

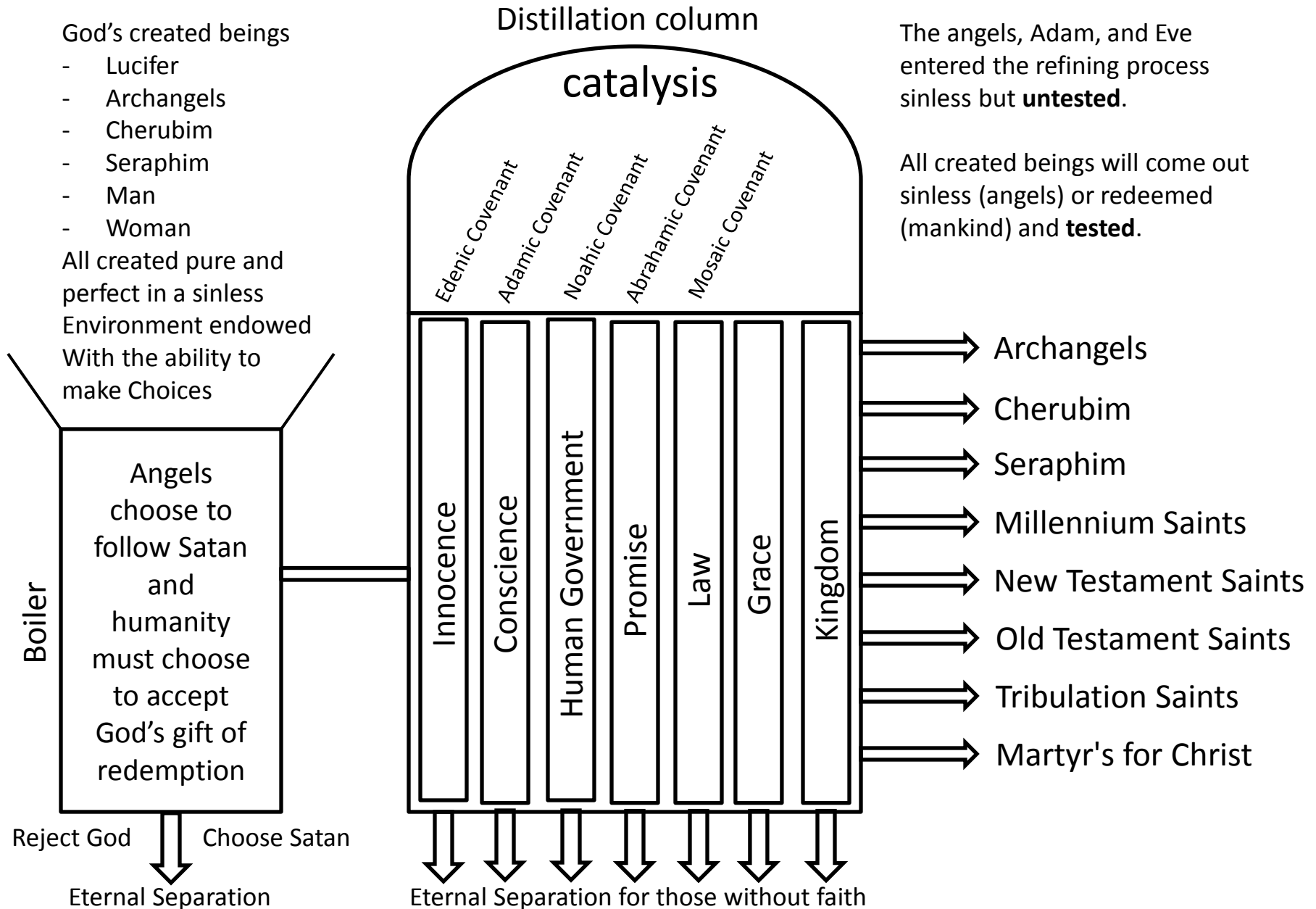
Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Revealed Plan of God from Eternity Past to Eternity Future



