

BOOK THREE

**Systematic
: Theology :**

“A” Course

2

Published by
Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute
516 Eighth Avenue West
Calgary - - Alberta

PART "3"

" RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD "

S Y S T E M A T I C T H E O L O G Y "A" C O U R S E

'THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS'

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16. The Dispensation of Law.
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A GENERAL VIEW OF GOD'S GREAT PLAN

The Scriptures divide HUMAN T I M E, by which is meant the entire period from the creation of Adam to the destruction of Heaven and earth (Revelation 20:11) into SEVEN unequal periods called 'Dispensations', Ephesians 3:2, or 'Ages' Ephesians 2:7 or 'Days', Mal 4:1,5.

A Dispensation is a period of time during which GOD deals with mankind in a particular way in respect to sin and to man's responsibility.

E.G. The Dispensation of Innocence, during which Adam and Eve were responsible to keep their innocency by abstaining from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Dispensation of Law when Israel was responsible to keep the Law.

Five of these seven dispensations have already been fulfilled; we are living in the sixth and have before us a part of the fifth and the whole of the seventh.

The failure to recognize these dispensations and the confusing of the covenants under which God has dealt or is dealing with men, has led to much heresy and false teaching in this day.

E.G. Some men say that they believe that if they do what their consciences tell them, God will accept that. You should see at once that they imagine that we are now in the Dispensation of Conscience that ended in the days of the Flood.

Another says that he is sure if he does the best he can do to keep the laws of Moses he thinks God will accept him and save him. You see that he believes that we are still under the covenant of the Law. Evidently he will pay no attention to what God has told him in this dispensation of Grace. Read it for yourself. Romans 3:19,20; Galatians 3:9,10.

These Dispensations are marked off in Scripture in four definite ways, -

- (1) There is a Covenant made by God with man.
- (2) The development of man's failure to keep his covenant.
- (3) The resulting climax of difficulty.
- (4) The end of the dispensation in a climax of catastrophe.

Usually, following this terrible result of Sin there is a transition period to give mankind an opportunity to learn the new covenant.

Let us illustrate this. Take for example the Dispensation of Human Government. The third covenant with man was that he should rule with equity and justice. Out of the fearful judgment of the Flood, God saved eight persons to whom, after the waters had subsided, He gave the purified earth with ample power to govern it. This, Noah and his descendants were responsible to do.

Gradually man became selfish and in violence he grasped from his fellows the things necessary to this latter's existence. So, it developed until, upon the plain of Shinar, in an impious attempt to dethrone God and become independent of Him, they planned to build the tower of Babel.

So the dispensation closed in Judgment. God sent them confusion of tongues and they were scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth.

The other dispensations are similar in their beginning, their development, their end and their judgment.

The student must learn at once that the requirements of God under each covenant are different one from the other. Hence it becomes necessary in reading Scripture, to recognize the Dispensation about which the statement is made. It is by neglect of this important precaution that many so-called contradictions appear.

E.G. A person reading the Bible comes to Matt. 6:15 and he at once concludes that if he hopes to gain forgiveness for sins he must first forgive his fellows. See how definite it is. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses". This is further supported by Matt. 18:35.

However, when you come to Eph. 4:32 the matter of forgiveness is approached in the reverse order. Here we are told that we should forgive one another because we are forgiven.

Now which is basic the one to the other. Does God forgive first and then call upon us to forgive, or do we have to forgive first and then because of our willingness, He forgives us?

The careful student at once notes that Matthew was written for the Kingdom Covenant and Ephesians for the covenant of Grace. Hence the order of Ephesians is the one for our guidance and admonition.

Now, knowing this, you see the information we can bring to our aid when we read James 5:14,15. We soon learn that this is Kingdom dispensation instruction also for it speaks in verse 15 of getting forgiveness of sins through prayer. This is not the way forgiveness comes under Grace.

Read Acts 13:38,39 and you will see how forgiveness comes under Grace and here it tells us that this is different from that under law.

The whole matter becomes very much more clear when we take a subject and trace it through each dispensation.

Imagine the consternation of one who has no knowledge of Dispensational Truth beginning to study the Food problem as taught in the Bible. You may know that some people are what we call 'religious vegetarians'. They believe that anyone who eats meat in any form has not much hope of getting to Heaven.

Then there are those sects who do not object to all kinds of meat, but merely those forbidden under the Mosaic Law. E.G. Pork, ham and bacon.

To come to some conclusion our interested friend commences to read the Bible. Before he reads very far, he comes to Genesis 1:29. "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat."

Here he sees that fruit and vegetables are all that was given to the human race. He wonders then why any of God's people, accepting the Bible as true, are eating meat of any kind.

But, he reads on until he comes to Genesis 3:18,19.

" - and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

He here notices the inclusion of 'Bread' as well as herbs. This is not much change. The making of bread is merely a preparation of the seed of the grain.

So he reads on and finds Genesis 9:3,4.

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

This puzzles him. Here they are told to eat any kind of meat that they desire. The only restriction being that they should kill and bleed it. Now how is a man to eat fruit and vegetables only and at the same time eat all kinds of meat.

But he reads on until he comes to Genesis 18:6-8. Here he finds that when the Lord Jesus came to visit Abraham, they prepared for Him, biscuits, butter, milk and veal.

