

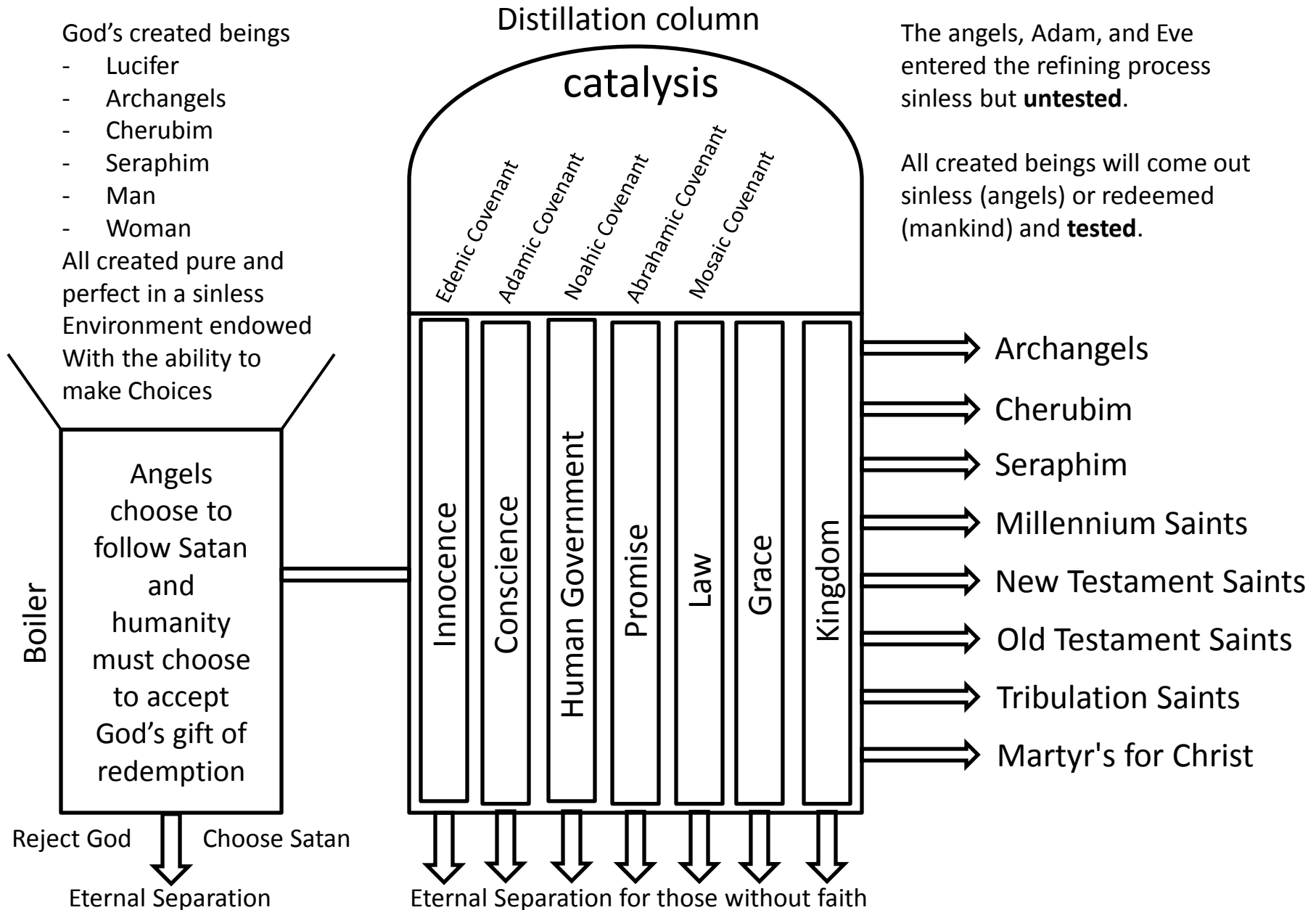
Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

