away, Antichristian power or false religion became fully established and since that time, the true witnesses of Christ have prophesied in sackcloth or under darkness. Many who lived during the times of Antichristian darkness have been faithful to testify against sin; even to the laying down of their lives for the testimony which they held; so that God accepted them in their obedience; while they were faithful and just to live or walk up to the measure of light and truth of God revealed or made known unto them. But it was and is written, that all they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution: and so it has been and those faithful witnesses lost their lives, at the hands of those falsely called the Church of Christ: which is Antichrist; for the true Church of Christ never persecuted any; but was inoffensive, harmless, separate from sin, living in obedience to God and earnestly contending for the Eternal Crown and Glory. Through this previous description of true saints of God, it may be plainly seen and known, where the true Church of Christ is found. However, it is written that Antichrist (or false Churches) should prevail against the saints and overcome them, before Christ's second appearance, "Let no man deceive you by any means for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first; and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" 2 Thessalonians 2:3. "And it was given unto him to overcome them and power was given him over all kindreds, tongues and nations" Revelation 13:7. This is the state Christ prophesied the world of mankind should be in, at his second appearance, "And as it was in the day of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the son of man" Luke 17:26. Even so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed Luke 17:30. This is all plainly referring to his second appearance to consume or destroy Antichrist and make a final end of sin; by establishing his kingdom upon earth. It was necessary however, that the revelation of Christ needed to be in his people, whom he had chosen to be his body, to give testimony of him and to preach his gospel to a lost world. Thus, the third dispensation was the power of Christ revealed in the primitive Church which received a powerful anointing, yet not complete freedom from sin while waiting for the second appearing of this Christ Spirit. A true Church, which in time fell away due to the power and reign of the prophesied Antichristian darkness spoken of by the Apostles.

The fourth and final dispensation or day is the second appearance of Christ, which is currently the last or final display of God's grace to a lost world, in which the mystery of God will be finished. This is a decisive work which brings the final salvation or damnation of all the children of men. When the prophecies are rightly calculated and truly understood, we can see that this dispensation began in the year of our Savior Jesus Christ, 1747 (See Daniel, Revelation, Biography of Elder Henry Clough etc.). A number of souls can attest to this manifestation of great light— through mighty trembling by the invisible power of God, visions, revelations and prophecies; all of which have progressively increased, with an administration of all those spiritual gifts that were administered to the Apostles at the day of Pentecost. This is the Holy

Spirit and Comforter that has led us into all truth: which was promised to abide with the true Church of Christ unto the end of the world and by which we find baptism into Christ's death; a death to all sin, making us to become alive to God, by the power of Christ's resurrection, which worketh in us mightily. The final dispensation of the gospel is committed unto us; and woe be unto us if we preach not the gospel of Christ's second appearing in the likeness of the female without sin unto Salvation. Christ's second appearing is now visible and manifested in all of his true children of Zion. The Bride of Christ has made herself ready. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. The waters have become a river of life, deep enough to swim in and a river that cannot be passed over (Ezekiel 47:5). We are born again children of the Second Adam and Eve, Jesus Christ and Ann Lee. We accept, experience and proclaim so great a Salvation and deliverance from the law of sin and death through believing and obeying this final gospel which is the gospel of Christ: born again children of a Spiritual Father and Mother of the New Creation, openly confessing and forsaking all sin, giving up all we possess to the continued up-building and promotion of the True Church or Kingdom of God and Zion of His Likeness on Earth, denying ourselves and bearing the cross of Christ, against the world, the flesh and the devil. We have found repentance of all of our sins; and are made partakers of the grace of God wherein we now stand. All who believe and obey, have acceptance with God and find Salvation from their sins as we already have in this great fourth and final dispensation. God is no respecter of persons. His desire is that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. Thus we have given a short and concise, yet powerful explanation of what we believe regarding the dispensations of God's grace to mankind, both past and present: and in what manner the people of God have found justification, or acceptance with God, which was and is still found through believing and obeying the light and truth of God revealed or made known, in the day or dispensation in which it is revealed. For as the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness or live in any known sin against him; so his mercy and grace is towards all them that truly fear Him and turn from all their sins, by confessing, forsaking and repenting at the Judgment Seat of Christ found in his true witnesses. This is the only way and manner in which all must find the forgiveness of their sins and acceptance with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, or finally fail to receive the grace of God; and that salvation which has been fully brought to light by the gospel.