Evidently it was not sinful to eat meat or the Lord would not have eaten it.

On continuing to read he comes to Lev. 11:7,8.

" And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you."

Now this is confusion worse confounded. One text of the Bible plainly asserts that all kinds of meat may be eaten. This passage divides meats into two classes, clean and unclean; and forbids the unclean.

Coming to the New Testament he reads Col. 2:16 - "Let no man therefore judge you in meats."

And - 1 Tim. 4:4,5 - "Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer."

Now how is our friend to understand all this until he gets to know the truth concerning dispensations.

When he discovers that,

- (1) Genesis 1:29 - 'Fruit and vegetables but no meat', was for the age of Innocence -
- (2) Genesis 3:18,19 - 'Herbs and bread but no meat', was for the age of Conscience -
- (3) Genesis 9:3,4 - 'Meats of all kinds when properly dressed,' was for the dispensation of Human Government *
- (4) Genesis 18:6-8 - 'More preparation of food including meat' was the order under the covenant of Promise.
- (5) Lev. 11:7,8 - Only clean meats (no pork) could be eaten under the covenant of the Law.
- (6) Col 2:16 - Freedom to eat what has been sanctified by the Word of God and prayer is the rule for the dispensation of Grace.
- (7) Matt. 22:4 shows us that at the marriage supper in the beginning of the Kingdom Age, the Millennium, they shall eat meat. (clean).

This should show anyone who earnestly desires to be able to read the Bible, the necessity of rightly dividing the Word dispensationally.

The Seven Dispensations may be gathered together under THREE headings -

- (1) The Beginning of things, during the time when God was peopling the earth.
 - (a) Innocence - when sin began.
 - (b) Conscience - when man learned to comprehend the awfulness of sin.
 - (c) Human Government - when man was given the control and the human race was scattered over the face of the whole earth.
- (2) The Time of the Hebrews -
 - (a) Promise - when Abram was called.
 - (b) Law - when the penalty of sin was taught.
 - (c) Kingdom - when God's people shall be called to reign in righteousness.
- (3) The Church of God -
 - (a) 'Grace' - when God undertakes to call out of the world, a people for His name.

The dispensation of Grace does not come last. It is set into the midst of the Dispensation of the Law, which is afterwards followed by the Kingdom Age.

THE STUDENT SHOULD SECURE ONE OF OUR 25¢ CHARTS TO PICTURE THIS WHOLE COURSE.

Values

REVIEW QUESTIONS - LESSON 11 -

- (4) 1. (a) How long does Time last?
(2) (b) Into how many periods is it divided? Are they equal in length?
(6) (c) Give the names sometimes given to these periods. Illustrate.
- (4) 2. (a) What is meant by a Dispensation?
(4) (b) In what way has much heresy and false teaching arisen in connection with the Bible?
- (6) 3. (a) State ONE error that is being made today by some who do not grasp dispensational truth. Explain it.
(4) (b) Where do we stand dispensationally? How many more dispensations are yet to come.
- (6) 4. (a) Show how a dispensation is marked off.
(6) (b) Illustrate this using the dispensation of Human Government.
(6) (c) Do the same, using the dispensation of Conscience, which precedes Human Government, as your theme.
- (4) 5. (a) Why is it necessary to recognize the dispensation about which any Bible statement is made?
(4) (b) To what dispensation does each of the following belong? Eph. 4:32; Matt. 18:35; Acts 13:38,39; James 5:14,15.
- (3) 6. (a) What do the 'Religious Vegetarians' believe and teach?
(3) (b) Name another error in connection with the food question.
- (5) 7. (a) Does Genesis 1:29 contradict Genesis 9:3,4? Explain.
(5) (b) Does Lev. 11:7,8 not forbid the eating of pork in this dispensation of Grace? Give scripture to back up your explanation.
- (3) 8. (a) Did the Lord Jesus ever eat meat? Make your answer definite.
(6) (b) What information was given us in:
(1) 1 Tim. 4:4,5 and (2) Acts 10:11-15.
- (7) 9. Name the SEVEN dispensations in order and state what could be eaten under each.
- (7) 10. Classify the dispensations under the three headings and give the general lesson of each.
- (2) 11. (a) Which is the last Dispensation in time?
(3) (b) Which is later, Law or Grace? Explain.

LESSON 12. THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE.

This dispensation extended from the creation of Adam to the Expulsion from Eden.

It is principally covered by the first three Chapters of Genesis, but there are references to this period of time here and there throughout the Bible.

E.G. Matt. 19:4-6 tells of the beginning of man in connection with marriage and quotes from Genesis 2:24.

Luke 3:38 traces the genealogy of the Lord Jesus through His mother, Mary, back to Adam and ends by saying 'Adam, which was the son of God.'

Romans 5:12-14 speaks of sin entering into the world by 'one man'. Verse 14 counts time from Adam to Moses.

In 1 Cor. 15:22 we read 'As in Adam all die'. Verse 45 reads, 'the first man Adam.'

In 1 Tim. 2:13,14 we find a corroboration of the Order of Creation and a detail of the fall of man.

Adam was formed before Eve and Adam deliberately sinned. He was not deceived.

The use of the concordance will give other passages, dealing with this dispensation.

