

Lesson Four — Basic Distinctions Between...

Day One — Eternity and Time, Ages and Dispensations

Day Two — Heavenly and Earthly Realms

Day Three — Old and New Testaments, Part I

Day Four — Old and New Testaments, Part II

Day Five — Gentile, Jew, Christian

In the past few weeks we have seen the foundational timeline given at the beginning of God's Word, and how God added detailed information to this initial and skeletal foundation. We have also begun to realize that one of the main ways of God revealing detailed information to His people is through the use of types and antitypes, i.e., people, things and events seen in history (types), which point to people, things or events in the future (antitypes). As we continue our study this week, we need to understand some basic distinctions and divisions which are necessary to grasp if one is to correctly understand prophecy. Then in the final three weeks we will begin to delve into the various types (even the ones we have previously only glimpsed) and really begin to see how God's Word of prophecy fits together so intricately. It's all so exciting!

This week we need to clearly understand some *basic distinctions*, which are clearly made within God's Word. (Please notice the distinctions we will be making in each day's study in the list above.) The lack of making proper distinctions in these areas brings about incorrect interpretation in many areas of Scripture—the area of prophecy being the issue at hand. And really, as you will see this week, these very basic distinctions are *easily* seen in Scripture.

Please continue to pray for more and more insight and understanding. As you study, ask God to give to you His Spirit in full measure. May the Holy Spirit be your Guide and Teacher.

Let's begin.

Day One — Eternity and Time, Ages and Dispensations

As previously seen, the foundation of Scripture (Gen. 1:1-2:3) is laid out in such a way so as to provide the focus on a seven-day structure of time (seven 24-hour days) in the type, pointing to the span of *time* from Genesis to Revelation (seven 1,000-year days) in the antitype. But within the first two verses ages are also

seen. Time, as we know it, apparently began in 1:3 and will continue, as we know it, until the end of the Messianic Era, the age (singular) of the ages. At that point, the ages (plural) of the ages will begin. From comparing Scripture with Scripture we can know that:

- In eternity past, God created the universe perfectly (Gen. 1:1; *cf.* Isa. 45:18). This began the ages.
- In an age past, a subsequent ruin of a province within God's Universe took place (Gen. 1:2; *cf.* Ezek. 28:15-18). Satan and a third of his host of angels rebelled against God; and due to this rebellion, the earth and the heavens which surround the earth fell into ruin (Ezek. 28:18).
- When time began there was a six-day period (six twenty-four hour periods) of restoring the ruin, with man being created on the sixth day, for the purpose of ruling in Satan's stead (Gen. 1:3-31).
- Then, following the sixth day, on the seventh day, there was a day of rest (Gen. 2:1-3).

Keep these things in mind while looking at the chart on the next page. Let's study through this chart while referring to the notes below.

The first part of the chart speaks for itself — there is a simple division between time (as we know it), and the ages. But the *focus* of Scripture is within the scope of time, to be sure, with the ages only being mentioned to a degree that we can understand how time fits into these ages.

Now, let's look at the second part of the chart. You can see that *dispensations* fit into ages. Ages and dispensations are *not* one in the same, but different and distinct.

The English word for *age* is usually translated from the Greek word *aion*¹. In a simple statement, the singular form of this word refers to *a long period of time*, which has a beginning and an ending.

The English word *dispensation* is taken from the Greek word *oikonomia*. The word has to do with *household management*, and in Scripture, essentially it refers to *those put in charge of managing God's house*. (This is an important concept to grasp, so as not to be swayed into incorrect doctrine.)