www.RefiningaCreation.org

God's Refining Process for His Created Beings



Refining a Creation for Eternity

God's Economies for Mankind

Overview



Edenic



Adamic

Innocence



Noahic

Human Government



Abrahamic

Promise



Mosaic

Law



Postponed

Grace

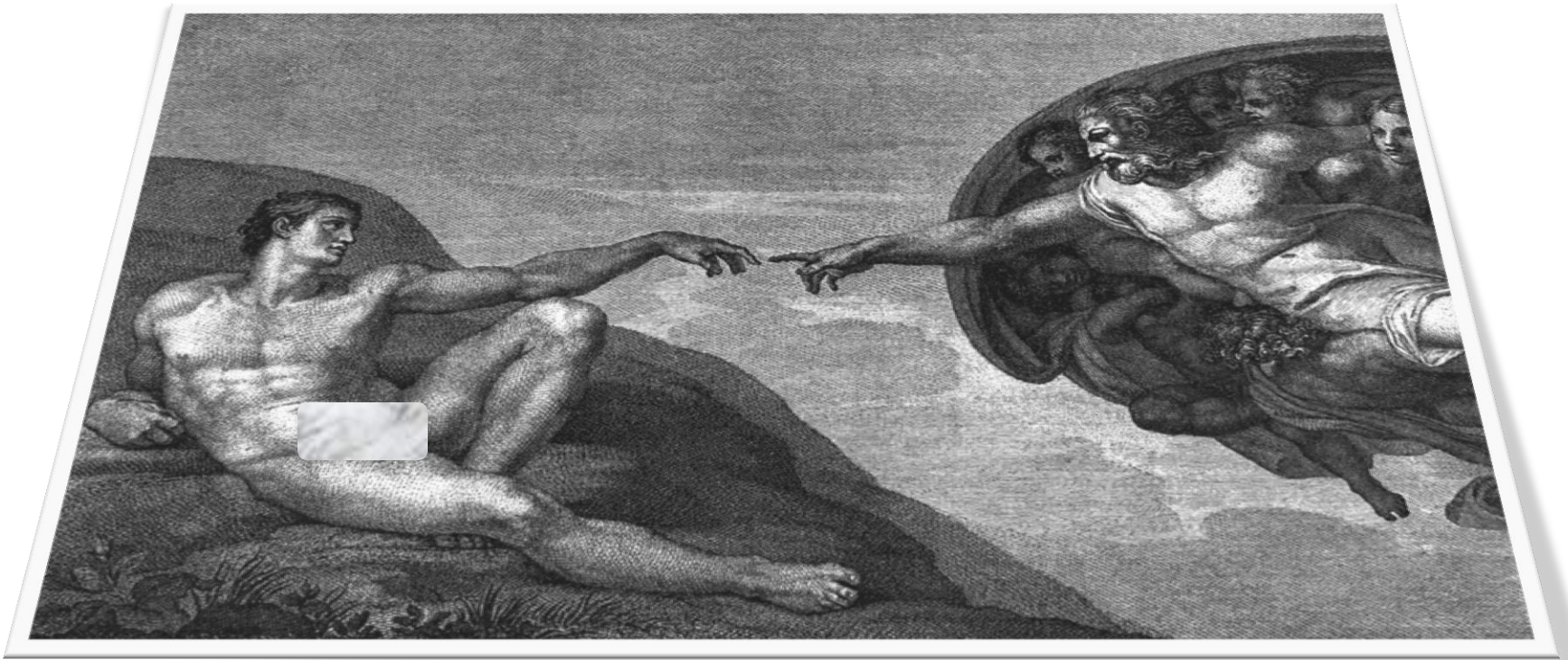


Fulfillment

Kingdom

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The First Economy



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Edenic Covenant (Gen 1:28-30; 2:15-17; Hos 6:7)

Parties to the Covenant

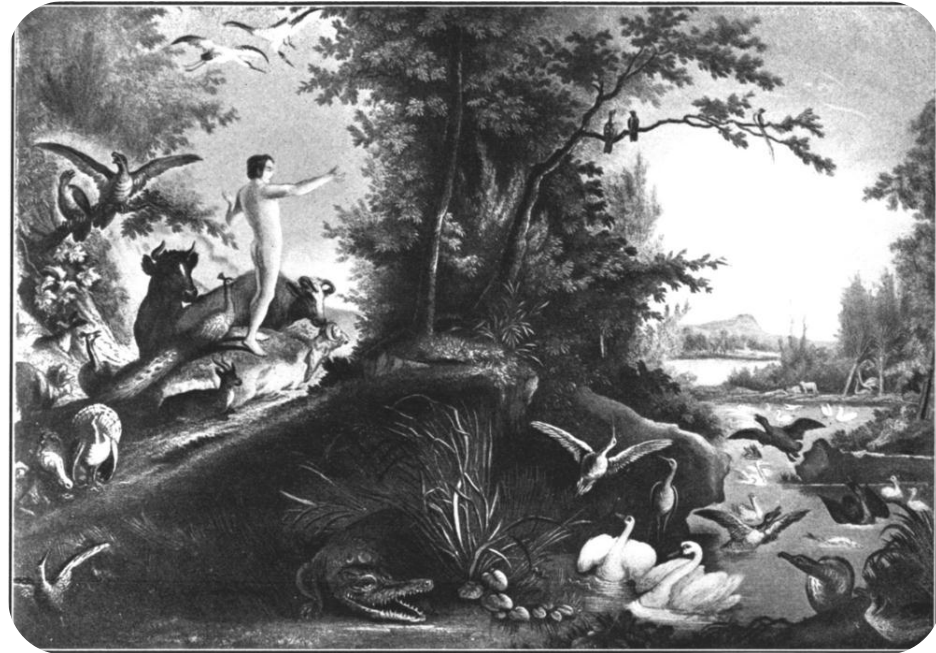
- God and Adam

Conditions of the Covenant

- Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth
- Subdue the Earth
- Rule over the animal kingdom
- Plants are for food (vegetarian)
- Defined roles
- Guard the garden
- Not eat from one tree
- Penalty for violating the commands is death

Token of the Covenant

- Tree of Life



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Review of past lessons

Dispensation of Innocence

Man's Responsibilities

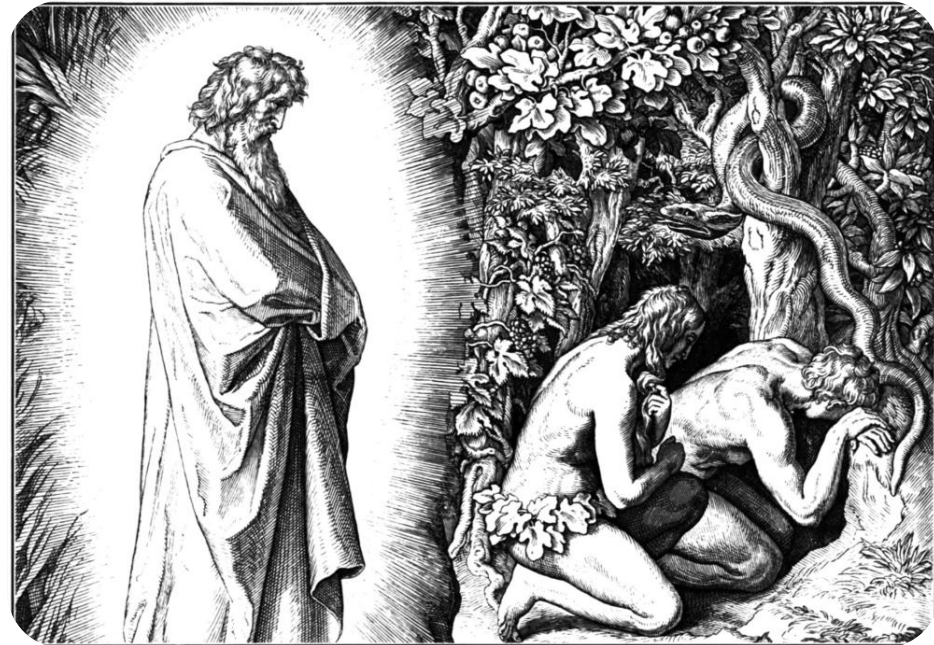
- Man's responsibilities in the garden were to fulfill the Edenic Covenant, essentially to multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it. Mankind was forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Man's Failures

- Man's failure was to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It is important to note that while the woman was deceived, the man made a conscious decision to disobey God.

The Resulting Judgment

- Pain in childbirth, Authority struggle, Earth antagonistic to man, Man irresponsible to animals, Plants of the field for food, Expelled from Eden, Spiritual and physical death



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Approaching God in the Dispensation of Innocence

God walked with man

- Genesis 2:15 - Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.
- Genesis 3:8 - They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,

God spoke to man

- Genesis 2:16 - The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

God had fellowship with man

- Genesis 2:19 - Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.