It is evident from the above that the theory of 'Multiple Creation' is untenable. Adam and Eve were the first and only pair of human beings to begin with. The Multiple Creation theory holds that there were many pairs.

Genesis 3:20 tells us definitely that Eve was the mother of all living. The old query, 'Where did Cain get his wife?' is at once answered. He must have married his sister or his niece or grand niece. There were girls in the family of Adam and Eve. (See Gen. 5:4)

The student must be careful to note the beginning of this dispensation was at the creation of man.

There were three beginnings of the world just as there will be three endings.

The 'beginning' of John 1:1 was long before the creation of the earth, for in verse 3 the creation of all things is declared.

The 'beginning' of Genesis 1:1 is ages before the creation of man. Isa. 45:18 tells us that the earth was not created void nor chaotic. Jer. 4:24,25 tells us that before man was on the earth the mountains were shaken out of their places. Job 9:5 corroborates this. It was in these prehistoric times that the great coal and mineral areas were formed.

It was the darkening of the sun that brought on the glacial catastrophe which destroyed the prehistoric animals and buried them.

The third 'beginning' is referred to in Matt. 19:4.

Genesis 1:2 begins the story of re-creation when the earth was again to be replenished with inhabitants. This time human rather than angelic.

The Recreation of the earth took place in six days of 24 hours each.

Adam was created in the afternoon of the sixth day. Note this carefully, for God's seventh day was therefore Man's FIRST DAY. This foreshadowed a new day when the Son of Man would once again bring mankind into a conciliatory position with God and man would worship on the first day, the day of the resurrection.

Immediately after the creation, the animals were named. (Gen. 2:18-25) and Eve was created as a help mate to Adam. Then they were placed in the garden of Eden and given a covenant.

- (1) They were to eat only vegetables and fruit. Gen. 1:29. The animals also were graminivorous, not carnivorous. (Genesis 1:30)
- (2) They were to maintain their innocence. They were not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If they did, there was to be a certain penalty. (Gen. 2:17.)
- (3) They were encompassed about by the glory of God, so they were not ashamed although they were naked. (Gen. 2:25)

Time after time the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day and had sweet fellowship with them.

One day, however, the beautiful serpent, erect in form, enticed the woman to the forbidden tree and induced her to eat by deception. Then Adam seeing the fatal mistake, deliberately followed her into sin, and hid from the Lord God. (1 Tim. 2:13,14.) The glory of God departed from them. In their endeavor to cover their nakedness, they sewed fig leaves together.

Then came the judgment -

- (1) The Serpent was cursed forever, and as a sign was made to crawl upon its belly as long as it lives. Verse 14.
- (2) The Devil was declared to be a permanent enemy of mankind even endeavoring to destroy man's only Saviour. But He was to be finally crushed and his dominion taken from Him.
- (3) The woman was to have great sorrow and pain in childbirth, even coming to the very gates of death itself. Man was to have dominion over her. Verse 16.
- (4) The man was to face difficulty in providing for himself and family from the cursed ground which would persistently bring forth thorns and thistles, rather than good fruit.

Even the very digestion of the food will be a difficult one, and will finally bring you to death.

- (5) Finally, out of the beautiful Garden of Eden they both were driven with all the animals. The entrance was guarded by mighty cherubims and the tree of life was removed from the earth to the New Earth. Revelation 22:1,2.

Thus ended the dispensation of Innocence.

Man has no more covenant to keep innocent and be acceptable to God.

Sometimes mothers have wished that they might be able to keep that sweet little child on his way to school, innocent. But that is impossible. God desired his two creatures to maintain innocence but in vain.

The human race are forced to face the sin problem.

Even apart from their own deeds of evil, they are born in sin and iniquity. (Psalm 51:5) and the sentence of death has passed on all men. Romans 5:12. The human race today are described in Romans 3:10-18. This is the result of the terrible fall of mankind in the first dispensation.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW -

Values

- (4) 1. (a) How long was the first dispensation?
(2) (b) What part of the Bible covers this particularly?
(6) (c) Name three other passages that speak of it. Tell what they declare.
- (4) 2. (a) What is the theory of 'Multiple Creation'?
(4) (b) Is this theory Scriptural? Give proof.
(2) (c) Who was Cain's wife?
- (6) 3. (a) Explain the three beginnings of the world, giving Scripture for each.
(2) (b) With which one does the first dispensation begin?
(a)
- (4) 4. When did the glacial catastrophe take place?
(6) (b) What took place at that time?
- (2) 5. (a) How long did it take God to re-create the earth?
(2) (b) When was Adam created?
(4) (c) What significance has that?
- (4) 6. (a) What is the full import of the word 'replenish' in Genesis 1:28?
(4) (b) Were there men on the earth before? Prove your answer.
- (8) 7. (a) State the covenant of God for the dispensation of innocence.
(4) (b) Why did Adam and Eve not obey this covenant? Be specific.
- (4) 8. (a) Of what is a crawling serpent a sign?
(6) (b) Explain Genesis 3:15.

REVIEW QUESTIONS - LESSON 12 Continued.

Values

- (4) 9. (a) In what way did the fall affect women?
(6) (b) In what way does the Fall affect mankind?
- (6) 10. What happened to the Garden of Eden after the Fall?
Be concise -
- (6) 11. What is the ultimate result of the first dispensation,
on the human race? Answer this fully.

