

God's Plan for the Ages

Understanding the Dispensations

Lesson 6 – The Dispensation of Human Government

The Time The third dispensation extended from the Noahic Flood to the call of Abraham.

The Scripture The Scripture portion which covers this dispensation is Genesis 8:20-11:32.

1. Man's State at the Beginning

a. Noah and his family were _____ from the Flood.

After the great flood there were only eight people on the face of the earth: righteous Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives.

Genesis 6:8,9 – *Noah was a **just** man* (righteous)

Genesis 7:1 - *'for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.'*

Hebrew 11:7 - *became heir of the righteousness which is by **faith**.*

Noah responded to God's salvation in praise and worship to Him:

Genesis 8:20 – *"And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar."*

b. God promised Noah that mankind would never be _____ by a worldwide flood again.

We find in Genesis 8:21 God's promise that he would not smite every living thing again as he had done. This was ratified by a covenant, made by God with Noah and all generations that followed him that he would never again destroy all flesh with a flood. This covenant was unconditional, in that it was made by God alone and not dependent on man's actions or obedience.

God gave the rainbow as a sign of this covenant, a sign that continues to this day.

c. God assured Noah that the _____ and _____ would continue while the earth remained.

With such a change in the geography of the world and even the weather, Noah and his family would now have to adapt to their new environment. In Genesis 8:22 God told Noah and his family that there were certain things that they could always count on:

- The seasons
- Changes in weather
- Day and night

Even today we can see God's great faithfulness in the seasons and in the day-night cycle.

How long did God promise these things?

Does this promise hold true today?

d. God made _____ begin to fear man.

In Genesis 9:2 God tells us that He put a "fear" and a "dread" of man into every animal, giving him a new kind of authority over the animal kingdom. During the Dispensation of Innocence, when God placed man in the Garden of Eden, there was no need for such authority because animals were as docile and as calm and quiet as they could be. But after the Fall, when man was cursed, when the ground was cursed, when the animal kingdom was cursed, men had to protect themselves from wild, ferocious animals. They were no match for them. In this new dispensation, God gave into the hands of man the authority over the animal kingdom.

e. Man was given permission to _____ animals, provided they handled them correctly.

Man could now eat of any animal, in the same manner as they did plants, but it must not have the blood still in it, for the blood is representative of life. (Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:11)

2. Man's Responsibility

a. Man was to multiply and _____ the earth.

In Genesis 8:17 we read about all of the animals that were kept safe on the ark. God's plan for these creatures was that they should "*breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.*" God desired the same thing for mankind.

Genesis 9:1 – replenish (to fill) 9:7 – to bring forth abundantly

God wanted mankind to have children, multiply, spread out and repopulate the earth. Compare this with Genesis 1 :28

b. Man was to enact _____ for murderers.

Human life is something that God places great value upon.

Why? Because man is made in His image (likeness) Genesis 1:26,27

God therefore ordained capital punishment for murderers (Genesis 9:5-6).

Capital punishment requires a human government agency to investigate the murder, and then apprehend and try the murderer, and administer the sentence of execution.

God commanded that the murderer's blood be shed by mankind.

Thus, when God ordained capital punishment, He thereby instituted human government as a further restraint against the lawless rebellion of mankind.

In Romans 13:1-7 the Apostle Paul indicated that human governmental authority derives its existence from God, that it was ordained for the purpose of restraining evil, and that it functions as the minister of God when it administers capital punishment. Human government, then, with its authority to administer capital punishment, was the new ruling factor that God instituted for the third dispensation.

3. Man's Failure

a. Noah failed to show _____ restraint and thus brought shame upon himself (Genesis 9:20-24).

Noah was guilty of a three-fold sin.

- He was guilty of drunkenness. Drunkenness is a sin.
- His nakedness was related to the sin of immorality, and immorality and drunkenness often go hand in hand.
- Noah's drunkenness incapacitated him to discharge the obligation of authority which God placed upon him.

b. Ham displayed a _____ and rebellious attitude toward his father bringing a curse upon his family line. (Genesis 9:25)

The sin of Ham was not just seeing his father naked but making fun of his father. There was evidence of an absolute lack of parental respect in relation to the sad condition in which Noah was found.

c. The generation that followed _____ against God by building a city and tower for their own glory. (Genesis 11:1-9)

Nimrod, the self-appointed 'king' (Genesis 10:8-9), instigated the building of Babel and its tower. This was to make a name for themselves, not to glorify God and was in disobedience to God's command to spread out.

4. God's Judgment

God did what they refused to do. He said, "*Scatter, multiply, and replenish the earth.*" They said, "*No.*" God said, "*I'll do it for you.*" The manner in which He did it was to confuse their language so that they could not understand one another until they came in contact with other individuals who spoke the same language which they spoke forming groups. Some went in this direction; some went in another direction, and God's purpose and plan was fulfilled.

5. God's Grace

In every dispensation we see a manifestation of the grace of God, and we find several hints of His compassion in the midst of His judgment:

- a) **The _____ on Shem (Genesis 9:26,27, 10:21)** Notice the word Eber. It is the contracted form of the word Hebrew. God chose Shem's line through which Abraham and his descendants who became the Hebrew race through whom came the revelation of God in its pure form.
- b) **The _____ of the nations** was a deliberate act on the part of God and it was for a special purpose. We find the reason when Paul preached his sermon on Mars Hill in Acts 17:26 and 27:
*"and hath **determined the times before appointed**, and **the bounds of their habitation**; That they **should seek the Lord**, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:"*

Conclusion

Once again, as we bring a discussion of a dispensation to a close, we are reminded that man is bent on failure. Here was a nation beginning anew and afresh on an earth that was cleansed, on an earth that was fresh, and continued a little less than five hundred years and messed it up again. All of this brings us to a realization that our hope lies in the Lord Jesus Christ and in no other. That's the reason we don't labour for a better world. There won't be one, but we should labour that men might know the Lord Who can make them better, and that makes a difference