In conclusion, we believe and do testify that the present gospel of God's grace unto us is the fourth and final dispensation, which is spoken or prophesied of in the Holy Bible as the second appearing of Christ to consume or destroy Antichrist, or all false religion. God's Kingdom is established upon earth on a rock solid foundation of faithful Shakers (See Daniel 2:44). This Kingdom of Zion was established to put a final end to the reigning power of sin over the children of men. He that committeth sin is the servant of sin and Satan and the wages of sin is death to the soul. But the gift of God is Eternal Life through **Jesus Christ**, by obeying His revealed way and order in this final dispensation (See John 8:34 and Romans 6:23). Again, we boldly proclaim that God has established his Kingdom and that righteousness which shall stand forever, reigns within the walls of Zion and Her branches. The present display of the work and power of God unto Salvation will increase until it is manifested to all as prophesied, in God's appointed time: for every eye shall see Him; and He will reward every man according to his

deeds. None can any longer stand in sin or unrighteousness; but all must stand in that righteousness which is pure and holy: even without fault before the throne of God. This righteousness is obtained by grace, through faith in obedience to the truth of the everlasting gospel of our Gospel Parents of the New Creation: **Lord Jesus Christ and Mother Ann Lee**. We say it one final time, that none can ever say they were not told and accuse us before the throne of our Eternal Parents, Father God and Mother Wisdom. The true gospel is the denying of all ungodliness and worldly lusts; by an honest confession of all sin to one of God's true witnesses in Zion, then taking up the cross of Christ against the world, flesh and devil. The next step is consecrating your life, talents and all resources to the continued up-building of the True Church or Kingdom of God and Zion of His Likeness on Earth. It is our earnest hope that the children of men would believe this testimony of gospel truth and turn from their sins through repentance, that they might obtain the mercy of God and salvation from all sin before it is too late. So be it.

A Letter from Father James Whittaker to his natural parents Jonathan and Ann Whittaker

I am writing a letter to you, in answer to a letter you wrote to me last winter; wherein I have signified my mind partly to you: it remains now that I declare unto you my whole heart; which I cannot tell at present if it will be a final closing between you and me, through time and eternity. Flattering titles I am not about to use towards you or to sooth you with lies, but with the truth will I come forth, whether you hear, or whether you forbear: be not so unwise as the Scribes and Pharisees; who said to Christ, thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true: while I testify unto you what God has done for my soul. Blessed be God forevermore who has separated me from my mother's womb; and made me a minister of the gospel in the day of Christ's second appearance. All earthly profits and pleasures; all earthly generation and propagation which are the delights of all men in their natural birth (professor and profane) all these, I say, have I forsaken for Christ's sake; and I have already received an hundred fold in this present time, according as the holy Son of God promised in the day of his first appearance; and much more abundantly: A death to the man of sin have I found; a total spoiling of the strong man's goods and redemption from the bondage of corruption; which is that sordid propensity to, or ardent desire of copulation with women [fleshly sexual intercourse]: which has not been understood in that sense for many ages, but now is made manifest to all them that believe and obey the gospel which God has committed to my trust. I daily feel a fountain of love, life, joy and heavenly glory flowing in my soul like a river of living waters; pure and clean. My soul is constantly replenished with rich supplies from the heavenly glory; and my heart incessantly flows with charity and benevolence to all mankind: with a broken heart God has blessed me; and the image of the Lord of glory is formed in my soul. Plenty of the dew of heaven is distilled in my soul from day to day and the Divine nature doth infold me like a delightful sea of pleasant waters, full of glory. What think ye? Am I to seek friends in this world? Should I not be found cleaving to my own blood? Should I not make you the objects of my first pursuit? Nay, but I am weaned from all terrestrial connections; and instead have joined the host of heaven. With open vision do I behold the Angelic Company of the spiritual world; and join the melodious songs of the New Jerusalem. Why tell ye me of your increasing and multiplying after the flesh? Your vessels are marred in the potter's hand and they must be made over again by regeneration; or go down to the pit. Do you say that it is a command to increase and multiply? I say it never was