100%

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LESSON 13. THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE.

By the Fall, Adam and Eve acquired and transmitted to the human race a sinful state and the knowledge of good and evil. This gave Conscience a basis for right moral judgment and hence the race came under this measure of responsibility to do good and eschew evil.

This dispensation extended from the Fall to the Flood.

The particular Scripture covering this period includes from Genesis 4 to Genesis 8, inclusive.

There are other passages also scattered throughout the Bible in which reference is made to it.

Hebrews 11:4 - In this passage a comparison of the offerings of Cain and Abel is made.

Jude 11 tells us of a custom that was modelled after the reasoning of Cain, which did nothing but lead men into destruction.

Jude 14 tells of Enoch preaching of the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of his saints.

The covenant is not definitely stated but the recorded events teach us the details of it. Evidently mankind were to obey their natural or acquired conscience. They were to eschew the evil and do the good.

To meet the sin problem, not only inherited, but produced by failure to obey, they were told to offer a sacrifice. The story of the slaying of the lamb to provide a covering for man (Gen 3:21) would indicate that they were instructed regarding a blood sacrifice. The definite rule is given in Hebrews 9:22. 'Without shedding of blood, is no remission.'

With this fact in mind, the student will better understand the rejection of Cain's offering and the acceptance of Abel's. Hebrews 11:4) Abel offered a sacrifice of blood. Cain offered the fruits of his own efforts. Thereupon, God called Cain's attention to the fact that he had not thereby settled the sin problem. Genesis 4:7.

In this dispensation we have the first murder. The general course of the age that rejects the blood sacrifice is presented in the life of one individual.

Cain was banished where he began a civilization that refused to believe or obey the Word of God. This group have continued to the present time.

They had their music with which to entertain and pass away the time. They made their inventions by which they secured a living from the cursed ground without so much work. With them, also began the practice of polygamy. Lamech had two wives.

Before leaving this other civilization, may we call your attention to the fact that Genesis 4:17 does not say that Cain got his wife in a far country, as some try to declare. He had a wife before he went. This time the woman deliberately follows the man.

Genesis Chapter 6 gives an account of the development of wickedness and violence during this dispensation. One of the greatest causes of the rapidity of its decline was the intercourse between angels and human beings.

Some declare that the Sons of God (Gen. 6:2) refer to the Sons of Seth, and explain this verse to mean mixed marriages with unbelievers. Now it is admitted that such unions are unfortunate and cause much distress and sorrow, but certain facts show that this breach was much worse.

The term, 'Sons of God' in the Old Testament is never applied to any creatures born of men. Adam was the only Son of God among mankind. Seth was the son of Adam (Luke 3:38) and Enos, is said to be the son of Seth.

Angels are called the 'Sons of God' in Job 38:7. Hence it is evident that this verse (Genesis 6:2) could not refer to the sons of men.

It is true that in the New Testament by the New Birth, men may become sons of God (John 1:11) but this requires, a new birth.

Jude refers to this evil intercourse between mankind and angels (Jude 6) and points out with warning, the judgment which came from it.

We need not be surprised to read that 'the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. Gen. 6:5.

So judgment had to fall. The Flood came. But before the flood, Noah preached 120 years, warning people of the coming judgment. Genesis 6:3.

One can imagine the various replies that these Antediluvians made to Noah's preaching.

- (1) God is too good to damn anyone.
- (2) It is a scientific impossibility to have so much rain.
- (3) An old pessimist like you should be locked up.
- (4) Even if it did rain to cause a flood we could scale the high mountains until it subsided.

Then the Flood came. That this Flood was universal, covering the whole of the earth is proved by geological science and by the scripture. (Gen. 7:19)

The student should read Chapters 7 and 8 and note the following details of the flood -

- In Noah's 600th year, 2nd month, and 17th day the rain began. It rained 40 days and 40 nights and the fountains of the deep were broken up until all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.
- In Noah's 600th year, third month and 27th day, the rain ceased.
- In the 600th year, seventh month and seventeenth day, the ark settled on Mount Ararat. (not on the peak)
Now the waters prevailed with no further departure until -
- In the 600th year, eighth month and 27th day they began to assuage.
- In the 600th year, 10th month, and 1st day, the tops of the other mountains came into sight.
- In the 600th year, 11th month and 11th day, Noah sent out a raven which never came back. Also he sent forth a dove but she came back at once.
- In the 600th year, 11th month, and 18th day Noah sent out the dove again and she came back this time with an olive leaf plucked from a tree.
So Noah knew the water had almost subsided.
- In the 600th year, 11th month and 25th day, he sent out the dove the third time and she never returned.
- In the 601st year, the first month and the first day he took the top off the ark and saw that the ground was dry.
- In the 601st year, second month and 27th day God told him to go forth from the ark.

Thus a new beginning was made. Noah, and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, with their wives, i.e. eight souls in all, were saved.

In conclusion may we call your attention to striking passages in the New Testament about this dispensational ending.
MATTHEW 24:37-39 compares the conditions before the flood to those preceding the second coming of Christ. This is repeated in LUKE 17:26,27.
HEBREWS 11:7 tells of the effect of warning upon Noah. His belief in God's Word made him an heir of righteousness.
1 PETER 3:20,21 tells us of Noah's faithful preaching and compares his building of the ark to our submission to baptism.