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The Second Economy



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Review of past lessons

Adamic Covenant (Gen 3:14 – 3:21)

Parties to the Covenant

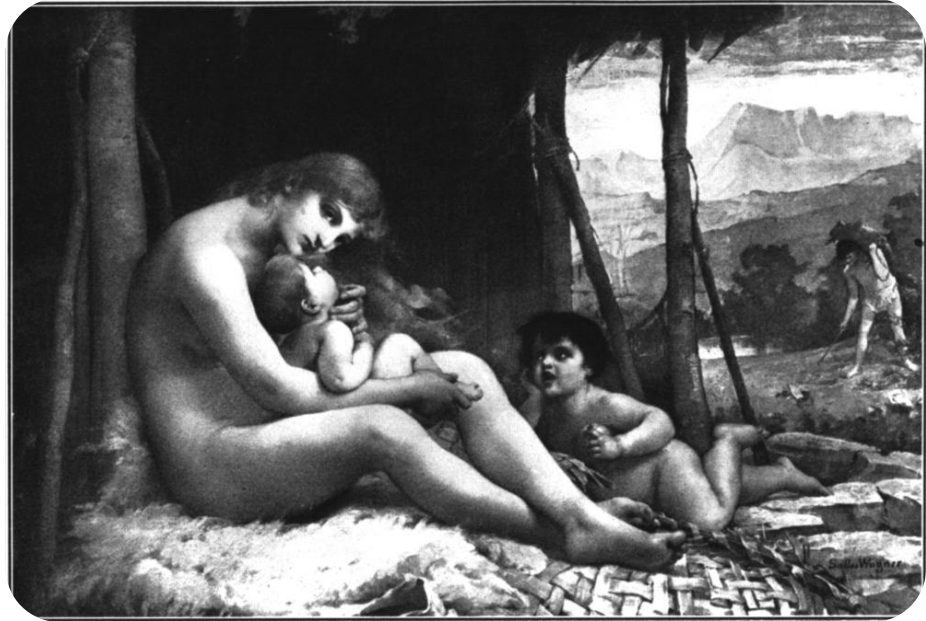
- God and Adam as the representative for mankind

Conditions of the Covenant

- Transformation of the animal kingdom
- Protevangelium (first gospel) and promise of Satan's defeat
- Woman cursed in area of assigned duties
- Man cursed in area of assigned duties
- Physical death (return to ground)
- Man remains a vegetarian

Token of the Covenant

- Spiritual death



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Dispensation of Conscience (Gen 3:9 to Gen 8:14)

Man's Responsibilities

- Man's responsibilities, having been ejected from the garden, was to fulfill the Adamic Covenant, essentially to multiply and fill the Earth. Mankind was to respond to God through the prompting of his conscience and as evidence of his faith in the promised seed, to bring an acceptable blood sacrifice as God had instructed them to do.

Man's Failures

- Mankind, having been given the ability, through their conscience, to desire a relationship with God and the provision, through blood sacrifices, to approach God, failed to do so and instead followed after their own evil lusts. The wickedness and evil became so great and widespread, God decided to let mankind start anew.

The Resulting Judgment

- God, being true to His word, spared the only faithful humans and a small remnant of air breathing creatures and started over in order to fulfill his promise of redemption



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Approaching God in the Dispensation of Conscience

Approach God by Faith

- Hebrews 11:4 - By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

Blood sacrifice as example of faith

- The test then becomes “with a conscience, guided by that conscience, will man choose to do good and approach God by means of sacrifice as the example of the sacrifice that God indicated”.
- Leviticus 17:11 - ‘For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’



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Review of past lessons

At The End Of The Second Economy

Promise of Redemption Maintained - Genesis 6:8-9, 18; 7:1

- But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.
- “But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.
- Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.

Angelic Conflict - 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6

- For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;
- And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

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The Third Economy



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Review of past lessons

Noahic Covenant (Genesis 8:20 – 9:17)

Parties to the Covenant

- God and Noah as the representative for mankind

Conditions of the Covenant

- Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth
- Man to be feared by animals
- Mankind allowed to eat meat
- Mankind not to eat or drink blood
- Institution of capital punishment
- Never again a universal flood

Token of the Covenant

- Rainbow



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Review of past lessons

Dispensation of Human Government (Genesis 9:1 to 11:32)

Man's Responsibilities

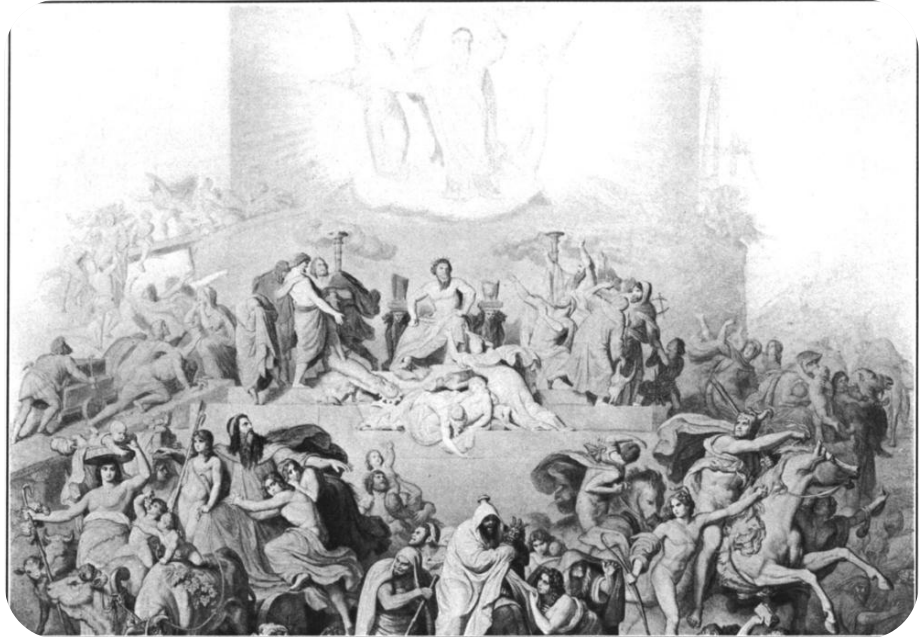
- Man's responsibilities were to fulfill the Noachic covenant. Mankind was to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Mankind was to govern itself with the full authority of capital punishment.

Man's Failures

- Failure to govern successfully appeared on the scene almost immediately, for Noah became drunk and incapable of ruling. The people, instead of obeying God's command to scatter and fill the earth, conceived the idea of staying together and building the tower of Babel to help achieve their aim. Fellowship with man replaced fellowship with God.

The Resulting Judgment

- As a result, God sent the judgment of the tower of Babel and the confusion of languages. He also graciously intervened in that He did not utterly destroy the nations but chose to deal graciously with Abraham and his descendants.