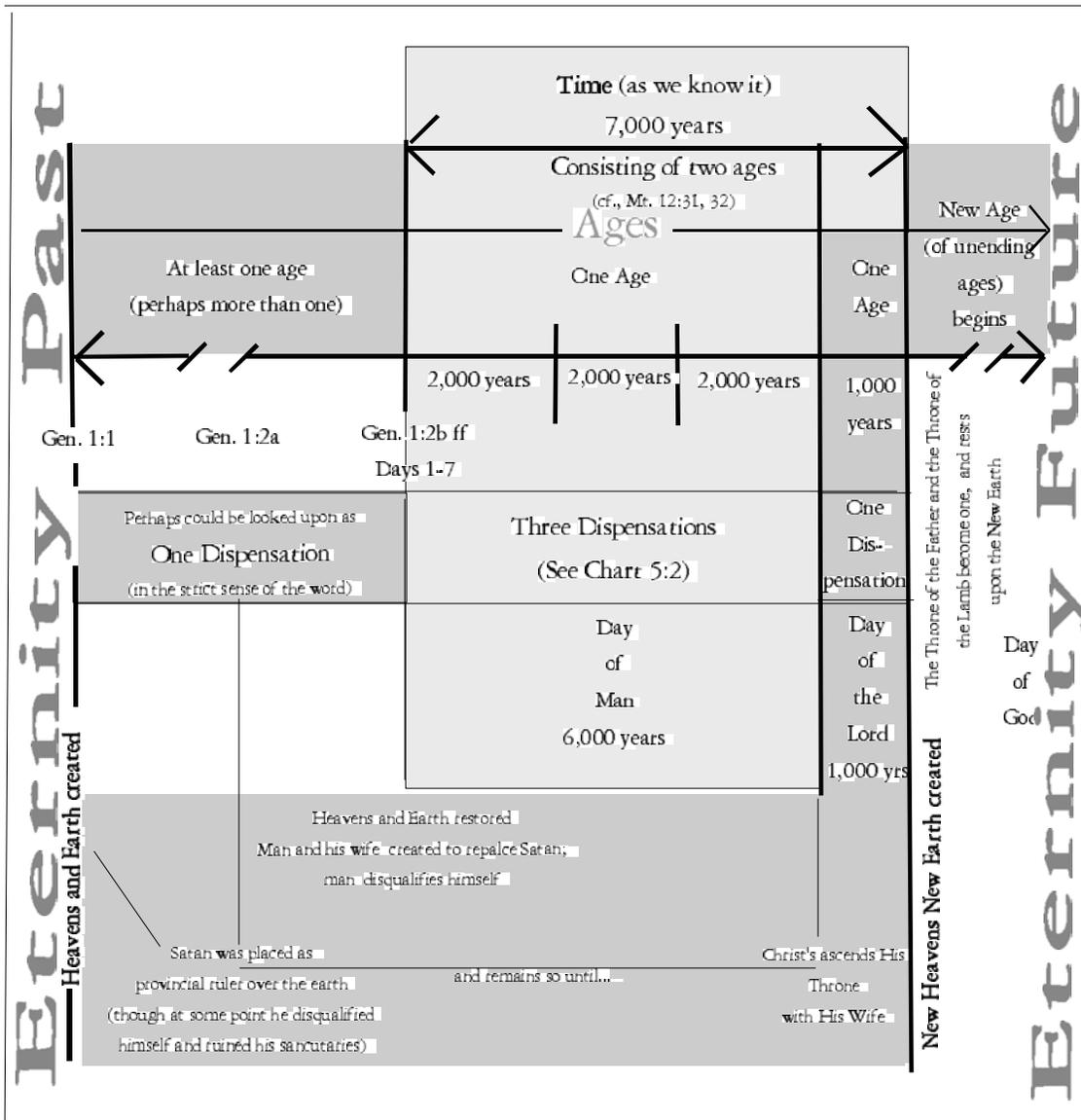
You can see that there are to be perhaps as many as five dispensations, which are covered throughout the whole of the Bible, from Genesis 1:1 forward, excluding the past and future ages. Look at the first dispensation on the left side of the chart. This deals with the period wherein Satan had been created and placed as provincial ruler over a host of angels who ruled over the earth. At some point within this period we know that Satan and a third of his angels rebelled and lost their right to continue in rulership. (The remaining two-thirds of Satan original host, who did not follow him in the rebellion, apparently encircle God's Throne in the recesses of the North and do His bidding with respect to His people on earth.) Then, at some point in this period (about 6,000 years ago) man was created to rule in Satan's place. And while three dispensations transpire within these present 6,000 years, Satan continues to rule from the heavens over the earth. In this respect, you would not see Satan's dispensation coming to an end until the Day of Man comes to a close and the Day of the Lord begins. It is during the Day of the Lord that the final dispensation transpires.

Since making distinctions in these areas is so important to understanding prophecy, for the remainder of the day's study, we will read through an article in the Appendix entitled AGES AND DISPENSATIONS. In studying through the article, you should come to a good grasp of these distinctions, which is necessary for a correct understanding of prophecy. Please take the time to do that now.

See you tomorrow.

¹ To see how the Greek word *aion* is used in the New Testament, refer to the page in the Appendix entitled ETERNITY — IS IT ETERNAL OR AGE-LASTING. You might also look up the noun form of the definition in the New Testament Lexicon in the Appendix <165> *aion*, as well as the adjective form <166> *aionios*.

Chart 5:1



Day Two — Heavenly and Earthly Realms

Today we are going to note distinctions between the heavenly and earthly realms. In the end, you may wonder at how this is so easy to see, and how important it is in the overall scope of prophecy. Please begin your day of study in prayer.

Let's go back again to the very first section of the Bible.

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Write down the two realms mentioned in this very first verse in the whole Bible.