2 PETER 2:5 tells of the certainty of God's judgment of sin.

Your concordance may give you other passages that will help you to understand this dispensation.

The story of this awful flood should forever disabuse anyone's mind of hoping today to be saved by doing what our conscience tells us.

This was the terrible fault that clung to the mind of Saul of Tarsus.

He steadfastly asserted (Acts 23:1) that he had lived in all good conscience in all he did. He verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (Acts 26:9) So he sought out the Christians and persecuted, tortured and murdered them. He did not know that one's conscience may be defiled. Titus 1:15. Yes even worse than that, it may be so hardened and calloused that it would appear to be seared with a hot iron.

This is to be the case in the last days. (1 Tim. 4:2) It is so today. Do not be surprised. Men too often have to be purged of an evil conscience. How easy it should be therefore, in this day, to be convinced of the fact, that we cannot be saved by doing what our conscience tells us, for even then we would have to revert to the offering of the proper Abel sacrifice, or be rejected as Cain. And then what?

BE SURE TO GET THE THOUGHT OF THIS LESSON.

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REVIEW QUESTIONS.

- (2) 1. (a) How long did the dispensation of conscience last?
- (2) (b) What Scripture deals particularly with it?
- (4) (c) Mention two references to it in the New Testament and state the specific point noted in each.

- (6) 2. (a) What was the Covenant in this dispensation?
- (4) (b) Why did mankind fail during this dispensation?
- (4) (c) What is the great principle underlying this covenant? Give scripture.

- (4) 3. (a) What was the result of Cain's banishment?
- (6) (b) State three important features of the civilization in the far-away land of Ed.

- (10) 4. (a) Who were meant by 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6:2? Discuss this fully.
- (4) (b) What was their effect upon the human race?

- (4) 5. (a) How long did Noah preach and with what results?
- (6) (b) State some of the remarks that might have been made at his preaching.

- (4) 6. (a) Was the flood universal? Give scripture for your answer.
- (2) (b) How long did it rain during the Flood?
- (2) (c) Where did the ark settle?
- (6) (d) How long did the waters prevail?
What does 'prevail' mean?
- (6) 7. (a) Tell the incidents of the raven and of the dove, giving time references.
- (2) (b) How Long after they removed the top did Noah remain in the Ark.
- (4) (c) Why did he leave then?
- (18) 8. Discuss fully the suggestion made to you by a friend, claiming that he can be saved today by doing what his conscience tells him.

100%

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LESSON 14. THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

This third dispensation is more or less of a new beginning. However much we may discuss the origin of mankind, we can be satisfied that the Flood made the Apostle Paul's statement true, as recorded in Acts 17:26.

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed."

Eight persons only were left after the flood and from the three sons of Noah all the nations must have been descended.

The natural tendency of inborn sin is at once exhibited in the story of Noah's disgraceful drunkenness in Gen. 9:20-27.

It is usually understood that the descendants of Shem were the Hebrew race - the descendants of Ham, the black races of Africa and the islands of the Sea; and the descendants of Japheth were the white races of Europe and America.

A careful study of Gen. 10 would show us that the nations of Japheth or what is more commonly called the Gentile Nations, were Askenaz - Germany; Riphath - Scandinavians; Togarmah - Austrians and Balkans; Elisha - Spain and Portugal; Tarshish - Great Britain and the United States; Kittim - Italy; Dodanim - France; Magog, Tubal and Meshech - Russia; Madai-Japan and China; Tiras-Turkey.

We do not ask the student to accept all this at once. Simply bear it in mind as you read the prophecies of the Bible.

The dispensation of Human Government lasted from the Flood to the time of dispersion at the Tower of Babel.

Genesis, chapters 9 to 11 inclusive is the particular part of the Bible that deals with it. Very little reference is made to this dispensation in any other part of the Bible, although Babel becomes the foundation of the great religion of Babylon all down the ages.

In Genesis 9:1-17 the full text of the covenant with Noah is given.

- (1) He is once more to replenish the earth.
- (2) He is to rule the earth for God. The powerful beasts of the earth will submit to the rule of man because of a fear that is upon them.
- (3) He is to be allowed to eat all manner of meats provided they are properly dressed.
- (4) If a man was killed by another man or a beast, the murderer was to be put to death.
- (5) The covenant was to have a seal of its inviolability in a rainbow seen at the time when it should ever rain. God will never again destroy the earth with a flood.
- (6) The fact that clean animals were preserved in the ark indicated that the blood sacrifice was still to be offered from time to time for the remission of sins.

We have little account of the dispensation until the very close. Evidently much of the covenant had been forgotten for Genesis Chapter 11 tells us that in order to protect themselves from the devastation of another flood (see #5 above) they set themselves to build a tower to go beyond the highest mountains into the very heavens themselves.

The expertness of their skill in engineering enterprises is evidenced by the attempt to build such a tower.

Their unbelief however, was dealt with by the confusion of languages put upon them in the land of Shinar, where they were building the high tower.

Thus was the whole earth peopled by the human race.

This completes the three general dispensations in which the world as a whole was tried and found wanting.

Mankind continually persists in returning to these three and will not learn the higher and more definite covenants given since then.

Constantly we hear it stated that if we had a better form of government, things would be better and on every side we read of anarchy and rebellion against constituted authority. How inconsistent men are!