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Review of past lessons

Small Remnant of Righteous – The Example of Job’s Theology

God’s sovereignty – Job 1:21

- He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. **The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away.** Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

God’s justice – Job 13:15–16

- “Though He slay me, **I will hope in Him.** Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him. **“This also will be my salvation,** For a godless man may not come before His presence.

God’s promise of salvation – Job 19:25

- “As for me, I know that **my Redeemer lives,** And at the last **He will take His stand on the earth.**



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

At The End Of The Third Economy

Promise of Redemption Maintained - Genesis 12:1-3

- 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; 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; 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 will be blessed.”

Angelic Conflict - Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7

- God allows Satan to persecute the faithful that He knows are mature enough to endure the trials. This strengthens the faithful and allows God to show His grace, mercy, and love. God also demonstrates that His righteousness and justice are compatible with His love.

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The Fourth Economy



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Review of past lessons

Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3)

Parties to the Covenant

- God and Abram as the father of the Jewish race

Conditions of the Covenant

- Fourteen provisions including the token of circumcision

Token of the Covenant

- Circumcision



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Promises made to Abraham

Father of great nation (Israel)

Possess the Promised Land

Father of other nations

Many descendants became kings

Receive personal blessings

Be a blessing to others

Name to become great

Promises made to Israel

Become a great nation

Become innumerable

Possess the Promised Land

Victory over enemies

Promises to Gentiles

Blessings for blessing Israel

Cursing's for cursing Israel

Spiritual blessings through the seed of Abraham – The Messiah

Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Dispensation of Promise (Genesis 11:10 to Exodus 18:27)

Man's Responsibilities

- The responsibility of the patriarchs was simply to believe and serve God, and God gave them every material and spiritual provision to encourage them to do this. The Promised Land was theirs, and blessing was theirs as long as they remained in the land. The people of the promise; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the children of Jacob (Israel) were to stay separate from the nations around them.

Man's Failures

- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons continued to intermingle with the Canaanites and surrounding nations.

The Resulting Judgment

- God sent the family down to Egypt where the surrounding Egyptians would not associate with them. Soon after they would be enslaved.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Approaching God in the Dispensation of Promise

Approach God by Faith

- Genesis 15:5–7 And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. 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.”

Blood sacrifice as example of faith

- Genesis 31:54 Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his kinsmen to the meal; and they ate the meal and spent the night on the mountain.



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Review of past lessons

At The End Of The Fourth Economy

Promise of Redemption Maintained - Exodus 15:18–19

- “The LORD shall reign forever and ever.” For the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea on them, but the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea.

Angelic Conflict - Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7

- Paganism continued to spread throughout the world. The populations were coming together as powerful nations were formed. God’s chosen, the Israelites, were in the protective womb of Egypt yet Satan influenced the first cycle of young Jewish boys to be put to death in an attempt to block the birth of the Messiah.

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The Fifth Economy



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20:1 – Deuteronomy 28:68)

Parties to the Covenant

- God and Israel with Moses acting as a representative

Conditions of the Covenant

- Law of Moses which contained a total 613 commandments. Being a conditional covenant, it provided blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. (Ex. 15:26) The key element of the entire Mosaic Law was the blood sacrifice. (Lev. 17:11)

Token of the Covenant

- Sabbath

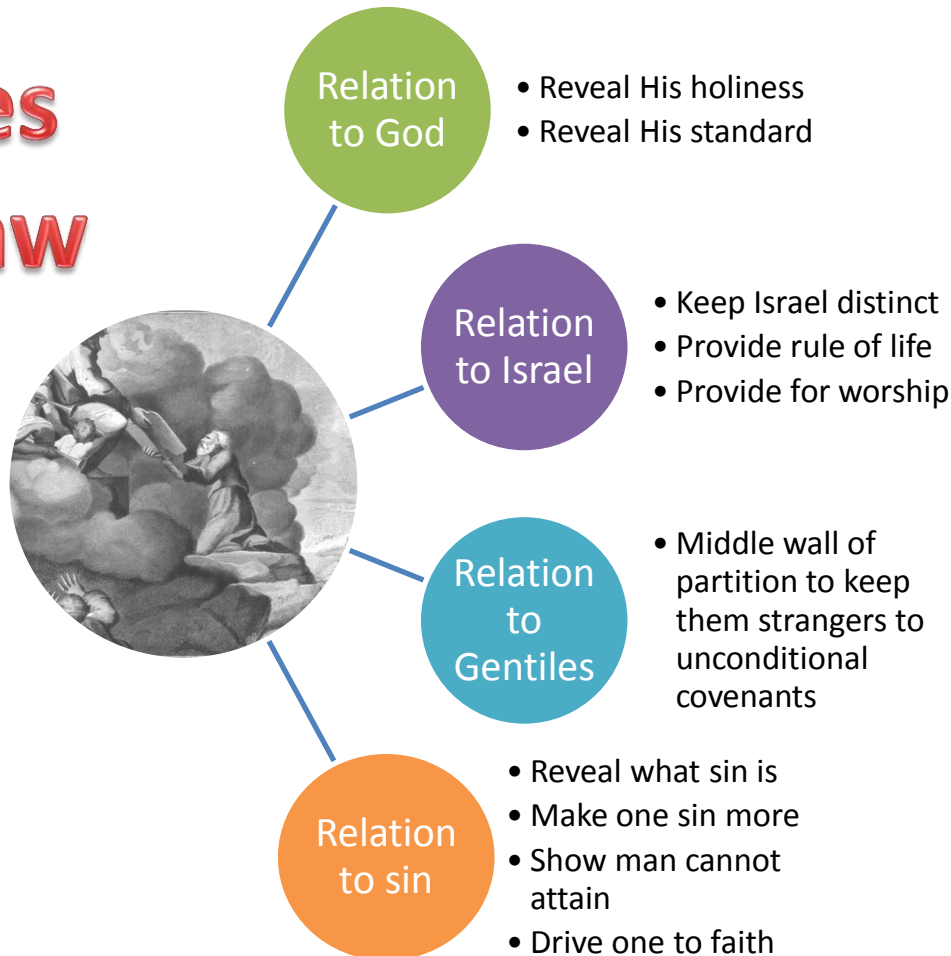


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The Fifth Economy

Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20:1 – Deuteronomy 28:68)