From previous study, hopefully you remember that Satan and his fallen angels presently rule over the earth. But from where do they rule? Are they ruling *from the earth* or *from the heavens above the earth*? The following passages are not the only places in Scripture that give the answer, but these particular passages state the fact plainly enough.

Daniel 4

26b ...that it is Heaven that rules.

In the lecture for Lesson Two, we looked closely at the following verse:

Ephesians 6

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

From where does this group of angels rule?

Now we will look to see over what domain these fallen angels rule:²

II Corinthians 4

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

John 12

31 "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out...

² This subject is covered in more detail in the study UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE — BIBLICAL SURVEY, Lesson Four.

John 14

30 “I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

John 16

...11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

Acts 26

18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’

According to these passages, over what do the fallen angels rule?

Even now Satan and his angels are ruling from the heavenly realm over the earth. (Of course there are heavens beyond that which Satan and his angels have control. The heavens from which these fallen angels exercise control are the heavens that have to do with the earth, not the heavens extending throughout the universe. This in itself is an important distinction to make!)

We have already seen that Satan’s rebellion, as the Scriptures state, his sanctuaries (plural) became profaned (or desecrated), which would refer to both realms of his domain — the earth and the heavens that surround the earth (Ezek. 28:18; Isa. 14:12-14; *cf.* Gen. 1:2)).

Both realms, heavenly and earthly, are mentioned in the creation of eternity past — God created *the heavens and the earth* (Gen. 1:1). And *subsequent* to the mention of this in this opening verse of Scripture, we can find information dealing with His creating *things to fill both of these realms*. In the passages printed below, the Apostle Paul states some of the details. (These are not the only places this information can be seen in Scripture, but Paul states it so succinctly here.)

Colossians 1

16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created by Him and for Him...

Paul tells us that God created things *in* both of these two realms. In this verse (as well as Gen. 1:1) *with respect to creation*, which realm is mentioned first?

Paul states clearly what God created within these two realms. What does Paul clearly say was created within the two realms?

Let’s notice the obvious — What did God create *in* the heavens?

Are these things the *invisible* or the *visible*? (I am only asking the obvious in order to draw attention to it!)

Then what did God create *on* the earth?

Are these things the *invisible* or the *visible*?

Now continuing a few verses further down in the passage —

Colossians 1

...20 and through Him [Jesus] to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Now, *in the reconciliation*, which realm is mentioned first?

Subsequent to the mention of these things created in both realms in v. 16, according to v. 20 what things are to be reconciled through the blood of Christ *on the earth*?

What things are to be reconciled through the blood of Christ *in the heavens*?

From what we know about Satan's rebellion, what do you think is the reason for *things* in *both* realms needing reconciliation?

The fact that both sets of created things — *visible* and *invisible* thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities — need to be reconciled to God, reveals that at a point in time past, both realms of authority had fallen out of perfect accord with God, resulting in the need for a reconciliation to take place in both realms. And according to Colossians 1:20, both realms *are reconciled* through the blood of Christ, though *time* must run its course to bring us to *the realization* of this reconciliation. Notice how Paul states things:

Ephesians 1

8 ... In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.

How is this passage similar to the one we studied in Colossians?

What added facts can you draw from the Ephesians passage?

According to this passage in Ephesians chapter one, in the fullness of time, what two things will be summed up in Christ?

Let's look at this from another perspective:

Hebrews 2

5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU REMEMBEREST HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU ART CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? 7 "THOU HAST MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; THOU HAST CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAST APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS; 8 THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. 9 But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Write out what this passage is essentially saying about Jesus Christ. Note the time frame mentioned in v. 5.

A little further down in this passage it becomes clear that only mankind has the means of redemption, not angels. Read what the author goes on to say —

Hebrews 2

14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He [Jesus] Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

To whom does God not give help?

To whom does God give help?

Let's put all of this together in the most succinct word picture:

In the beginning, God *created* the heavens (mentioned first) and the earth (Gen. 1:1); thereafter, the earth fell into a formless and void condition, and the heavens which surround the earth had become darkened (Gen. 1:2; cf. Isa. 45:7). The prophet Isaiah gives very specific information — that God did not *create* the

earth in a formless state, but *fashioned* the earth (from its formless state) in order for it to be inhabited by men (Isa. 45:18). And both the Prophet Isaiah and the Prophet Ezekiel reveal the reason for the earth coming into this state — Lucifer, the one created to rule over this domain rebelled, taking a portion of his host of angels in the rebellion. Due to this rebellion, Satan's sanctuaries become desecrated (compare Ezek. 28:15-18a with Isa. 14:12-14). Six-thousand years ago, God took six days to restore the ruined creation (Gen. 1:3-31), and on the sixth day, He created man to rule in Satan's place (Gen. 1:26-28). Then God rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3).