They seem determined not to believe what God has covenanted and foolishly pit their wisdom and skill against the omniscience of the Almighty One.

What folly! When will men learn the lesson of the Third Dispensation?

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REVIEW QUESTIONS - LESSON 14.

- (8) 1. (a) In what sense is the third dispensation a new beginning?
- (9) (b) Show that notwithstanding this there was still the sin of the former periods lingering in mankind?
- (6) 2. (a) How long did the dispensation of Human Government last?
- (5) (b) What section of the Bible deals particularly with this dispensation?
- (18) 3. (a) State the six points in God's covenant with Noah.
- (8) (b) What was the significance of the rainbow?
- (8) 4. (a) What particular part of the covenant was denied by the people who built the tower of Babel?
- (6) (b) Were these people especially skilful? Explain.
- (5) 5. (a) In what form did Judgment fall in this dispensation?
- (5) (b) What was the result of this judgment?
- (5) 6. (a) What remains of this dispensation all down the ages?
- (9) (b) Has mankind learned the lesson of this dispensation? Explain.
- (8) (c) State in your own words the lesson of this dispensation.

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LESSON 15. The Dispensation of Promise.

The next dispensations with their covenants, are not for the world at large but only for a particular people called of God out from the world. Hence it may be said that the world today is without covenant. (Eph. 2:12)

Out of the dispersed descendants of the builders of Babel, God called one man Abram.

His father was Terah and his two brothers were named Nahor and Haran. The latter, Haran, was the father of Lot and he died early, even before his father Terah. (Gen. 11:27,28)

Terah was a maker and worshipper of other Gods in the form of idols. (Josh. 24:2,3)

Abram married Sarai, his half-sister. She was the daughter of Terah with another wife. (Gen. 20:12)

Now God called Abram and entered into a covenant with him and his seed, the Hebrew Race. Some of the promises to Abram were purely gracious and unconditional. Other promises were conditional upon the faithfulness and obedience of the Israelites.

The gracious and unconditional promises were,-

- (1) Abram and his seed were to receive a land. Gen. 12:7 and Gen. 13:15.
 - (2) They were to be made a great nation.
 - (3) Their name was to be made great.
 - (4) They were to be a blessing.
 - (5) They were to be made a curse to those that cursed them.
 - (6) The nation was to be very numerous. Gen 13:16.
 - (7) He was to have a heavenly seed also. Gen. 15:5.
- These are certain to come to pass.

We find that Abram and his descendants have never had the promised land as their possession (Acts 7:5) so it follows that Palestine must yet become the possession of Israel and Abram must be raised from the dead to live on this earth.

Other promises were conditional.

E.G. The Lord promises to be with them and guide them by His presence if they sojourn in their land. (Gen. 26:3)

It is needless to say that these conditions were violated and the dispensation resulted in utter failure. It therefore closed in the judgment of Egyptian Bondage. God's people, Israel, were abject slaves of a great Gentile Nation.

This nation, of course, was judged by God as He promised.

Thus the dispensation began with a glorious prospect and ended in a coffin in Egypt.

The particular section of Scripture dealing with it is found in Genesis Chapters 12 - 50 inclusive.

We are not able to deal with the bulk of detail in this outline lesson. The student should familiarize himself with the splendid stories.

REVIEW QUESTIONS LESSON 15.

Values

- (6) 1. (a) In what way is the Dispensation of Promise different from the previous ones?
- (8) (b) Under what covenant is the world today? Give Scripture.
- (10) 2. (a) Tell a few facts regarding Terah -
1. Where did he live?
II. How many sons had he?
III. What was his occupation?
IV. What relation was he to Lot?
V. Where did he die?
- (8) (b) Tell what you know of Abram's wife.
- (5) 3. (a) What is meant by saying that some of God's covenants with Abram were unconditional? Give an example.
- (6) (b) Was the promise of Palestine as a possession conditional? Has Abram received it yet? Give Scripture.
- (6) (c) What conclusion do you make from this?
- (8) 4. (a) Give an example of a conditional promise to Abram.
- (12) (b) Did Abram or did his seed keep the condition? Explain definitely treating each separately.
- (7) 5. (a) Name seven things promised to Abram that are sure to come to pass?
- (5) (b) Can you name a nation that has treated the descendants of Abram cruelly? What will surely happen to it?
- (5) 6. (a) How long did this dispensation last?
- (5) (b) What particular scripture covers it?
- (9) (c) Name three of the greatest men among Abram's descendants that lived during this dispensation?

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LESSON 16. THE DISPENSATION OF THE LAW.

The second dispensation in connection with God's people Israel, or i.e. the fifth dispensation of Time, began with the deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt. The story of the deliverance is told in the early part of Exodus.

They received the Law covenant from the Lord God as described in Acts 7:38 and Gal. 3:19 when they reached Mount Sinai. The student should note that the ten commandments were, in the first case, written by the finger of God on two tables of stone. See Exodus 31:18)

In disgust at the folly of God's people, worshipping the Golden Calf, Moses broke the first two tables at the foot of the Mountain. (Exodus 32:19)

This necessitated a second visit into the mountain and God instructed Moses to write the commandments anew on two other tables of stone. (Exodus 34:27,28) These commandments and sundry other correlated laws constitute the Law Covenant with Israel.