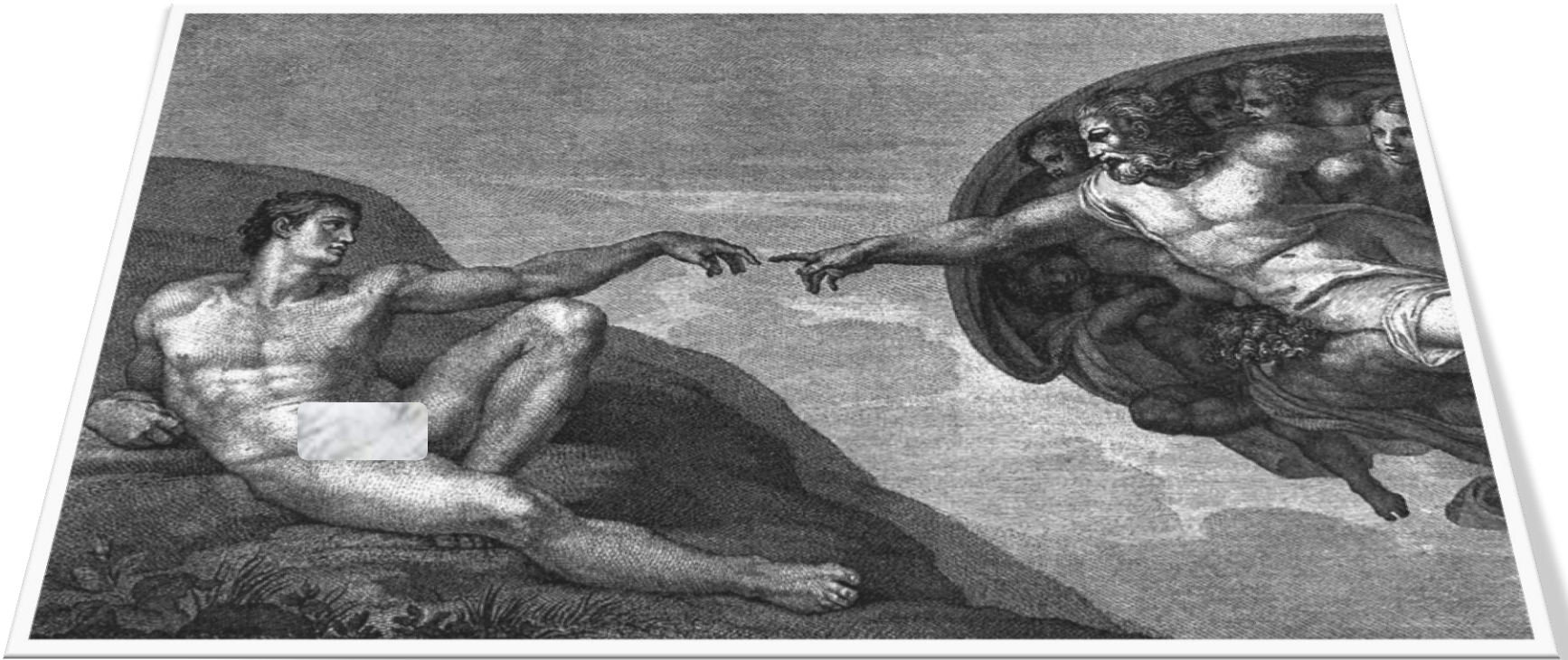


Fulfillment

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

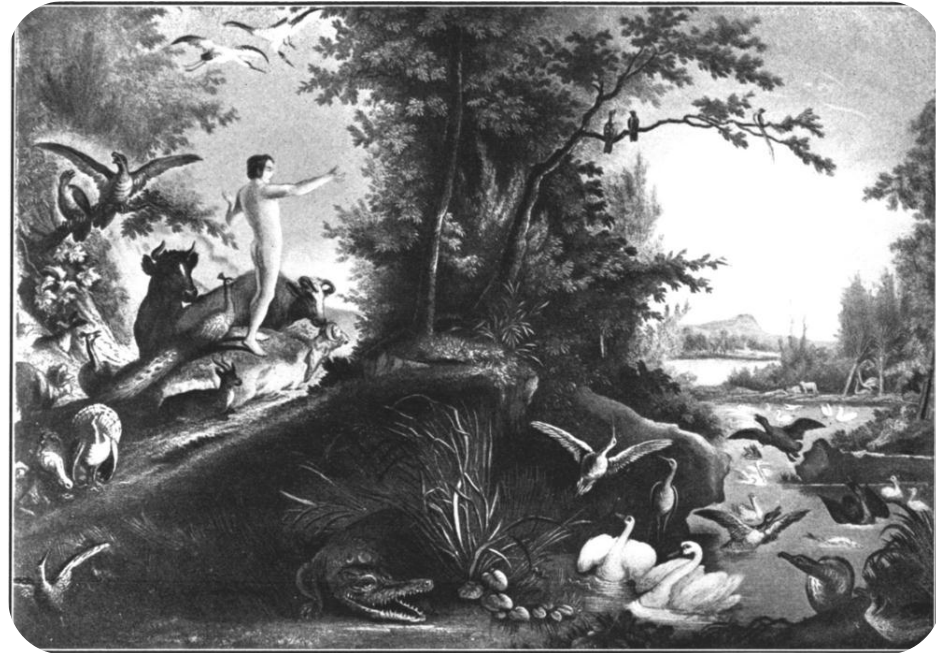
- God and Adam

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



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Dispensation of Innocence

Man's Responsibilities

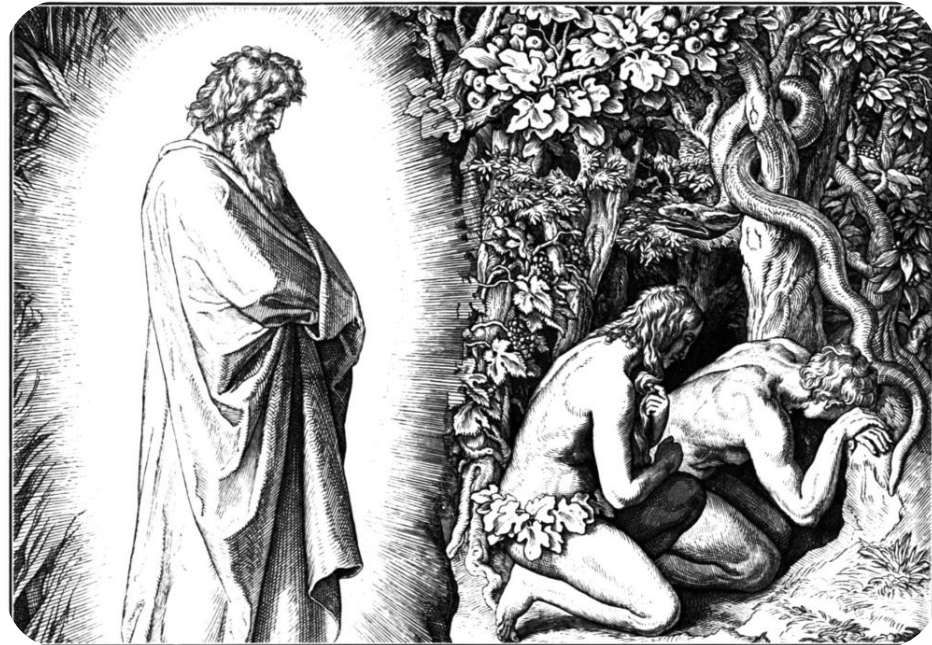