A *very short time* after the man was created and the woman taken from the man's body and formed to be his helpmate, the woman was deceived (at the hand of Satan [Gen. 3]), and the man, through making a choice to enter into sin and death, became disqualified to rule. These events allowed Satan to maintain his position as ruler over the earth — for the time being, even through to the present.

Immediately after man's fall, however, a promise for a Redeemer had been given. The Seed of the woman would crush the head of the seed of Satan. Through Christ's blood (Christ, Who is the seed of the woman), *the visible* thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities on the earth, as well as *the invisible* thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities in the heavens will have been reconciled to God (Gen. 3:15; Col. 1:16, 20). Through Christ's blood, man has been placed back in the position for which he was created — looking forward to rulership. But due to man's sin and according to the pattern set forth at the beginning of Scripture — a pattern showing how God restores a ruined creation — God will again take six days to restore man and his ruined sanctuaries — the earth and the heavens which surrounds the earth, only this time, a 1,000 years will be counted as a day.

In the end, *both realms* — the earth and the heavens (and the things *in* both realms — visible and invisible thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities, respectively) will have been reconciled. All of this is the subject which will be covered in the next two days of study.

Tomorrow and the next day, we will see how God deals with both of these realms in the Old and New Testaments. And in order to understand some of the distinctions between the Old and New Testaments, this distinction (between the heavenly and earthly realms) needs to be understood.

Have a good day.

Day Three — Old and New Testaments, Part I

In the past two days we have looked at basic distinctions concerning time and eternity, ages and dispensations, and we have glimpsed the distinction between the heavenly and earthly realms of this province of God's Universal Kingdom. Now we come to another area of distinction that needs to be understood — a distinction between the Old and New Testaments. For the next two days we are going to be looking at a portion of the distinctions between the Old and New.

For our purposes in this study and in *the most simple of terms*, we need to keep in mind that the Old Testament deals primarily with the earthly realm, and the New deals primarily with the heavenly. And it can be easily seen throughout the Old Testament that the earthly land of Israel is the focus of the writings; and throughout the New Testament the heavenly land is the focus of the writings.

Having said that, it can also be seen that the Old Testament is not without glimpses of the heavenly realm; and vice-versa. It could only be so, since the Old moves into the New and neither can be fully understood apart from the other. Actually it can be said that there is nothing in the New that has not been initially introduced in the Old in some fashion or form.

As we look at these things, please do a quick review of what you learned yesterday from Colossians 1:16, 20. Remember the point the text made. While the heavens are mentioned first in the creation, the earth is mentioned first in the restoration. Not only do we see this clearly in Colossians, but we can also see this in the opening chapter of the Bible. Genesis 1:1 states that *in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*. (Notice the order.) But as God moves into the restoration of what had become the formless earth and the darkened heavens (Gen. 1:2ff), He spends the first three days dealing with the earth. Only in day four does He begin to bring light to shine forth from the heavens. Hence, the earth is dealt with first *in the restoration*, followed by the heavens. The perfect pattern has been set, and God will not change the pattern for He is immutable.

(In the way of a side: It is interesting to note that after the complete seven 1,000 year-period days there is a creation of *a new heavens and new earth*; the same order is maintained as in the original creation. (And wouldn't it be so?) The new heavens will be created first, followed by the creation of a new earth. We can see this from the writings of Peter, as he deals with the future — seventh day (seventh-thousandth year).

II Peter 3

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Here, Peter deals with the seventh-thousandth year, calling it the “Day of the Lord.” Peter states clearly how this Day will begin — it comes like a thief (*cf.* I Thes. 5:1-5); he also clearly states how it will end, 1,000 years later — the heavens and the elements within the heavens (the sun, moon, stars) will pass away with a roar and intense heat; and the earth will be burned up.

Then Peter moves into *the creation* (not the restoration) of a *new heavens and earth* in which righteousness dwells, which Peter refers to as “the day of God.”

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

We can easily see that the heavens are always mentioned first in creation; and the earth is always dealt with first in the restoration.)

What we have just learned will hold true as we study the distinctions between the Old and New Testaments. Within the following list of Scriptures there are a few passages wherein one can get glimpses of both realms — earthly and heavenly, but notice which realm the focus is on and make appropriate notes as you answer the questions.

Genesis 1

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created

them. 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Does this Old Testament passage have to do with earthly land or heavenly?

Genesis 12

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Does this Old Testament passage have to do with earthly land or heavenly?

(I know the answers to these simple questions are obvious, but the point needs to be made for our study. Please hang with me here.)

Genesis 14

17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tenth of all.

21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.” 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’

Does this Old Testament passage have to do with earthly land or heavenly?

Genesis 15

7 And He said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” 8 And he said, “O Lord GOD, how may I know that I shall possess it?”