Purposes of the Law

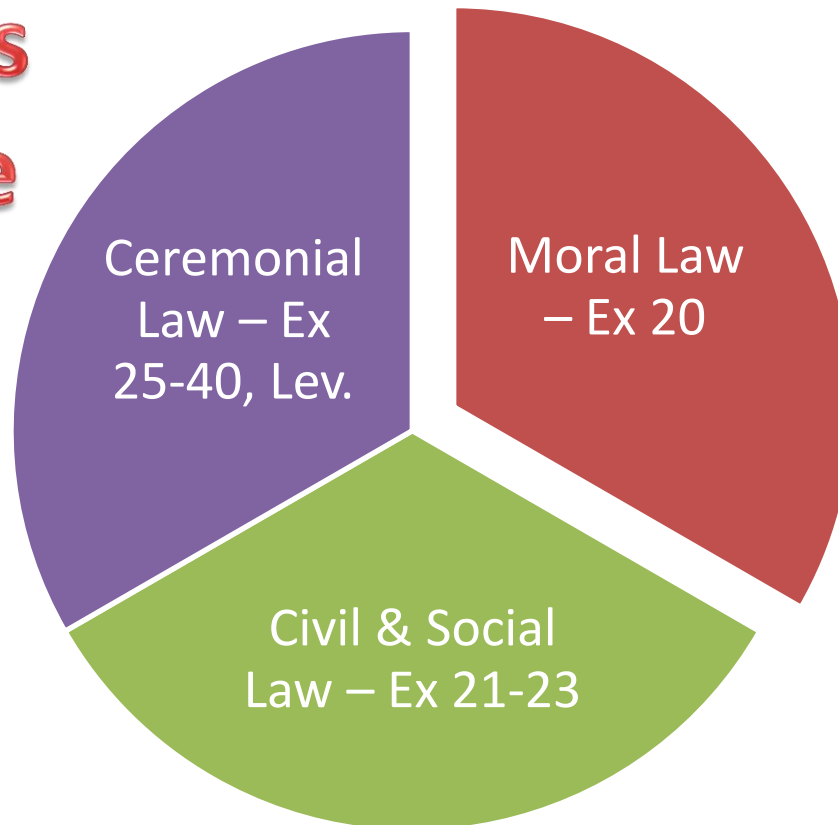


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The Fifth Economy

Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20:1 – Deuteronomy 28:68)

**The Law is
the Entire
Pie!**



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Dispensation of Law (Exodus 19:1 – Acts 1:26)

Man's Responsibilities

- The responsibility of the Nation of Israel along with Gentile proselytes was to keep the Mosaic Law.

Man's Failures

- The Nation of Israel was continually disobedient and God continued to bring them back through discipline. They continued to reject the ordinances of God. (2nd Kings 17:7-23)

The Resulting Judgment

- As a result, there were many judgments throughout this long period. The ten tribes were carried into Assyrian captivity; the two tribes were carried into Babylonian captivity; and later, because of their rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, the people were dispersed into all the world (Matt. 23:37–39).



Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Abrahamic Covenant



Land

- Real Estate Covenant
- Deut. 29:1-30:20

Seed

- Davidic Covenant
- 2nd Sam. 7:11b-17
- 1st Chron. 17:10b-15

Blessing

- The New Covenant
- Jer. 31:31-34

Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

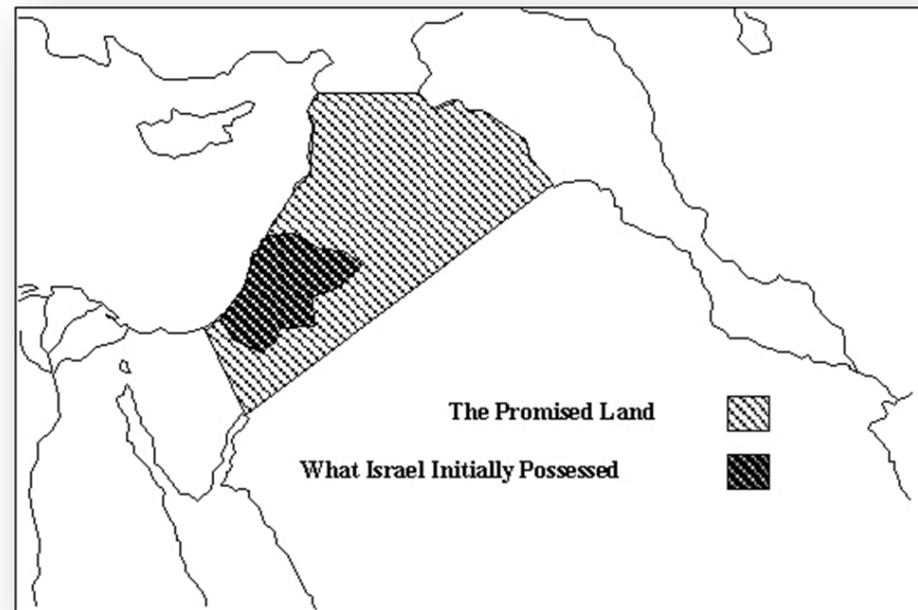
Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1 – 30:20)

Parties to the Covenant

- God and Moses as the representative of National Israel

Conditions of the Covenant

- The nation will be plucked off the land for its unfaithfulness (Deut. 30:1-3)
- There will be a future repentance of Israel (Deut. 30:1-3)
- The Messiah will return (Deut. 30:3-6)
- Israel will be restored to the land (Deut. 30:5)
- Israel will be converted as a nation (Deut. 30:4-8)
- Israel's enemies will be judged (Deut. 30:7)
- The nation will then receive her full blessing. (Deut. 30:9)



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Seed (Davidic) Covenant (2 Sam. 7:10-14)

Parties to the Covenant

- God and David as the representative for the House of Israel

Conditions of the Covenant

- David's child, yet to be born, shall succeed him and establish his kingdom.
- This son, Solomon, shall build the temple instead of David.
- The throne of his kingdom shall be established forever.
- The throne will not be taken away from him (Solomon).
- David's house, throne, and kingdom shall be established forever.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Blessing (New) Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Parties to the Covenant

- God and the houses of Israel and Judah

Conditions of the Covenant

- The new covenant is an unconditional, grace covenant resting on the “I will” of God.
- The new covenant is an everlasting covenant.
- The new covenant also promises the impartation of a renewed mind and heart which we may call regeneration.
- The new covenant provides for restoration to the favor and blessing of God.
- Forgiveness of sin is also included in the covenant.
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is also included.
- The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit will be manifested, and the will of God will be known by obedient hearts.
- As is always the case when Israel is in the land, she will be blessed materially in accordance with the provisions of the new covenant.
- The sanctuary will be rebuilt in Jerusalem.
- War shall cease and peace shall reign according to Hosea 2:18.
- The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of all the blessings of the new covenant.