- Man's responsibilities in the garden were to fulfill the Edenic Covenant, essentially to multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it. Mankind was forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

Adamic Covenant (Gen 3:14 – 3:21)

Parties to the Covenant

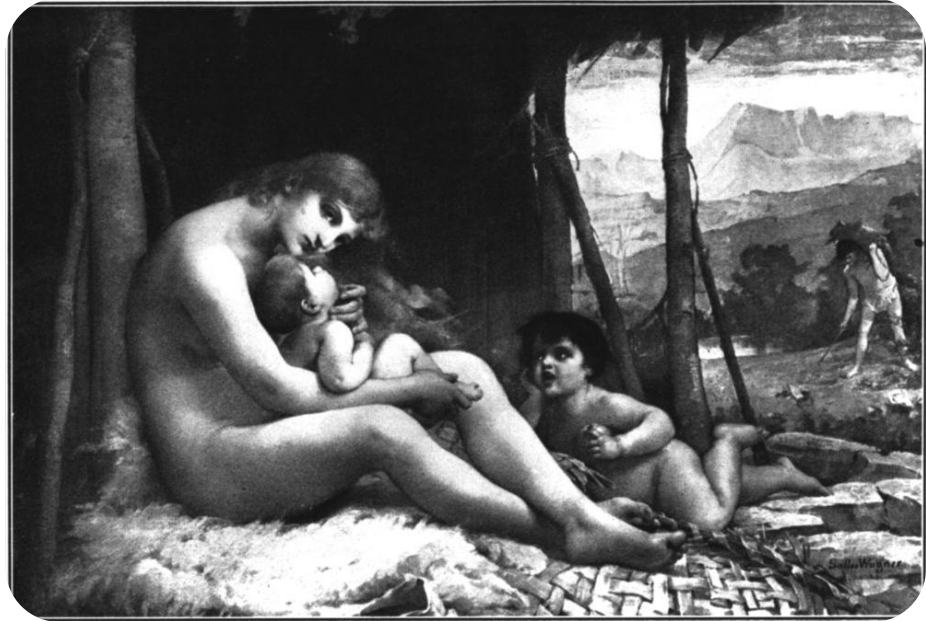
- God and Adam as the representative for mankind

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.’



