

THE DISPENSATIONS
FALL, 2020
“THE DISPENSATION OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT”
SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

**I. THE FAILURE OF CONSCIENCE TO BRING MAN INTO A
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

A. *The dispensation of conscience considers the time immediately following the fall of man and his expulsion from the Garden of Eden to the time of the judgment of the flood due to man’s abject failure to live obediently by his conscience to the few rules given. No new expectations beyond the original creation mandates and subsequent rulings had been given. The stewardship he knew about coming from their parents were those given to the parents in the Garden of Eden. From the Scriptures we do not find that any new stewardship was handed down to the offspring. But we can see that in addition to the creation mandate there were observations that can be made from the natural world and its operation that must have taught men something. It is this memory of the duty of man from the creation mandate, his observable contact with the natural world, his expulsion from his home, the temple of God in Eden, into the wilderness and the lack of any new stewardship rules given to him, he was given liberty to live by his conscience not rules. By review, we can gain this understanding from the stewardship originally given him that would have informed his conscience to live righteously:*

THE CREATION MANDATE

1. *Reproduction naturally with male and female – Be fruitful and multiply after your own kind*
2. *Land stewardship, the management of the land in a sustainable way to continue the food provision for all creatures over whom man had dominion. The other created beings of every living environment shared the vegetation of the earth with mankind. His dominion duty in part meant keeping the earth sustainable so that all would be provided for in this interdependent, interactive, symbiotic relationship that made it all very good. This is the glory of God!*
3. *Leadership dominion over the other creatures but not human beings.*

4. *Though all the other vegetation is available to us for food and medicine, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are gone from our reach. The garden and all the rules that applied to it are gone to us. We cannot tend the garden. It will be a memory to our parents and it will become one to their children IF they explained what the garden was like. No doubt the desire for some kind of utopia or idealized kingdom came into the mind of at least the first offspring after the fall.*

OBSERVATIONS AND JUDGMENT PRINCIPLES FROM THE FALL

1. *Death comes to all beings; murder is wrong; vengeance is a possibility when someone close to you is killed by another human.*
2. *There is a God but He is angry with humans and makes no contact*
3. *God seems to want sacrifices from humans in order to have any contact with Him*
4. *Sexual relationships between a man and a woman produce children; the bond between a man and his wife or a woman and her husband is inviolable; birth for the woman is painful*
5. *The world around us provides resources that can be used to build or create things.*
6. *The Garden of Eden or the temple area is unavailable to us and therefore contact with God is not likely since we can't get there*
7. *Some men knew God and had not only contact with God but walked with Him. Some men called upon the name of the LORD but we do not have a record of what they did or how they did it.*
8. *In trying to grow food from the earth, the ground grows things I do not want it to grow.*
9. *Violence is harmful or deadly. Violence and wickedness are growing stronger every day as are the Nephilim. The mighty ones are taking the daughters of men for themselves and a great wickedness is coming from it*
10. *As time goes by things mature to fruitfulness; time is marked by day and night; the day is dominated by the sun and an abundance of light; the night is marked by the moon and by the stars which all seem to move in a pattern.*
11. *We do not know what effect the download of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had on the mind, heart,*

spirit, or conscience of the man but it seems it had not helped him to make wise decisions in keeping with his being in the image of God. His conscience alone was not seeking to restore the relationship to God with the noted exceptions of those who called on the name of the Lord and the one, Enoch, who walked with God, whatever that means. We can know it meant he had faith as we find him mentioned in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11. As a matter of fact, it is relation to Enoch's pleasing walk with God that the description of pleasing God is found:

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (NKJV) Once again we see the principal that we are saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest a human being dare boast in what he has done.

- 12. God had left the responsibility for restoration of the created relationship with the free will of man governed by his conscience and there was such an abject failure that judgment was sure to happen.*

B. But there was no new recorded "rules of the house", no new dispensation, given under that time. Man wanted to be his own boss and God was allowing him to see that he had not been created to be independent of his creator. We are not free or alone in this cosmos.

C. It would take the judgment of the flood for God to renew the rules of the house. After the destruction of the flood and the gracious rescue of 8 souls God would issue new rules of the house, a new dispensation.

II. THE DISPENSATION OF CIVIL OR HUMAN GOVERNMENT

A. The destruction of the flood was complete. Nothing except what was on the ark (and perhaps the creatures made for the waters) survived its power and judgment. That which survived would be the basis for a reboot of God's created earth.