...18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

Does this Old Testament passage have to do with earthly land or heavenly?

Genesis 22

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing, and

have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Does this Old Testament passage have to do with earthly land or heavenly?

Exodus 15

13 “In Thy lovingkindness Thou hast led the people whom Thou hast redeemed; In Thy strength Thou hast guided them to Thy holy habitation... 17 Thou wilt bring them and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, The place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thy dwelling, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.

Does this Old Testament passage have to do with earthly land or heavenly?

Exodus 19

3 And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”

This passage refers to the theocracy in which God was preparing to establish *on the earth* through Israel. The word *theocracy* refers to the government over the earth wherein God is the King/Ruler. With this type of Rulership over the earth in mind, go back and underline the phrase *a kingdom of priests, a holy nation*, in v. 6.

What is God saying to the Children of Israel in this passage? How does it seem He will set up His Theocracy?

It was within the land of promise that God was going to set up His Theocracy. And within this land the Children of Israel would live, receive their inheritance, and find rest from their enemies in an earthly land. But according to this passage in Exodus, what was the condition upon which they would be part of the kingdom of priests (v. 5)?

The next several passages deal with three things, which are somewhat interchangeable in idea: *the land* (earthly), *the inheritance* (which is the land), and *the rest* (which the people of God were to have in the land). While reading these passages, underline the words *land*, *inheritance* and *rest*, as you come to them.

Deuteronomy 4

37 “Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, 38 driving out from before you

nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today.

Deuteronomy 6

22 ‘Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; 23 and He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.’

Deuteronomy 25

19 “Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

Joshua 1

13 “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God gives you rest, and will give you this land.’

Joshua 11

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.

NOTES:

Do these Old Testament passages have to do with earthly land or heavenly?

Do these passages have to do with *earthly* inheritance or a *heavenly* inheritance?

We could peruse the complete Old Testament and see that the Old Testament mainly deals with an *earthly* Theocracy, a Theocracy upon the earth, with Him dwelling among His people. God had drawn out a people for Himself, and had deeded an earthly piece of real estate to them — the Promised Land. And this is the land wherein a kingdom (a Theocracy) was to be set up — the earthly Theocratic kingdom. But look back at the beginning section of your homework in Day Two. We dealt with two verses in Colossians chapter one (vv. 16, 20) that reveal rulership in two distinct realms — earthly and heavenly. And as we have seen today, the earthly is largely dealt with in the Old Testament; and, as we will see tomorrow, the heavenly is largely dealt with in the New.

See you tomorrow.

Day Four — Old and New Testaments, Part II

Yesterday we looked at a handful of passages which reveal that the Old Testament deals mainly with the earthly realm. But oh, we could have perused innumerable passage from Genesis to Malachi revealing the same focus, for that is the focus of the Old Testament — an earthly land deeded to Abraham’s descendants

wherein an earthly Theocracy was to be set up. And within this earthly land God's people were to receive an earthly inheritance wherein they would be able to experience rest from their enemies.

However, in a respect, this earthly Theocracy was only to point to a Theocracy which would eventually emanate from the heavens over the earth.

Today we are going to look into New Testament passages wherein God deals with *the kingdom of the heavens*. Just to make sure that you see it plainly, we'll again answer the simple question of each passage — "Does this passage deal with the earthly or heavenly?" As we look at these things, please remember what God taught Nebuchadnezzar through the Prophet Daniel. This earthly king had something to learn (which we learned in Day Two of this week's study). Simply stated, it is *the heavens that rule* over any physical domain.

Daniel 4

26b ...that it is Heaven that rules.

In other words, rulership ultimately emanates from the heavens over the earth. We can see this very clearly from Paul's epistle to the Church at Ephesus.

Ephesians 6

11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

And while God dealt with the earthly in the Old Testament, it is very evident that eventually He was going to deal with the rulership which emanates from the heavens. For example, Abraham knew that the promises given to him by God had to do with heavenly blessings as well as earthly and he looked forward to the heavenly city (*cf.* Gen. 14:19, 20; 22:15-17; Heb. 11:9, 10).

So that is where Scripture takes us when we come to the opening pages of the New Testament. Now God is going to begin to deal specifically with the kingdom of the heavens (which surround the earth).

As we begin, let's first establish the fact that Jesus came to His people, Israel, as their King — He came to them as the King of the Jews:

Matthew 2

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him (*cf.* Num. 24:17)."

As the forerunner to Jesus, John the Baptist heralded the message:

Matthew 3

1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven (lit., the kingdom of the heavens) is at hand."

Does this passage deal with the earthly or heavenly?

Then Jesus preached the message:

Matthew 4

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven (lit., the kingdom of the heavens) is at hand.”