Refining a Creation for Eternity

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



Refining a Creation for Eternity

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



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

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

Man's Responsibilities

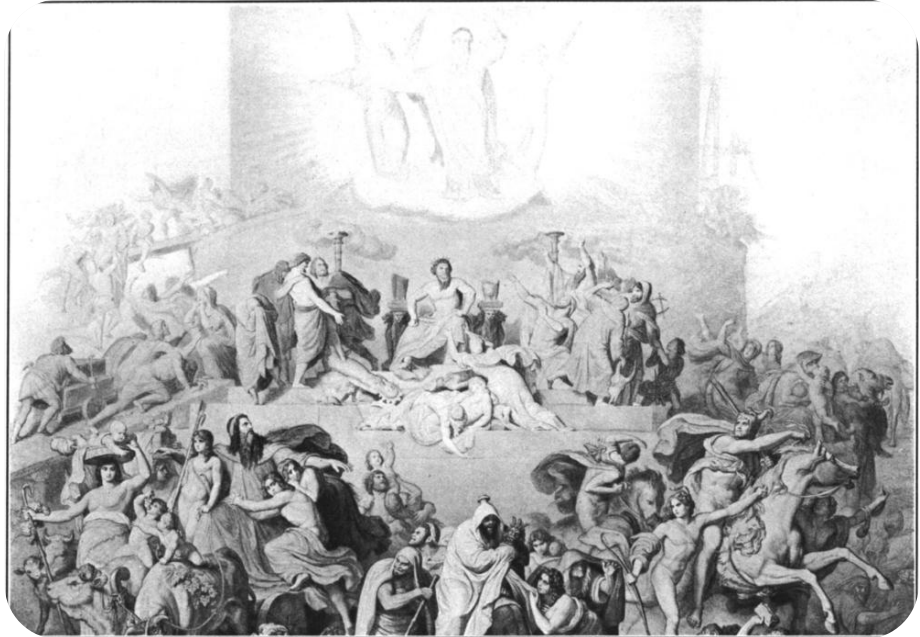
- Man's responsibilities were to fulfill the Noachic covenant. Mankind was to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Mankind was to govern itself with the full authority of capital punishment.

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.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

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.**



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Review of past lessons

At The End Of The Third Economy

Promise of Redemption Maintained - Genesis 12:1-3

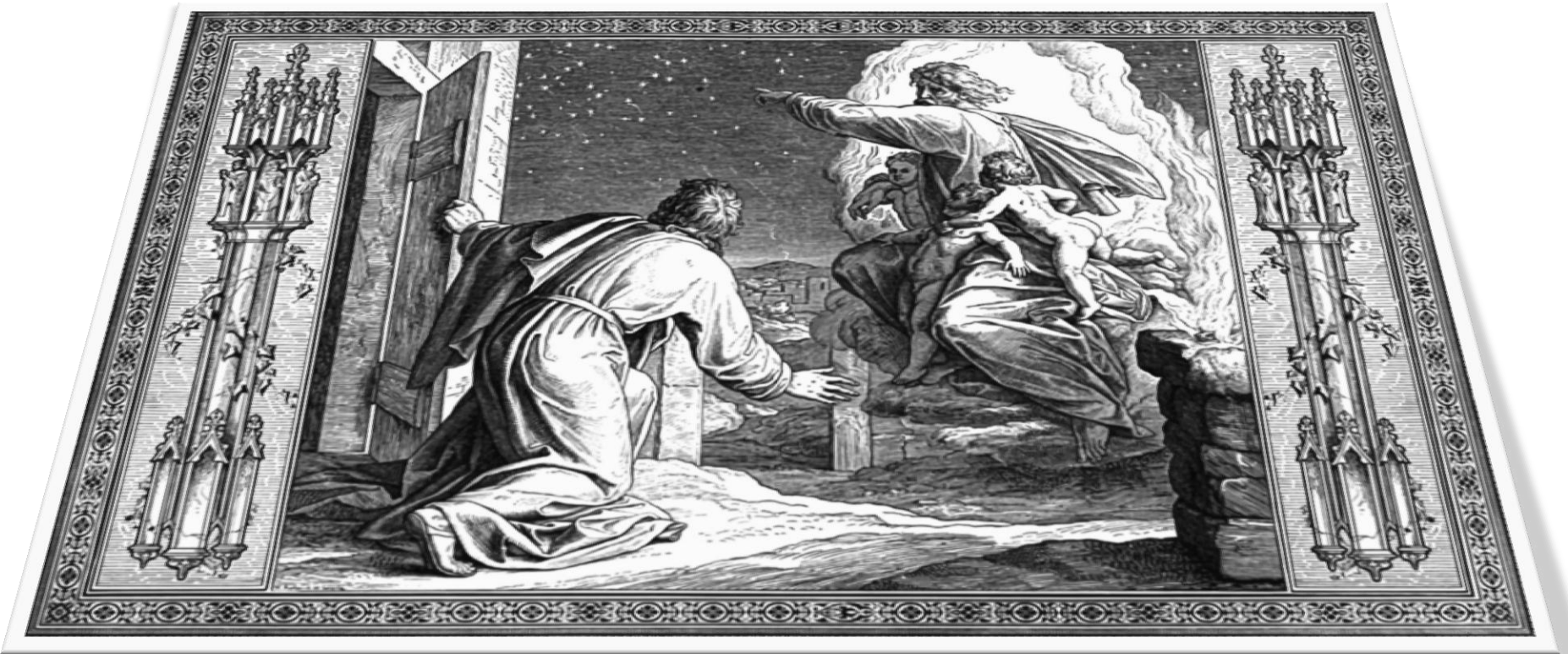
- Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you,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