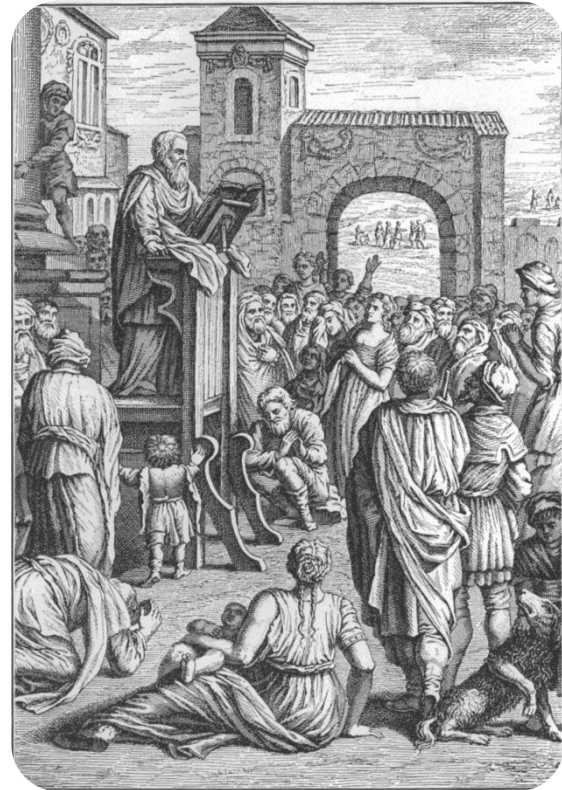
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Review of past lessons

Approaching God in the Dispensation of Law

Approach God by Faith (Heb. 11:30–34)

- By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

At The End Of The Fifth Economy

Promise of Redemption Maintained

- By rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, the Nation of Israel opened the door for God to display the supreme demonstration of His grace. This unique demonstration, never previously revealed, is the elimination of the Jew/Gentile distinction in Christ. Further, God indwelling His people is also never known in history.

Angelic Conflict

- “Satan suffered a specific judgment at the time that the Messiah died. Satan knew it was coming, and that is why he tried to do everything he could to keep the Messiah from the cross. He constantly tried to have Yeshua killed either prematurely or in the wrong manner; such as, by sword or by stoning. But all such attempts failed because: his hour was not yet come. When His hour finally did come, and when Yeshua was dying on the cross, Satan was no longer in control; rather, the Messiah was in total control. The cross, which brought salvation to humanity, brought judgment upon Satan.”

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The Sixth Economy



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Dispensation of Grace (Acts 2:1 to Revelation 19:21)

Man's Responsibilities

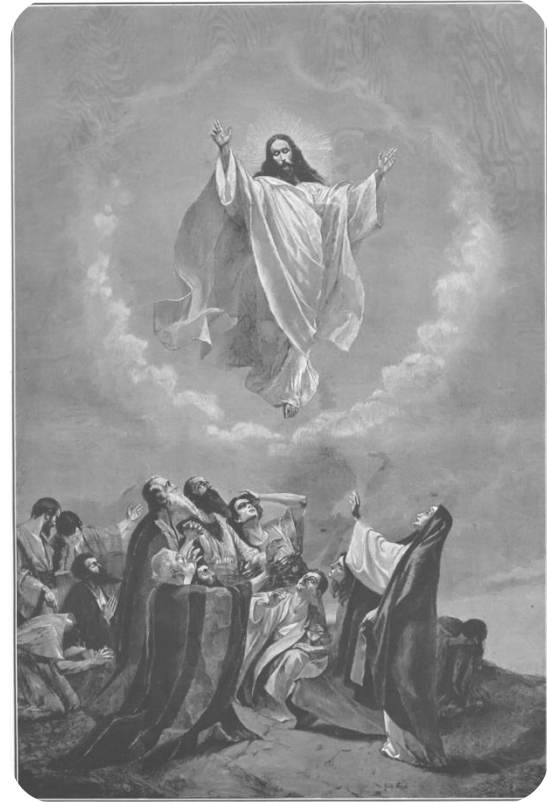
- Under Grace the responsibility on man is to accept the gift of righteousness that God freely offers to all (Rom. 5:15–18). There are two aspects of the grace of God in this economy: (1) the blessing is entirely of grace and (2) that grace is for all.

Man's Failures

- The vast majority have rejected Him and as a result will be judged. The dispensation will end at the second coming of Christ since, as suggested, the tribulation period itself is not a separate dispensation but is the judgment on those living persons who are Christ rejecters at the end of this present dispensation.

The Resulting Judgment

- The judgment to non-believers is death. The judgment to believers for not walking with Christ is a loss of rewards. The earth, which was to be controlled by Adam and handed over to Satan, will be ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Church

Church Ordinances

Baptism

Baptists, unlike Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Reformed, etc., do not practice infant baptism. Unlike the Church of Christ, they do not believe baptism is essential to salvation. Yet, Baptists do stress baptism as a necessary observance to obey the commands of Christ. The Baptist understanding is that only those who already believe may be candidates for baptism. This excludes infants who are un-able to believe. It also views baptism as occurring after salvation.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Church

Church Ordinances

Baptism

It ought to be obvious to any unbiased Bible student that the Bible never commands nor gives examples of infant baptism. The Scriptures uniformly give salvation by faith as the condition in order to be baptized. Without faith a person is unsaved regardless of whether he has been baptized. If faith is present, he is saved even if he has not submitted to baptism. The following texts prove that baptism is only for believers, and thus, it is for those already saved and those old enough to exercise faith in Christ.

Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 8:12; Acts 10:43-44; 47-48;

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Church

Church Ordinances

Baptism (cont.)

Baptism speaks of a sharing in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Sharing in Christ's life comes about through Spirit baptism into the Spirit of Christ. Thus, baptism in water also pictures baptism in the Spirit and union with the universal church. The one who undergoes baptism displays obedience to Christ's command and identifies with the visible church. It also seems reasonable to think that baptism symbolizes the cleansing (forgiveness) which comes through faith in Christ. (See Acts 2:38 where for means because of, and also Acts 22:16.)

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Church

Spiritual Gifts

There are two Greek words generally used to describe spiritual gifts. The first is *pneumatikos*, meaning “spiritual things” or “things pertaining to the spirit.” This word emphasizes the spiritual nature and origin of spiritual gifts; they are not natural talents but rather have their origin with the Holy Spirit. They are supernaturally given to a believer by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11).

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The Sixth Economy

The Church

Spiritual Gifts (cont.)

The other word often used to identify spiritual gifts is *charisma*, meaning “grace gift.” The word *charisma* emphasizes that a spiritual gift is a gift of God’s grace; it is not a naturally developed ability but rather a gift bestowed on a believer (1 Cor. 12:4). This emphasis is seen in Romans 12 where Paul discusses spiritual gifts. He stresses that spiritual gifts are received through the “grace given” to believers (Rom. 12:3, 6).

