

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XII

November 28, 2010

The Seventh Dispensation: “KINGDOM”!

Our previous studies have given an overview of the first six Dispensations. Today we come to the seventh and final Dispensation, “The Kingdom”-- the Millennial reign of Christ!

1. “Innocence” →

(“Creation” to “Fall”)

2. “Conscience” →

(“Fall” to “Flood”)

3. “Human Government” →

(“Flood” to call of “Abraham”)

4. “Promise” →

(“Abraham” to “Sinai”)

5. “Law” →

(“Sinai” to “Pentecost”)

6. “Grace” →

(“Pentecost” to Christ’s
“Second Coming”)

7. “Kingdom”

(“Second Coming”
to the “Great
White Throne”)

A Dispensation is a distinguishable “economy” or “stage” in God’s progressive revelation of Himself and His sovereign “plan” for human history.

--Key: As we identify and understand the Dispensations, we can identify and understand God’s “Plan of the Ages” and have “The Divine Interpretation of Human History”! We can know “who” we are; “where” we fit into God’s unfolding plan, and “what” to expect and do in preparation for the future! (See: Dispensational Chart by Kenneth M. Sheppard -- provided in Session IX as an Appendix)

The Dispensation of the Kingdom: “The Righteous Reign of Christ”

A. “Revelation”:

1. Old Testament → The major “unilateral” covenants God made with Israel.

- a. The Abrahamic Covenant: Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-27; 22:17-18.
--A “land”, a “posterity”, a “ruler”, and a “spiritual blessing” promised!
- b. The Palestinian Covenant: Deut. 30:1-10.
--A “restoration” to the land and “occupation” of the land promised!
- c. The Davidic Covenant: II Sam. 7:16.
--A “ruler” for the throne of David promised!
- d. The New Covenant: Jer. 31:31-34.
--A means for “blessing” promised to Israel → the “forgiveness” of God!

2. New Testament →

- a. Gospels: Matt. 5-7; 19:28; 25:31-46; Lk. 1:32-33.
“He will be great and will be the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his Kingdom will have no end.” --Lk. 1:32-33
- b. Acts: Acts 3:19-21.
- c. Epistles: I Cor. 15:24-25; Eph. 1:10; Heb. 6:5.
- d. Revelation: Rev. 11:15; 19:15; 20:2-7.
“Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’” --Rev. 11:15

B. “Responsibility”:

- To obey God on the basis of “human conscience”;
- To obey God on the basis of “human government”;
- To obey God on the basis of the “theocratic rule of Christ”.

--**Note:** The restoration of the “Theocratic Kingdom” rule of God on earth will be the New Rule of Life for the seventh and final dispensation.

--**Note:** As in each previous dispensation, the crucial question will be, “Will mankind obey God on the basis of these ruling factors?”

--**Note:** As in each previous dispensation, God gave the possibility for “obedience” to His revealed will.

“The successive dispensations glorify God in several ways. First, they demonstrate that God is the sovereign Ruler throughout history in spite of Satan’s attempt to overthrow that rule and man’s rebellion against it.

The fact that God can hold man responsible to obey His different ways of administering His rule throughout history and can judge man for his failures to obey clearly demonstrates that God is sovereign through history. Second, the dispensations show how desperately man needs to submit to God's rule in order to have things right on earth. They display the disorder and tragedy which result from the rejection of God's rule. Third, the dispensations progressively move history toward the fulfillment of its God-intended climax."

–Renald Showers

C. "Failure":

*"Man will **fail** the test of the last dispensation. Some unsaved individuals will rebel against Christ's rule during His reign (Isa. 11:3-4; 29:20-21; Jer. 31:29-30). Others will not rebel outwardly, but they will chafe inwardly. They will despise the absolute, righteous rule of Christ, but will know better than to rebel outwardly. When the seventh dispensation ends and Satan is released from the abyss, these people will follow Satan in his last revolt against God's rule (Rev. 20:7-10).*

*"This **failure** of great multitudes of people in spite of the perfect government and exceptional conditions of the seventh dispensation will demonstrate that the ultimate cause of man's failure and rebellion throughout history **is not** his external environment and circumstances, but his own inward, sinful nature, which rejects the rule of God and **asserts self-rule**."*

–Renald Showers

D. "Judgment":

*"Man's failure in conjunction with the seventh dispensation will bring **God's judgment**. Those people who rebel outwardly during Christ's reign will be executed (Isa. 11:3-4; 29:20-21; Jer. 31:29-30). In addition, God will crush the huge revolt which will take place immediately after the seventh dispensation by sending **fire** to destroy the human rebels and casting Satan into the Lake of Fire for everlasting torment (Rev. 20:9-10)."*

–Renald Showers

E. "Grace":

--God will reverse the Consequences of Mankind's Rebellion.

"In the final 'dispensation of the fullness of times' (Eph. 1:9-10), God will glorify Himself by crushing Satan and his kingdom (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:1-3), restoring His own Kingdom rule to the earth through Jesus Christ (Rev. 11:15; 20:4-6), and reversing the tragic consequences of man's rebellion (Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:19-21)."