Does this passage deal with the earthly or heavenly?

Jesus, the King of the Jews, came in order to present *the kingdom of the heavens* to the descendants of Abraham. His earthly ministry was taken up fully with this message. Read what Jesus told His disciples:

Matthew 5

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

...10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

...19 “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 6

33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”

Matthew 10

7 “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

Matthew 13

11 And He answered and said to them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.”

NOTES:

Do these passages deal with the earthly or the heavenly?

Although Matthew is the only gospel writer to use the exact term “kingdom of heaven (lit., *the kingdom of the heavens*),” by comparing the events written in the other gospels it is easy to see that Matthew’s terminology is most often interchangeable with the terminology that Mark, Luke and John use — the “kingdom of God.” Look and see that these other three gospel writers are writing of the same topic:

Mark 4

11 And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables... (cf. Mt. 13:11)

Mark 10

14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, “Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these (cf. Mt. 19:13, 14).

...**23** And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, “How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God (cf. Mt. 19:23)!”

Luke 4

43 But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose (cf. Mt. 4:23).”

Luke 8

1 And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him ...

Luke 8

10 And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, in order that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND (cf. Mt. 13:14).

Luke 13

28 “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out (cf. Mt. 8:11, 12).

John 3

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

...**5** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

NOTES:

The passages above all deal with *the kingdom of God*, or as Matthew called it, *the kingdom of the heavens*. These two phrases should not be thought of as two different concepts, for they are pointing to the same thing — the rulership which emanates from the heavens over the earth.

Even after Christ’s death and resurrection, Luke mentions in the Book of Acts what the focus of Jesus’ post-resurrection ministry was.

Acts 1

3 To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

In understanding that the phrase *the kingdom of God* has to do with the heavenly kingdom, can you see that even Christ’s post-resurrection ministry has to do with this heavenly kingdom? According to this passage, how long did Jesus appear to them, speaking to them about the things concerning this heavenly kingdom?

And we can easily see that this was foremost in the minds of the disciples at this moment, as well. Here is what they asked Him, just prior to His ascending into heaven.

Acts 1

6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”

And it is easy to see that the kingdom which was to be restored to Israel (that which was dealt with in the Old Testament), now, as shown throughout the Gospels, also concerned the heavens above the earth. You see, there are two realms to this kingdom. And in order to understand prophecy correctly, we must see that both realms are involved. Not just the one or the other. (Please be sure to understand the last two sentences.)

Then also the parables, taught by Jesus, deal with *the kingdom of the heavens*. Notice how each begins:

Matthew 13

24 He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven (lit. the kingdom of the heavens) may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field...

...31 He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field...

...33 He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

...44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

...45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,

...47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind;

Do these New Testament passages deal with the earthly or the heavenly?

This is how Jesus ended His teaching of the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen:

Matthew 13

52 And He said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.”

Does this passage deal with the earthly or the heavenly?

As revealed in the gospels, it was the kingdom of the heavens that was being offered to Abraham’s descendants through the ministry of Jesus Christ at His first coming. (Remember the earthly realm was the focus of the OT, and the heavenly realm is the focus of the NT.)

Eventually, the nation of Israel as a whole rejected the offer of the heavenly kingdom seeking to kill the One making the offer (though obviously many Jews individually accepted). Therefore, just prior to His death, Jesus withdrew the offer of the kingdom from the Jews and was ready to make the offer to a new nation. This is seen through the Parable of the Vineyard in Matthew chapter twenty-one. At the end of the parable, Jesus made this statement to the Jews:

Matthew 21

43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.

Essentially, what did Jesus tell the leaders of the Jews at this point?

Though Jesus made the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel throughout His years of public ministry, in His last week of public ministry, He withdrew the offer and began revealing that He was going to build His Church — a new creation, a new nation, a new man. The Church is the nation referred to in the above verse (Mt. 21:43), and to whom and through whom the offer of the heavenly portion of the kingdom would be made. The Day of Pentecost, following Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, is the day in which God established the Church, sending His Holy Spirit to minister to and through the Church. (The distinction between Israel and the Church is predominately the subject matter in tomorrow’s study.)

Though the offer of the kingdom of the heavens had been withdrawn from Israel, there was a re-offer made to Israel through the ministry of the Church in the Book of Acts. For about thirty-five years, the re-offer was extended to Israel; but with their continued rejection of the message, the offer was completely withdrawn, and the Temple and the city of Jerusalem fell into ruin in 70 AD. The remainder of the New Testament (the epistles) deals with the heavenly realm being offered solely to the Church.