The people were to do these things, and if they failed, certain sacrifices were ordained to be offered.

Boldly Israel entered into this covenant in spite of the failures recorded in previous dispensations.

The history of Israel in the wilderness, in the Promised Land and in captivity among the Gentiles is one long continued story of flagrant persistent violation of the Law Covenant.

When the Messiah arrived, in fulfilment of prophecy, the inconsistency of Israel's leaders was plainly revealed. By this time, through idolatry and inter-mingling with other nations, Israel as a whole had been finally taken captive by the Gentile Powers and the remnant in Jerusalem finally plotted the crucifixion of the Christ, their prophesied Messiah.

This was the climax of Apostasy and ended in dreadful judgments. Shortly after this climax of Apostasy, the city of Jerusalem was taken by the Roman Emperor Titus in A.D. 70. As a consequence, many were carried into captivity, and the Temple was destroyed.

We must not imagine that Israel had no warning given them. Warning after warning came to them from God through the prophets and at last the dispensation appeared to be nearing its close. A feeble remnant returned to God under Ezra and Nehemiah, and out of this, in due time, the Christ came, born of a woman, made under the law. Him both Jews and Gentiles conspired to crucify.

Now a strange thing happened. In fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel (Chapter 9:24-27) the sixty-nine weeks were completed, and the great prophetic break began. A new dispensation was inserted into the midst of the Law Covenant, which was thereby set aside temporarily. God decided to choose out of the world a people for His name. (Acts 15:15-18) Then after this, the seventieth week

or the last seven years of the Law dispensation will be completed and will end with the terrible time of trouble, the day of the Anti-Christ and finally the Second Coming of Christ.

The student must bear in mind that the dispensation of the Law is but temporarily set aside, at the present time, and will be replaced again after the close of the sixth dispensation, or after the Rapture of the Church. The observance of the Sabbath Day, the Daily Sacrifice in the Temple, etc, will be inaugurated again in the Promised Land.

The Anti-Christ, the Battle of Armageddon and the opening of the Seals, etc, do not take place in the present dispensation of Grace but in the last part of the renewed dispensation of Law.

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REVIEW QUESTIONS

Values

- (3) 1. (a) What is the name of the fifth dispensation?
(3) (b) With whom has it particularly to do?
- (3) 2. (a) When did the fifth dispensation begin?
(6) (b) When will it end?
- (2) 3. (a) In what book is Israel's Deliverance from bondage recorded?
(4) (b) Where and when was the Law given?
(6) (c) By whom was it given? Be explicit.
- (8) 4. (a) Who wrote the commandments on the two tables of stone?
(3) (b) What was to be done when any of the people broke the Law?
- (6) 5. (a) Had Israel learned the lesson of the failure under the previous dispensations? How do you know?
(6) (b) Did they fulfil the Law Covenant? Give proof.
- (3) 6. (a) What was revealed by the first advent of the Christ?
(6) (b) Should they have known that the Christ was their Messiah? Why? Give one text.
- (4) 7. (a) What was the climax of Israel's apostasy in the Law dispensation?
(6) (b) What was the outcome of their folly?
- (4) 8. (a) Had they any reason to anticipate the result?
(6) (b) If Israel was so apostate how could the Messiah have His prophetic birth?

REVIEW QUESTIONS - LESSON 16 C continued-

Values

- (3) 9. (a) Was the Destruction of Jerusalem the end of the Law Dispensation.
(5) (b) How much of the Law Dispensation is yet to come? Give scripture.
- (3) 10. (a) When will the Law Dispensation begin again?
(4) (b) Name two observances that will be renewed?
- (3) 11. (a) During what dispensation will the Battle of Armageddon take place?
(3) (b) To what dispensation does Matthew 24:20 refer? Why?

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LESSON 17 - THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

This dispensation is that peculiar, Divine, heavenly one that was inserted into the fifth dispensation, that of Law, when the people had crucified the Lord Jesus Christ.

How fully this dispensation impresses upon us, the glorious covenant of Grace offered to any individual and explained, partly at least in Romans 5:6-8. (Please read)

"When we were yet sinners, without strength, Christ Jesus died for the ungodly."

This is a covenant of undeserved favor bestowed by God through His Grace. The God of heaven imputes righteousness, gives it without money and without price, instead of requiring it as under Law. (Romans 4:4-8)

Salvation, perfect and eternal, is now freely offered to Jew and Gentile, bond or free, black, white, yellow or brown, on the basis of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross of Calvary. (2 Cor. 5:21 and 1 Peter 2:24)

This Dispensation did not begin at the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Law and the prophets were unto John, since that the Kingdom of God is preached.

Even after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Christ, the disciples preached the return of the King and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. Acts 3:19-21.

Peter and the other Apostles had some difficulty in understanding the application of Grace to the Gentiles.
(CF- Acts 10:9-28, 44-48, Gal. 2:11-21, 2 Peter 4:15,16.)

The Dispensation of Grace was hidden from the prophets. They had no revelation concerning it. (Romans 16:25,26; Col 1:25,27, Ephesians 3:1-6.)