–Renald Showers

Major Chronological and Practical Facts Concerning the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ

I. Events Leading to the “Second Coming” of Jesus Christ.

A. Events in Heaven:

1. The “Bema” – the “Judgment Seat of Christ”, II Cor. 5:10.

After the Rapture of the Church, the “Bride” of Christ, all N. T. Believers will stand individually before Jesus Christ, not to be judged concerning salvation, but to be examined concerning faithful living. The Lord Jesus, who will judge perfectly and fairly, will give to each Believer “reward” for personal faithfulness, I Cor. 3:10-15. Christ will be glorified for what **He** has accomplished through each Christian, Eph. 2:10, and will bring eternal satisfaction to the Christian!

2. The “Marriage Supper of the Lamb”, Rev. 19:7-8.

After the “Bema” the Church, the “Bride” of Christ, will “**make herself ready,**” and “**clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean,**” for “**the marriage supper of the Lamb,**” Rev. 19:7. All members of the “Body of Christ” will become “**the Bride, the wife of the Lamb,**” Rev. 21:9.

B. Events on Earth:

1. The “Battle of Armageddon”, Rev. 19:11-21.

As the end of the Tribulation period approaches, Antichrist, the “man of sin”, will gather the forces of his “Western Federation” against the forces of the “East” or Orient in his effort to conquer the world. The battlefield where they will meet is on the plain of Esdraelon, around the mountains of Meggido, a valley 20 miles long and 14 miles wide.

“In the midst of the battle, the Lord Jesus Christ will return, and armies of heaven will conquer the armies of the earth (Rev. 19:11-21). The carnage will be unbelievable (Rev. 14:20; 19:17-18). . . . The outcome is certain – the Beast will be defeated and his armies captured. He and his false prophet-lieutenant will be thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever. Thus the Tribulation will close.”

--Charles C. Ryrie

2. The “Judgments” at the Second Coming of Christ, Matt. 25:31; Rev. 20:4.

“At the end of the Tribulation . . . the Old Testament and Tribulation saints will be raised at that time to inherit the kingdom (Rev. 20:4). At the Second Advent Christ will judge Jews and Gentiles. The Jews will be judged on the basis of their preparedness for His return (Matt. 25:1-13) and their faithfulness as stewards of the Word of God (Matt. 25:14-30). The saved Jews will enter the Millennial Kingdom (Matt 25:21), while the unsaved will be cast into ‘outer

darkness' (Matt. 25:30). Unbelieving Gentiles will be judged in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Kidron Valley, Zech. 14:4) regarding their treatment of the Jews (Joel 3:2; Matt. 25:40). A positive response would indicate their belief in Messiah; these will inherit the kingdom (Matt. 25:34), while the unbelieving will be turned away into 'everlasting punishment' (Matt. 25:46)."

--Paul Enns

II. A Description of the "Millennial Kingdom".

A. The Reign of Christ:

"When Christ returns to earth He will establish Himself as King in Jerusalem, sitting on the Throne of David (Luke 1:32-33). The unconditional covenants demand a literal, physical return of Christ to establish the Kingdom. . . . these covenants will be fulfilled as Israel is regathered from the nations (Matt. 24:31), converted (Zech. 12:10-14), and restored to the land under the rulership of her Messiah."

--Paul Enns

B. The Length of the Kingdom:

"Six times in Revelation 20:2-7 the length of the Millennium is stated to be 1,000 years. The repetition of this figure underscores both its literalness and importance. . . . There is no reason to reject the literal meaning of 1,000 as indicating the length of the Millennial reign of Christ."

--Charles C. Ryrie

C. The Type of the Kingdom's Government:

"The government of the Messianic, Millennial Kingdom will be a theocracy. This is the same type of government God used for Israel in O.T. times; only in the Millennium, the Lord Jesus Christ will personally and visibly reign over the affairs of all mankind (Dan. 7:14). His rule will be as a benevolent despot (Rev. 19:15). As a result, there will be perfect and complete justice for all, and sin will be immediately punished (Isa. 11:4; 65:20)."

--Charles C. Ryrie

D. The Conditions of the Kingdom:

"The conditions during the Millennium will depict a perfect environment physically and spiritually. It will be a time of . . .

--peace (Micah 4:2-4; Isa. 32:17-18;

--joy (Isa. 61:7, 10);

--comfort (Isa. 40:1-2);

--no poverty (Amos 9:13-15);

--or sickness (Isa. 35:5-6).

Because only the Believers will enter the Millennium, it will be a time of . . .

--righteousness (Matt. 25:37; Psalm 24:3-4);

--obedience (Jer. 31:33);

--holiness (Isa. 35:8);

--truth (Isa. 65:16);

--and fullness of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29)."