I want you to notice something important to see. Go back to the last group of verses dealt with in Day Three. You will see that in the Old Testament the three words — *land*, *inheritance* and *rest* — being somewhat interchangeable, all have to do with an earthly kingdom. The same is true in the New Testament for the Church. Only for the Church, *the land and the inheritance and the rest are all to take place in the heavens*. This is what all the epistles deal with. A few passages printed below reveal information concerning the *heavenly* land, a *heavenly* inheritance and a *heavenly* rest. See if you recognize the details, and make notes in the margins.

1 Peter 1

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I Corinthians 6

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor

homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

I Corinthians 15

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Colossians 1

... 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel...

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Ephesians 1

9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

... 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 3

... 6 to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 5

5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Colossians 3

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

And finally here is a string of verses that are found in the Book of Hebrews. Read through these verses in Hebrews and see if you can get the gist of what this wonderful epistle is all about.

Hebrews 1

13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET”? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 2

5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

Hebrews 3

1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling,

Hebrews 4

**1 Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest,
... 9 There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.**

Hebrews 11

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city³ which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Hebrews 11

39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Hebrews 12

28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe...

Hebrews 13

**14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.
...22 But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.**

See you tomorrow!

Day Five — Gentile, Jew, and Christian

So far this week, we have seen distinctions in the following categories:

- Time and eternity; Ages and dispensations.
- Heavenly and earthly realms.

³ Of course, this is the *heavenly* city!

- Old Testament and New Testament and the focus of content in each — the offer of the earthly and heavenly realms of the kingdom, respectively.

Today's study will complete our look at basic distinctions as we compare the distinctions between three categories of people:

- Gentile
- Jew
- Christian

In the Church today, there exists various schools of thought surrounding eschatology — the study of end times. Many of these differences exist, in no small part, due to the lack of understanding the Biblical distinctions between these three separate and distinct groups of people, which needs to be clearly understood.

When a proper distinction *does not exist* between these three groups, the only thing that can follow in the way of Scripture interpretation is confusion and incorrect understanding, and this is especially true in the study of and correctly understanding prophecy.

But when a proper distinction *does exist* between these groups, an individual has a foundation with which to make correct interpretations concerning prophecy and the chronology of future events. And again, understanding the foundations which have been laid out in the beginning as well as the types and antitypes of Scripture will assuredly help to clear these distinctions things up, and allow correct interpretation to proceed.

As we have seen in Chart 5:1 on Day One of this week's study, a dispensation has to do with a *stewardship or the management of a household*. Look back to that chart for a moment. Notice the mid-section of the chart wherein you can see that there are three 2,000-year divisions. Notice that this 6,000-year period of time makes up the "Day of Man" and reveals that there are *three distinct dispensations*. (If you read the article in the Appendix entitled AGES AND DISPENSATIONS, this should be review to you.) Our next chart, which we will get to in a moment, will give more details and Scripture references for these distinct people groups.

But first we must remember that one of God's attributes is His Immutability. This Divine attribute means that God is unchangeable; He does not change. And we can see this in Scripture:

Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

Malachi 3:6 "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.

James 1: 17 Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.

Romans 11:29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

With these thoughts in mind, let's look carefully at the next chart, which depicts the three dispensations seen in the present age. Spend a moment studying it.

details that God deems necessary for us to understand what He wants us to understand. (Remember how much there is to understand through the types and antitypes!) For lack of a better term, we could refer to man in this dispensation as “Gentiles,” though the term “Gentile” was not really used until the second dispensation, when a creation in Jacob was separated out from among the nations. It can also be noted that at this point all the nations of the earth were under the rulership of Satan and his fallen angels.

In the second dispensation, God brought forth a *new creation*, which was not to be counted among the Gentile nations, and which would not be under the headship of Satan. (And in this respect, the only way in which the Theocracy could have been set up on the Earth in the Old Testament [studied briefly in Day Three of this week] was through a new creation, i.e., a creation of a people who would not be under the headship of the present ruler over the earth — Satan.)

God had initially promised Abram that he would be *the father of a great nation* (Gen. 12:2; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 46:3; Deut. 26:4), and later promised that he would be *the father of many nations* (Gen. 17:4-6, 16). Abraham had a total of eight sons: one son — Ishmael — through Sarah’s handmaid, Hagar; one son — Isaac — through his wife Sarah; and six sons through his wife, Keturah, after Sarah’s death. Through these sons, God has brought to pass the fulfillment of the prophecy that Abraham would be *the father of many nations*.

However there is only one son through whom God’s promises to and through Abraham would be fulfilled — his son by Sarah, the son of promise — Isaac (Gen. 21:12; cf. Gal. 4:22-31).

Then, Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob, in birth order. Though God had foretold Isaac’s wife, Rebekah, that *the older would serve the younger*, it was not until near the end of Isaac’s life that Jacob, the second born, was made the recipient of the firstborn’s birthright. It would be through Jacob that God would bring forth a new creation — the nation Israel. (Keep in mind that Jacob’s name was eventually changed from Jacob to Israel.)