It was given first to the Apostle Paul in the Desert of Arabia and by him it was passed on to the organized churches. (Col 1:25, Eph. 3:3, Gal. 1:15-24, 1 Cor. 11:23)

Those who know nothing of this dispensation could not understand the prophecies of the 'sufferings of Christ' and the 'glory that should follow'. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

They did not know that the dispensation of Christ came in between the two.

The dispensation of Grace therefore began after Pentecost a few years when it pleased God to give the revelation to the Apostle Paul.

It will end at the Appearing of Christ to receive unto Himself His own. (1 Thess. 4:14-18) The purpose of the dispensation is plainly stated in Acts 15:13-15. God is today taking out a people for His name, i.e. the Church.

Under this dispensation the covenant is entered into by a 'New Birth'. (John 3:3)

This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the acceptance of the Word of God. (1 Peter 1:23)

As soon as one is born again he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour (John 6:47, John 3:36, and 5:24)

Once a man is born again, he is assured of eternal life. (John 10:27,28)

The great delusion or difficulty with many is that they think that by good works, they can earn or keep salvation. (Ephes. 2:8,9, Romans 3:28, Romans 4:4,5.)

The fruitful aggressive service of the Lord is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit upon the regenerated believer. John 15:4,5.

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REVIEW QUESTIONS - LESSON 17.

Values

- (12) 1. In what way does the introduction of the dispensation of Grace impress upon us its glorious covenant? Explain carefully.
- (10) 2. What is the outstanding characteristic of this covenant? Give scripture.
- (12) 3. How does the individual's relationship to righteousness under Grace differ from his relationship to righteousness under Law? Give Scripture.
- (15) 4. When did the Dispensation of Grace actually begin? Discuss this fully.
- (4) 5. (a) Did Peter and the other Apostles understand it? Give Scripture.
- (4) (b) Did the prophets of old speak of it? Give proof.
- (6) (c) Who first received it? When and where?
- (6) 6. What difficulty did the dispensation give the prophets of old?
- (4) 7. (a) When will the dispensation of Grace end?
- (4) (b) What is its great purpose?
- (6) 8. (a) How is the New Birth accomplished? Give scripture.
- (3) (b) What is the first result of the New Birth?
- (3) (c) What should follow this? Give scripture.
- (4) 9. (a) What is the great delusion in this day of Grace?
- (3) (b) Does the efforts of the individual have anything to do with his service?
- (4) 10. How does a believer become able to serve acceptably?

LESSON 18. THE DISPENSATION OF THE KINGDOM.

The closing dispensation of what we call Time, is that of the Kingdom, variously called the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of Christ, the Millennium.

We must not imagine that this is the end of all the ages. It is not. The Apostle Paul speaks of others. (Eph. 1:10, 2:7)

This dispensation of the Kingdom is the climax of all ages. In it the world is to be restored as prophesied by the prophets. Acts 3:19-26.

After the dreadful tribulation and the troublous days of the last days of the Law Dispensation, with its Anti-Christ and the Battle of Armageddon, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ will return again to earth in person and after purifying the earth, He will introduce His personal reign over all the earth for a thousand years. (Revelation 5:10) The seat of His power will be in Jerusalem and with him will be His Bride and Body, the Church of Grace.

The Kingdom of God will cover the whole earth from the one end to the other. The Kingdom of Heaven will constitute the enlarged land of Palestine as promised to Abraham and his seed.

The Law shall go forth from Mount Zion. Micah 4:1-7.

There will be universal peace under the beneficent rule of the Christ. Isa. 11:1-11. Israel shall be restored to the promised land and the world will blossom as a rose. Amos 9:13-15.

Those who are left after the Battle of Armageddon shall come up from year to year to worship God and keep the feast of the Tabernacles. Zech. 14:16-21. During this dispensation Israel will become the greatest of missionaries into the far-off lands. Zech. 8:23.

There will be few deaths. Only the hardened rebellious sinners will die and that only after 100 years. (Isa. 65:20-25.)

At the end of the thousand years, Satan who has been bound in the bottomless pit will be loosed again a little season. How long that 'little season' lasts is not revealed, but it happens just the same. Revelation 20:1-15.

Satan finds the heart of rebellious mankind as prone to evil as ever and easily gathers the nations together to Battle against the Lord and His saints and fire comes down to destroy them all. So the dispensation ends in the judgment of the Great White Throne.

REVIEW QUESTIONS: LESSON 18

Values

- (6) 1. Is the Dispensation of the Kingdom the last of the Ages?
- (6) 2. (a) Give THREE different names for this dispensation.
(4) (b) How does the Kingdom of Heaven differ from the Kingdom of God?
- (7) 3. How will the Kingdom dispensation begin?
- (8) 4. (a) Will the Lord Jesus actually reign on earth in person?
Give Scripture.
(4) (b) Where will the seat of his authority be situated?
- (9) 5. State THREE facts that Micah 4:1-7 tells us of the Millennium.
- (6) 6. (a) Will there be any wicked men on earth during the Millennium? Give Scripture.
(4) (b) What observance will they have to recognize?
(4) (c) What will happen if they disobey?
- (10) 7. Will the Gospel be preached during the Millennium?
Give Scripture.
- (12) 8. Will there be many deaths during the Kingdom Dispensation?
Discuss this fully.
- (12) 9. What happens at the end of the dispensation? Give a complete answer.
- (8) 10. How long does 'the little season' of Revelation 20:3 last?

THE END