--Paul Enns

E. The Authority of the Kingdom:

*“**Christ** will rule as King (Isa. 9:3-7; 11:1-10), with **David** as regent (Jer. 33:15; 17, 21; Amos 9:11); nobles and governors will also rule (Isa. 32:1; Matt. 19:28; Luke 19:17).”*

--Paul Enns

“David will apparently be a regent in the Millennial Kingdom. A number of prophecies speak of David’s important place in the Kingdom (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 37:24-25). Apparently David, who with the other Old Testament believers will be resurrected at the Second Coming of Christ, will act as a prince under the authority of Christ, the King.

Authority over the Twelve Tribes of Israel will be vested in the hands of the 12 Apostles (Matt. 19:28). Other princes and nobles will likewise share in government duties (Isa. 32:1; Jer. 30:21). . . . The Church too will have a part in governing the earth (Rev. 5:10). Though many of the normal procedures of government will be carried out by subordinates, Christ will be King over all.”

--Charles C. Ryrie

F. The Subjects of the Kingdom:

*“The first subjects of the rule of Christ during the Kingdom will be the **Jews** and **Gentiles** who survive the Tribulation and who enter the Kingdom in earthly bodies. At the very beginning of the Millennium all the people on earth will be redeemed, for all unredeemed will have been judged at Christ’s return. Of course, babies will be born right away so that in a few years there will be many who will be of age to decide for themselves their own spiritual relation to the King. They will have to be subject to Him at least outwardly, but whether they give heart allegiance will be a matter of personal choice. All will have to accept Him as King; some will also accept Him as personal Savior. All of these people will be living in mortal bodies. Resurrected saints will, of course, have resurrected bodies, not subject to physical limitations. This also means they will not contribute to space, food, or governmental problems during the Millennium.”*

--Charles C. Ryrie

G. The Location of the King’s Throne:

“Jerusalem will be the center of the world and rule (Zech. 8:3), rising physically to reveal its prominence (Zech. 14:10). There will be topographical changes in Israel (Zech. 14:4, 8, 10).

--Paul Enns

“The city will be exalted (Zech. 14:10); it will be a place of great glory (Isa. 24:23); it will be the site of the Temple (Isa. 33:20), and the joy of the whole earth (Psalm 48:2). . . . and will never again need to fear for her safety (Isa. 26:1-4).

H. The Prosperity of the Kingdom:

--C. Ryrie

“The earth will be increasingly productive throughout the Millennium as wilderness and desert places become useful (Isa. 35:1-7). One harvest will be followed by another (Amos 9:14). Social needs and injustice will be eliminated (Psa 72:

12-13). The curse to which the earth was subjected when Adam sinned will be reversed, though not completely lifted until the end of the Millennium when death will be finally conquered.” --Charles C. Ryrie

I. The Peace of the Kingdom:

“Only the righteous will enter the Kingdom at its inauguration (Matt. 25:37), and those who ‘thirst after righteousness’ shall be filled (Matt. 5:6). . . . As a consequence of righteousness, the Millennium will be an era of peace. . . . the whole earth will be at peace (Isa. 2:4). One ramification of this will be the elimination of defense budgets which will release resources for other purposes.” --C. Ryrie

J. The Religious Practice of the Kingdom:

“Full knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth during the Millennium (Isa. 2:2-3). Apparently sacrifices will again be offered in the Temple which will be built and in operation during the Millennium (Ezek. 40-48). Premillennialists understand these sacrifices as a means of memorializing the death of Christ. Religious holidays will also be observed during the Millennium (Isa 46:1-15; Zech. 14:16).

--Charles C. Ryrie

III. Major Events at the End of the Millennium.

A. The Judgment of Satan:

“At the triumphant return of Christ, Satan is bound for 1,000 years and shut up in the abyss, no longer able to deceive anyone on earth for the duration of the Millennium (Rev. 20:2-3). . . . At the end of the Millennium Satan is released whereupon he deceives many people, leads a rebellion against God, is defeated and finally cast into the ‘Lake of Fire’ for eternity (Rev. 20:7-10).” --C. Ryrie

B. The Judgment of the “Great White Throne”:

“At the end of the Millennium the unsaved dead of all the ages are resurrected and judged at the Great White Throne. They will be condemned and cast into the Lake of Fire, their final abode (Rev. 20:11-15). The devil, the beast (the Antichrist), and the false prophet are also cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).” --Paul Enns

IV. The “Eternal State”:

“Following the Millennium, the heavens and earth are judged (II Pet. 3:10), because they were the domain of Satan’s rebellion against God. The eternal state, the abode of all redeemed (Heb. 12:22-24), will be ushered in (Rev. 21-22).” --P. Enns

Observation

“Why does there need to be an earthly Kingdom? Because He must be triumphant in the same arena where He was seemingly defeated. His rejection by the rulers of this world was on this earth (I Cor. 2:8). His exaltation must also be on this earth. And so it shall be when He comes again to rule this world in righteousness. He has waited long for His inheritance; soon He shall receive it!” --Charles C. Ryrie