Isaiah 43

1 But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!”

Isaiah 44

2 Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, “Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun⁴ whom I have chosen.

Isaiah 45

4 “For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me.

But why a new creation? Why a distinct nation from among the Gentiles? Ultimately, the answer to these questions can be traced back to Genesis, specifically in chapter twelve, and repeated many times thereafter.

Genesis 12

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a

⁴ Jeshurun is another name for Israel.

blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 18

18 since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?

Genesis 22 (God speaking to Abraham)

“...17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Genesis 26 (God speaking to Isaac)

4 “And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...”

Genesis 28 (God speaking to Jacob)

13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. 14 Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed...”

Acts 3 (Peter speaking to the Men of Israel)

25 “It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.’

What have you learned from these verses about Israel?

The establishment of Israel as a separate and distinct nation is something that will not change! Though many people in the Church today teach that God has forsaken Israel, the truth is that *God will not forsake Israel*. Even though Israel has been set aside for a time (i.e., the present dispensation), Israel will be restored as the people of God after God deals with them again in the soon-coming Tribulation (the last seven years of their dispensation), bringing them to repentance. And this is something that must be understood in the light of prophecy if prophecy is to be understood, which can only be done if it is studied and understood according to the way God gave it. Look at what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Rome in this rather lengthy passage. Notice even the first question in v. 1:

Romans 11

1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 “Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED THY PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN THINE ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.” 4 But what is the divine response to him? “I

HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.” 5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. 7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; 8 just as it is written, “GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.” 9 And David says, “LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. 10 LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.” 11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. 12 Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! 13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ...

23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.” 27 “AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.” 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Would you comment on the first ten verses?

According to v. 11, what is the reason for this happening to Israel?

Verses 12 and 15 are similar verses. What do these two verses imply?

Verse 24 is speaking of the Gentiles. What is it that Paul calls the mystery in v. 25?

What do vv. 26, 27 say about Israel? Can it be made clearer than this?

Essentially what do vv. 28 and 29 say?

There is so much in this passage from the Book of Romans! And it, in and of itself, would refute any and all thoughts and/or comments as to the supposed fact that Israel has been fully and completely set aside, never to be dealt with again. This passage, in and of itself, would refute any and all thoughts and/or comments as to the supposed fact that the Church is ‘the new Israel.’ Even if an individual would just look at the last verse in this passage (keeping it in context), one would have to come to the conclusion that God would not — He could not — change His mind about Israel.

However, a problem with Israel ensued! (This is not really a problem, but something used by God to ensure fulfillment of various Old Testament prophecies concerning Gentiles.) With both realms of the kingdom needing to be dealt with in the overall scenario, and Abraham’s descendants being the only ones to whom both realms can be offered, and with the Jews rejecting the offer of *the kingdom of the heavens* 2,000 years ago, and Jesus withdrawing the offer from the Jews just prior to His death, what was to become of the fulfillment of these prophecies concerning Abraham’s descendant and the heavenly realm?

No problem! God’s plan was set prior to the world being created! In the Old Testament, there are glimpses of Gentiles being brought into the Jewish family. In the types, you have Joseph’s wife — Asenath, and Moses’ wife — Zipporah. You have Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, marrying Boaz (both men Israelites). Additionally there are Old Testament prophecies specifically stating that a Light will shine in the darkness (e.g., Isa. 9:2; 42:1-7; 49:6, 8).

But now let’s look to see how it is brought to pass that Gentiles can be brought into and share in the promises given to Abraham and his descendants:

Galatians 3

16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.

... 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

On the one hand, once a person puts faith in Jesus Christ, that individual is immediately made to have a share in the promises of Abraham. However, even though this is true, there still must be a distinction made between the spiritual offspring of Abraham and the physical offspring of Abraham:

II Corinthians 5

17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Colossians 3

11 --a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

Galatians 6

15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

In Christ, a new creation is formed! (See the Chart 5:2.) Any individual, who has/will put faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, becomes a *new creation*, a part of a *new nation*. And those in Christ were created in Him from before the foundation of the world! Read the following passage:

Ephesians 2

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

11 Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, 20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

So with Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham set aside, a new creation in Christ is being built up. And this new creation, Abraham’s spiritual descendants through Christ (the Seed of Abraham), is to receive that which Abraham’s physical descendants rejected at the first coming of Christ — the kingdom of the heavens. Frankly, it is that simple!

So now the promises to Abraham and his descendants can be fulfilled!

Genesis 22

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 16 and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

We’ll look at more of all of this in the Lecture. You’re doing a great job! Keep it up!

Lecture Notes

