

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session VII

October 24, 2010

The Fourth Dispensation: “Promise” Or “Patriarchal Rule”

Review:

The “Dispensations”: Distinguishable Economies (Stages) in the Eternal Plan of God

I. “Innocence”:

A. “Revelation”: Genesis 1:28 – 3:6.

→ Time period = From the “creation” of mankind to the “fall” of man.

B. “Responsibility”: To maintain “innocence” by obeying God!

→ “Rule of Life” = “Innocence”; a “positive holiness”; “fellowship” with God;

→ Mankind was responsible to maintain this “sinless” standing;

→ God’s command: “*Do not eat!*” (Gen. 3:1).

C. “Failure”: Mankind failed the test!

→ “*They ate!*”

→ They chose to trust themselves rather than God!

D. “Judgment”: Spiritual and Physical “Death”!

→ Adam and Eve were permanently removed from the garden;

→ A “Curse” on all mankind and all creation!

E. “Grace”:

→ God’s provision for man’s need in the person and work of Christ!

→ God’s promise of a Redeemer through the “seed” of the woman, Gen. 3:15.

Note: A new dispensation begins when there is a change in mankind’s responsibility before God → some “old” aspects are removed; some are left; and some “new” aspects are added! Primarily there is a new “Rule of Life” (A new “governing principle”).

II. “Conscience”:

A. “Revelation”: Genesis 4:1 – 8:14.

→ Time period = from the “fall” of mankind to the universal “Flood”.

B. “Responsibility”:

→ To do what is right by “human conscience”, Gen. 4:9

→ To be governed by the “restraint” of the Holy Spirit, Gen. 6:3;

→ To approach God by “blood sacrifice”, Gen. 4:2-5.

→ Note: Each of these “responsibilities” is a “A **New** “Rule of Life”!

C. “Failure”: Mankind failed the test!

→ Universal “Wickedness”!

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Gen. 6:5

D. “Judgment”: The Worldwide “Flood” in the day of Noah!

→ All mankind was destroyed except for the eight members of Noah’s family.

E. “Grace”:

→ God’s provision for man’s need in the person and work of Christ!

“But Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the LORD . . .” (Gen. 6:8)

→ God’s provision of deliverance through the “Ark” of safety!

III. “Human Government”:

A. “Revelation”: Genesis 8:15 – 11:9.

→ Time period = From the worldwide “Flood” to the call of “Abraham”.

B. “Responsibility”:

→ To do what is right by “human conscience”;

→ To be governed by the “restraint” of the Holy Spirit;

→ To approach God by “blood sacrifice”.

→ To “scatter” and “multiply” throughout earth, Gen. 9:7;

→ A **New** “Rule of Life” = To live by submission to “human government”;

To control violence and corruption by human

“authority” – capital punishment, Gen. 9:6.

C. “Failure”: Mankind failed the test!

“The people, instead of obeying God’s command to scatter and fill the earth, conceived the idea of staying together and building the ‘Tower of Babel’ to help achieve their aim. Fellowship with man replaced fellowship with God.” --Charles Ryrie

D. “Judgment”: The “scattering” of mankind by the “confusion” of human language, Gen. 11:5-9.

E. “Grace”: God’s provision for man’s need in the person and work of Christ!

“. . . God graciously intervened in that he did not utterly destroy the nations but chose to deal graciously with Abraham and his descendants.” --Charles Ryrie

IV. “Promise”:

A. “Revelation”: Genesis 11:10 – Exodus 18:27.

→ Time period = from the call of “Abraham” to the giving of the Law to Moses.

“The title ‘Promise’ comes from Hebrews 6:15 and 11:9 where it is said that Abraham obtained the ‘promise’ and sojourned in the ‘land of promise’. . . . Until this dispensation (“Promise”) all mankind had been directly related to God’s governing principles. Now God marked out one family and one nation and in them made a representative test of all.”

--Charles Ryrie

B. “Responsibility”:

- To do what is right by “human conscience”;
- To be governed by the “restraint” of the Holy Spirit;
- To approach God by “blood sacrifice”.
- To control human behavior by the authority of “human government”;

→ A new “Rule of Life”: To be governed by faith in the “Promises” of God!

“The special revelation which God gave to Abraham and his descendants for the fourth dispensation is recorded in:

- Genesis 12:1-3;*
- Genesis 13:14-17;*
- Genesis 15:7-21;*
- Genesis 17:1-22.*

God made personal promises to Abraham:

- He would bless him;*
- Make his name great;*
- Give him many physical descendants;*
- Make him the ‘father’ of a multitude of nations;*
- Give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession;*
- And bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him.*

God made national promises concerning Israel:

- He would bring Israel into existence as a nation;*
- Make it great;*
- Give Israel the land of Canaan forever;*
- And establish the Abrahamic Covenant with the nation as an everlasting covenant.*

God also made a universal promise:

--He would give blessing to all the families of the earth through Abraham's line of descent (the 'Redeemer' would come through Israel)."

--Renald Showers

"The responsibility of the patriarchs was simply to 'believe' and 'serve' God, and God gave them every material and spiritual provision to encourage them to do this. The Promised Land was theirs, and blessing was theirs as long as they remained in the land."

--Charles Ryrie

C. "Failure":

"Abraham and his descendants failed the test of the fourth dispensation. On several occasions they disobeyed God as the result of lapses of faith concerning the fulfillment of His promises.

--Abraham fathered Ishmael through Hagar. (Gen. 16:1-16)

--Twice he lied concerning his wife Sarah. (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18)

--Isaac lied concerning Rebekah. (Gen. 26:6-11)

--Jacob was a great deceiver. (Gen. 27:1-29)

--The Jews did not return from Egypt to Canaan after the famine of Joseph's time ended. Apparently they forgot that their destiny was related to the land of Canaan rather than to Egypt."

--R. Showers

D. "Judgment":

→ "Slavery" in Egypt.

"This failure brought divine judgment. Throughout their history the Jews have continued to have problems with Ishmael's descendants. Through time they were subjected to slavery and threatened with annihilation in Egypt."

--Renald Showers

--See: Exodus 1:7-22.

E. "Grace":

→ God's provision for man's need in the person and work of Christ!

→ God sent a "Deliverer" → "Moses" to bring the "Chosen People" out of slavery and into the "Promised Land"! (Exodus 3:1-10)

What Does This Mean For Us?

1. The Fourth Dispensation of “Promise” introduces the most important spiritual principle in the _____ of mankind’s _____ by God!

--“The _____ shall _____ by _____!”

- a. Genesis 15:6 →
- b. Romans 1:17; 4:3, 17-22 →
- c. Galatians 3:6, 11 →

2. The nature of a “_____” is foundational to Biblical _____:

--It is a legal “_____” that cannot be “_____”!
(Gal. 3:15)

--It is “unilateral” – dependent upon only one party in the agreement! This concept is _____ from our culture!
(Gen. 15:8-18)

3. The responsibility of the “Patriarchs” was to _____ God!

--Their choice _____ the whole _____!

--Their choice _____ their _____!

--Unbelief brings lasting _____!

a. “_____” →

--He was _____ by becoming “second-best”!

--He experienced an “_____” father!

--He was filled with lasting “_____” → “_____”!

(See: Heb. 12:15)

b. “_____” → “_____”.

--The “generational” _____!

--See: Gen. 28:8-9.

--Key: Current _____ - _____ conflict!