a command to corrupt the earth and fill it with a double condemnation; and then plead the command of God to increase and multiply, as though you had been doing his will. God has given me the power to increase and multiply in its true, typical and evangelical sense, which I go forth to do: I have begotten many thousands of children and replenished them with many good things. I hate your fleshly lives and your fleshly generation and increasing, as I hate the smoke of the bottomless pit: and I also despise your pleading of the command of God to increase and multiply, to cover your doleful and grief bringing corruptions; and inverting the order of heaven. Think ye that I will look towards you, while you live after the flesh, defiling yourselves with effeminate desires and profaning the command of God for a cover? It is in my power indeed to help you greatly in a temporal sense and many others who live as corrupt lives as you do this day; just as much without God in the world; but be it known unto you and all men that I will not do it; except you forsake your wicked lives and serve the living and true God: which I have no expectation you will do if I should nourish and cherish you as a tender father does his children. Stay in England until you go down into your grave, as long as you are for following natural generation and the course of this world: I know that your greatest oppression is your living after the flesh, which is your own choosing; and is the very reason why I will not help you, tho' I have it in my power. Away! with your looking towards me for help, since you are sunk in my soul for your disobedience to God and your lying hopes that you are in favor with him; while you corrupt the law and trample the gospel under foot: were it so indeed that you had it in your hearts to turn to God and obey the gospel, I would look towards you with charity and compassion and would take care of you, soul and body: but that is far from you and it is in your hearts to enlarge your liberty after the flesh; and to provide livings for yourselves and posterity. Therefore you are but a stink in my nostrils: instead of your having the pardon of your sins, you are deceived and I feel that you are powerless, alienated from the life of God and become carnal, sensual and unwise. As you have chosen your own ways, you shall see what the god you serve will do for you and your false hopes what they will bring you to. All we that are that one community that worship God in Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, being separated from all effeminate desires and sensual pleasures, are in possession of the only hope of Eternal Life: my God has delivered me, redeemed my soul, filled it with heavenly glory and the power of an endless life; as well as made me able to help many in a temporal sense: and you might have been sharers with me in all this unmerited generosity and abundance, had you obeyed the gospel with me. As therefore you have forsaken God, so I also forsake you; and will never give you any encouragement to come into this land, until once for all you resolve to turn to God and obey the gospel. I feel the compassion of God to warn you of what you are losing in this great day of the second appearance of the Son of Man. You are losing the only means of salvation that will ever be offered again in this world. The power of the gospel does prosper in my soul, in bowels of charity & compassion for the poor lost children of men. I would that you would be warned by a faithful friend, not to outstand the day of God's final visitation, for the sake of your false hopes, which will leave your souls desolate and barren. Choosing the fading things of this life, which are but vanity and vexation of spirit. O! That you would hearken! For there remains the same door open for your escape, as for the rest of the children of men. If you will enter at this door, I feel to receive you with charity. The severity of this letter, is the very charity of God for your souls; and his abhorrence of your false hopes.

JAMES WHITTAKER

Shaker Communities

THE PROPHECY

A Worldwide Kingdom of God and Zion of His Likeness on Earth (Daniel 2:44).

FOUNDER

Ann Lee, the Bride of Christ (1736-1784) of Manchester, England.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Virgin Purity, Peace, Justice and Love

Expressed Through: Celibate Life, Complete Confession and Forsaking of all Sin,
Non Resistance, Community of Goods and Divine Order.

BELIEFS

Duality of the Deity, Father and Mother God (Power and Wisdom). The Mighty Dual Spirit, Creator of Life, Light, Truth and Love. Duality of the Christ Spirit, as manifested by Jesus Christ and Ann Lee, Immortal Life, Progress of the Soul, Faithfulness, Lawfulness, Equality of the Genders, Equality in Labor, Equality in Property, Temperance in all things, Justice and Kindness to all Living Beings.

GOVERNMENT

The Head of the Shaker Order is Christ.
Represented in a Dual Order of Leaders, Ministry Elders and Trustees.

COMMUNITY

Serious Minded and Competent individuals who vow to never deny
the Father God, the Mother Wisdom, the Son Jesus Christ or the Daughter Ann Lee.

SHAKER MOTTO

Hands to work, and Hearts to God.—ANN LEE

Zion's Center Of Union