A concise definition of spiritual gifts is simply a “grace gift.” A more complete definition is “a divine endowment of a special ability for service upon a member of the body of Christ.”

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The Sixth Economy

The Church

Spiritual Gifts (cont.)

Two concepts are involved in spiritual gifts. First, a spiritual gift to an individual is God's enablement for personal spiritual service (1 Cor. 12:11). Second, a spiritual gift to the church is a person uniquely equipped for the church's edification and maturation (Eph. 4:11–13).

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The Sixth Economy

The Church

Spiritual Gifts (cont.)

It should also be noted what is not meant by spiritual gifts. It does not mean a place of service. Some may suggest “he has a real gift for working in the slums.” This, of course, is a wrong concept of spiritual gifts. Nor is a spiritual gift an age group ministry. Or some might say that “he has a real gift for working with senior highs.” A spiritual gift is not the same as a natural talent; there may be a relationship, but a natural talent is an ability that a person may have from birth and develop, whereas a spiritual gift is given supernaturally by God at the moment of conversion.

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The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Prophecy

Verse

- Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 14:29-32

Description

- Speaking truth directly revealed from God

Result

- Understanding mystery. 1 Cor. 13:2

Example

- Timothy – 1 Tim. 4:14; Daughters of Philip – Acts 21:8-9

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Service, Helping

Verse

- Rom. 12:7

Description

- Aiding others to do God's work
- Giving practical assistance to members of the church

Result

- Serving the church and the needy – Acts 6:1

Example

- Onesiphorus – 2 Tim. 1:16

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Teaching

Verse

- Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11

Description

- Communicating the truth and applications of the Scripture

Result

- Understanding the Word of God – Acts 18:26

Example

- Priscilla and Aquila – Acts 18:26
- Apollos – Acts 18:27-28
- Paul – Acts 18:11

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The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Encouraging

Verse

- Rom. 12:8

Description

- Urging one to pursue proper conduct or to console

Result

- Encouragement – Acts 9:27

Example

- Barnabas – Acts 4:36

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The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Giving

Verse

- Rom. 12:8

Description

- Liberally and cheerfully imparting substance to God's work

Result

- Meeting physical needs – Acts 9:36

Example

- Dorcas – Acts 9:36

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Leadership

Verse

- Rom. 12:8

Description

- Organizing and administering the work of the ministry

Result

- Order – Titus 1:5

Example

- Titus – Titus 1:5

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Showing Mercy

Verse

- Rom. 12:8

Description

- Giving undeserved aid to others

Result

- Sympathy, compassion toward undeserving

Example

- Barnabas – Acts 9:27

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Apostleship

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11

Description

- Being an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ and speaking authoritatively about faith and practice

Result

- Sets forth God's precepts for the church – 1 Cor. 14:37

Example

- Paul – Gal. 1:1
- Peter – 1 Pet. 1:1

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The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Evangelism

Verse

- Eph. 4:11

Description

- Presenting the gospel with clarity and with a burden for the unsaved

Result

- Understanding the Gospel

Example

- Philip – Acts 21:8

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The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Pastor/Teacher

Verse

- Rom. 12:7;
Eph. 4:11

Description

- Shepherding
and teaching
the church

Result

- Care and
godly
instruction –
Acts 20:28-
31

Example

- Paul – 1
Thess. 2:7-
12

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

The Message of Wisdom

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:8

Description

- Perceiving and presenting the truth of God
- Applying God's Word or wisdom to specific situations

Result

- The ability to grasp and apply the revelation given

Example

- John – 1 John 1:1-3

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

The Message of Knowledge

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:8

Description

- Understanding and exhibiting wisdom from God
- Revelation from God about people, circumstances, or biblical truth

Result

- Truth understood in its spiritual sense – 1 Cor. 2:6-12

Example

- Paul – Col. 2:2-3

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Faith

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:9

Description

- Trusting God implicitly to perform unusual deeds

Result

- Accomplishment of great tasks

Example

- Stephen – Acts 6:5

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Healing

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:9

Description

- Being able to cure diseases

Result

- Complete cures – Acts 3:6-7

Example

- Peter and John – Acts 3:6-7
- Paul – Acts 20:9-12

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Spiritual Gifts

Miracles

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:10

Description

- Being able to perform works of power

Result

- People fear God – Acts 5:9-11

Example

- Paul – Acts 13:8-11

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Discernment

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:10

Description

- Distinguishing the power by which a teacher or prophet speaks

Result

- Exposure of false prophets – 1 John 4:1

Example

- Believers at Corinth – 1 Cor. 14:29

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Spiritual Gifts

Tongues

Verse	Description	Result	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 Cor. 12:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaking in a language not understood by the speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Praise to God which is understood by those persons knowing the language spoken – Acts 2:1-12• Thanksgiving to God which may be understood if someone interprets the language spoken – 1 Cor. 14:5, 16, 27-28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The disciples

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Spiritual Gifts

Interpretation

Verse

- 1 Cor. 12:10

Description

- Making “tongues” understandable

Result

- Confirmation of the foreign language – 1 Cor. 14:27-28

Example

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The Apostasy of the Church

The English word apostasy is derived from two Greek words. The first word is the preposition *apo*, which means “away from.” The second word is the verb *histēmi*, which means, “to stand.” Thus, apostasy means, “to stand away from.” Apostasy refers to a departure from known or previously embraced truth. The subject of apostasy has little to do with the condition of the unsaved world, which has always rejected divine truth and therefore has nothing from which to depart. Rather, apostasy pertains to the spiritual temperature within God’s church. While some might think that apostasy relates to some External factor such as whether the economy is up or down, the subject of biblical apostasy relates to internal church conditions.

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The Apostasy of the Church

General characteristics of apostasy

1. A Sign of the Last Days

Apostasy is a sign of the last days of the church. When we speak of the signs of the end, many subjects come to mind such as the return of the Jews to their land or the trend toward one-world government. However, these kinds of signs concern God's future program for Israel rather than the church. Apostasy is another sign, often taking place right under our noses, which we fail to recognize as a sign of the end. Apostasy is the specific scriptural sign given indicating that the church is nearing the completion of her earthly mission.

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2. A Massive New Testament Subject

Surprisingly, apostasy is one of the most frequently mentioned subjects in all of the New Testament. For example, such warnings are found in the Gospels (Matt 13), Acts (Acts 20:29-31), the Pauline letters (Rom 16:17-18; Gal 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:1-15; Philip 3:2, 18-19; Col 2:8; 1 Tim 4; 2 Tim 3–4; Titus 1:10), and the general epistles (Heb 2:1-4; 2 Pet 2–3; Jude; 1 John 4:1-6).¹ The early chapters of the Apocalypse also reveal the reality of apostasy. Revelation 2–3 describes seven letters to seven churches in Asia Minor. Five of these seven churches are in need of rebuke from Christ due to their apostate condition.