B. God issued the new dispensation to Noah and it contained these terms (Genesis 9:1-17):

- 1. Be fruitful and multiply; replenish the earth*
- 2. The animals, for whom you once provided and dominated, will now be afraid of you. This was the creation of a new human/animal relationship.*

3. *A major dietary changed from vegetarian to omnivorous: they could eat anything that moved!*
 4. *There was a very serious caution added to the dietary permission: We cannot eat blood for the life of the flesh is in the blood. We are to avoid eating it with all our being. We are given permission to eat the flesh but we must drain it of its life before we do.*
 5. *Adding to the caution regarding blood, we are commanded, with severe penalty, to not shed human blood. To the one who dares to kill another human comes the penalty of the forfeiture of his own life. This warning includes animals. Animals are forbidden at the peril of the loss of their own lives from killing human beings.*
 6. *This warning is given in light of man's being created in the image of God*
 7. *Logically, it follows, that there must some determinant of guilt established for the one who kills another human. That would logically involve some council or court to declare it. This is seen as the basis of human government.*
 8. *But there would have to be some standard for judgment, some rule, some law before a council could decide the guilt and therefor the fate of the one who had taken another's life. Conscience alone had failed already but that was the only determining factor given by man. Man is now getting the opportunity to govern not only himself (conscience) but the guilt of another.*
 9. *Along with the commands, we need to consider the promises made by this covenant-keeping God. In Genesis 3:15 He had promised a deliverer. God does not change His promises, so this promise is still in effect and is a carry over from the previous dispensations. Additionally, God now promises He will never destroy the earth by a flood again and gives the rainbow as the proof of this covenant He has just made. When we see the rainbow it is to remind us of our responsibility to reproduce, eat responsibly and avoid eating blood.*
- C. *An additional element of civil government is added due to the failure of the incident at what would be called Babel.*
1. *Man was obedient to the command to be fruitful and multiply. Husbands and wives were creating families; their children were creating additional families; they were gathering together in tribal groups of the members of the same family; the children within the tribes were having more children until there would be*

- enough in the family of a patriarch to approach nation status. Family government had become tribal government and tribal had to become national government. What are the rules or applications of know rules that would be operational for the national level?*
- 2. Man was not obedient however to the command to replenish the earth. There was a group harmony going on with the various tribal groups from the sons of Noah. They had one language and since language coupled with environment helps to determine culture, they were unified in language, culture and appreciation for the lands they were occupying. Rather than spread out to fill the earth they stayed together in a same culture huddle.*
 - 3. Additionally, seeing the power of what they could do in a unified state they became proud in their abilities and their culture. Rather than spread out, when they came upon the valley of Shinar they established a unified compound and determined to travel no further. They would create there a new city, a new advanced culture and create a name for themselves. Now their rebellion was complete. They would go no further around the earth. This would be their new temple to themselves.*
 - 4. They were declaring their independence from God AND the kingdom of heaven, the angels who had brought about the judgment that had destroyed the previous earth in the flood.*
 - 5. God's judgment on their disobedience was to confuse the language so they could not speak understandably with one another. This would prevent further planning in the unified way.*
 - 6. Additionally, HE spread them out across the earth. From the description given He is the one involved in spreading them out, not a slow immigration of people from one location to another eventually over the years. Acts 17:26-27 tells us that he set the boundaries for their nations, as well as the time of their ascendancy and decline for the purpose of them seeking after Him. So He moved them to the lands that they were to set up their nations.*
 - 7. Deut 32:7-8 tells us that He divided the nations and appointed guides for them from the sons of God (the divine council) to teach them truth, how to come back to God and the ways of God. We learn what those ways were from Psalm 82:1-4. We learn there that the knowledge of these rules of the house were to be passed*

- down from the sons of God to the nation over whom they were given charge. We derive from God's criticism these principles:*
- a. There was to be just judging. To be just and to act justly one must know what is just so they must have had some laws, rules or principles that people knew about in order to be judged by them*
 - b. They were to show no partiality to the wicked. Once again their cannot be wicked folk unless there is something established as righteous to be departed from or to twist. There was to be no partiality shown.*
 - c. They were to defend the poor and the fatherless. This implies some party was seeking to harm the poor and the fatherless. That also implies that oppression was taking place. Oppression necessarily implies some knowledge that something was violated.*
 - d. The afflicted and needy needed justice done for them. This implies that someone had a working knowledge of what was and was not just.*
 - e. They were to deliver the poor and needy. The poor and needy were being harassed by some party. One would have to know the rules to know that harassment of some kind in violation of the law in some place, in this case it was the wicked. To be wicked you must know what the law is from which you are departing.*
 - f. They were supposed to have taught them the Word of God. Instead the people were ignorant and without understanding, walking around in darkness.*
 - g. We conclude that even if we do not know the specifics we can see that they were still working by their free will violating their own conscience but authorities were put in place to govern them on principles of right and wrong as revealed by what they were not doing. Governments were established to make applications in each culture of the basic rules set down by God's Word.*
 - h. These laws written on the conscience and maintained by human government have their beginning here in this dispensation.*

II. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE FAILURE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

- A. This dispensation continues through to this day. We are presently in the age or times of the Gentiles. Gentile nations are maintaining**

rule of the world and will do so, according to the prophecies found in Daniel, until Christ's kingdom comes and crushes all of them at His second coming.

B. It has been a failure of conquest, murder, deceit, theft, rape, violence, captivity, human trafficking, slavery, pride, arrogance, and many other atrocities. It is humanized with the images of Babylon, the harlot, the mother of all abominations and harlots.