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2. A Massive New Testament Subject (cont.)

Interestingly, entire New Testament books were written solely for the purpose of warning believers concerning apostasy. Galatians was written in order to warn against The Judaizers. Colossians was written for the purpose of warning Christians about the Colossian heresy. Hebrews was written to keep the audience from leaving the full revelation of Christ and lapsing backwards into Judaism. Both Jude and 2 Peter were written as warnings concerning apostasy.

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3. Apostasy Concerns Every Major Doctrine

Yet another point to understand is that warnings against apostasy pertain to every major doctrine. What will the apostates deny? Is there any doctrine that will be left off the “chopping block”? Are there any doctrines that are so essential to the heart of Christianity and considered so precious that no apostate would dare deny them? The answer is a resounding “no!”

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3. Apostasy Concerns Every Major Doctrine (cont.)

The New Testament reveals that apostates will deny “the faith” (1 Tim 4:1), God (Jude 4), Christ and His atoning death (2 Peter 2:1), “sound doctrine” (2 Tim 4:3), God’s role in creation (2 Pet 3:5), His future return (2 Peter 3:4), doctrine of the resurrection, (1 Cor. 15:14; 2 Tim 2:17-18). Thus, the preceding discussion indicates that there are no doctrinal “sacred cows” as far as the apostates are concerned. The New Testament predicts that everything that can be denied will be denied.

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4. An Internal Matter

In Paul's magnificent address as recorded in Acts 20:18-35, he unfolded grand ecclesiology principles designed to govern the ministries of the Ephesian elders as they attempted to shepherd Christ's church at Ephesus. In this discourse, Paul also sounded the alarm concerning apostasy. Apparently, Paul was serious about this subject since he had warned the Ephesian elders about it both day and night, with tears, for a period of three years (Acts 20:31). Jude also noted the internal character of apostasy (Jude 4).

Thus, these verses indicate that apostasy is not something that takes place outside of the four walls of the church. Rather, it is a reality that takes place within her midst. When one looks for apostasy, he should not look for it in the unsaved world. Instead he should look for it behind pulpits, in Christian publications, and even in Christian schools.

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5. Apostasy Knows No Limits

The very people or groups that one would initially think would not be involved in apostasy are sometimes the very ones “leading the charge” into apostasy. For example, Exodus 32:1-10 indicates that while Moses was on Mount Sinai for a 40-day period receiving God’s Law, the children of Israel at the base of Mount Sinai quickly apostatized by constructing a golden calf. What is most shocking about this event is that the ringleader of this apostasy was none other than the high priest Aaron. Similarly, Judges 17–18 records a wandering Levite who helped introduce the first instance of idolatry into the land of Israel after the conquest under Joshua. This idolatry was first introduced into a household and then an entire tribe (Dan). Again, what is startling about this story is that the Levite responsible for these actions was none other than Jonathan, who was the son of Gershom or the grandson of Moses (Judges 18:30).

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General characteristics of apostasy

5. Apostasy Knows No Limits (cont.)

A New Testament example of apostasy is found in Rev 2:4-5 where Christ charged the church at Ephesus with having left its first love. Apparently, this sin represented a severe departure in Christ's eyes since He threatened to take away from the Ephesians their lampstand or sphere of influence unless they returned to Him. It is again surprising to observe that it was none other than the church of Ephesus involved in this departure. In sum, one would never have guessed that Aaron, Jonathan, and Ephesus would have ever been involved in apostasy. Yet these are the very ones who led in the area of apostasy.

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6. Apostasy Can Happen Quickly

Another characteristic of apostasy is the speed or haste in which it can transpire. Apostasy need not take several generations to occur. Galatians 1:6 says, “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel” (italics added). When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he expressed shock or surprise on two grounds. First, he was astonished at how quickly his readers had deserted the truth that he had imparted to them. Second, he was amazed that the Galatians had parted company with him on the very gospel itself. They did not disagree with Paul on some tangential or minor issue but rather on the core nature of the gospel, which represents the heart of Christianity.

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7. Apostasy is Satanically Energized

Who ultimately is behind apostasy? The following verses divulge Satan as the true culprit.(2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 4:1) This important spiritual reality is that demons are the ultimate source of power behind the last days apostasy of the church. Do men or Satan cause apostasy? The answer to this question is “yes” since both alternatives are true. Satan places ideas into the minds of fallen men typically in positions of ecclesiastical influence in order to push the church further into apostasy. Satan even uses believers in order to accomplish this endeavor. Satan’s ability to use carnal believers, or those who cater to their sin nature, is apparent from the following passages. (Matt. 16:23; Acts 5:3-4; Eph. 4:26-27). Thus, these passages all seem to indicate that Satan has an ability to negatively influence the lives of carnal believers.

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8. Apostasy is Destructive

The Spirit wants believers to be aware of the dangers associated with apostasy, which explains why Scripture frequently analogizes apostasy to familiar dangers from the physical world. (1 Tim. 1:19-20; Acts 20:29). In 2 Tim. 2:17-18 the verb translated “overthrown” is also used in John 2:15 in reference to how Christ overturned the moneychangers’ tables in the temple. Like the overturning of a table, apostasy represents a similar destabilizing influence.

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General characteristics of apostasy

9. Apostasy Brings Difficulty to the Man of God

Paul said, “But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13, italics added). He also predicted, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers, and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Although there are many applications of these verses, they bear a striking similarity to a modern ministry philosophy that has captured the hearts of many of today’s evangelical churches known as the “church growth movement.” Church growth is not per se wrong as long as God is the one giving the growth (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 3:6).

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9. Apostasy Brings Difficulty to the Man of God (cont.)

However, God-induced numerical growth is not what modern-day church growth advocates promote. Rather, what they mean by church growth is sociological polling in an attempt to determine what the unsaved want to experience in church. When such data is collected, it is concluded that the unsaved want entertainment, shorter sermons, “practical” preaching enabling them to succeed in business, and fewer references to offensive concepts such as blood, hell, sin, or Christ’s second coming. The church growth movement then concludes that if the church is then repackaged to satisfy these yearnings of the unsaved, then people will flock to church thereby causing it to grow. While no one disputes that large crowds can be accumulated through the use of this methodology, the real question is, “does the end result represent God’s definition of what the church is supposed to be?”