Refining a Creation for Eternity

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.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

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.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

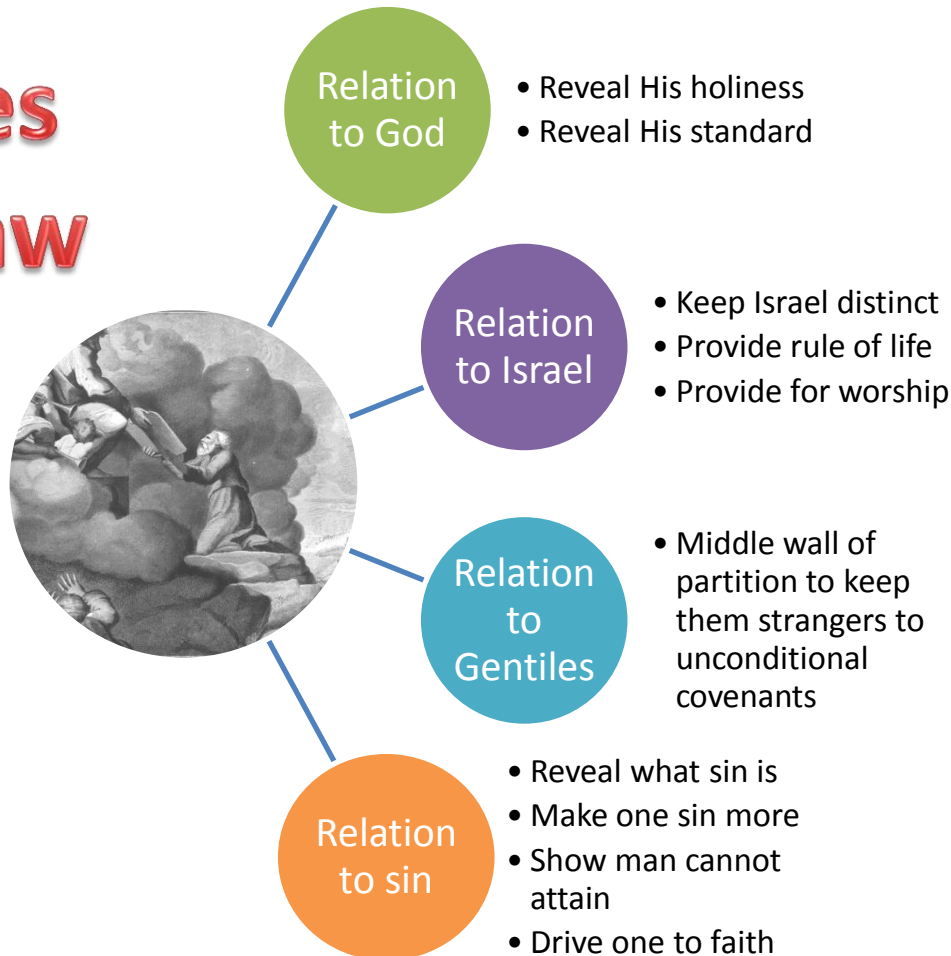


Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Fifth Economy

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

Purposes of the Law

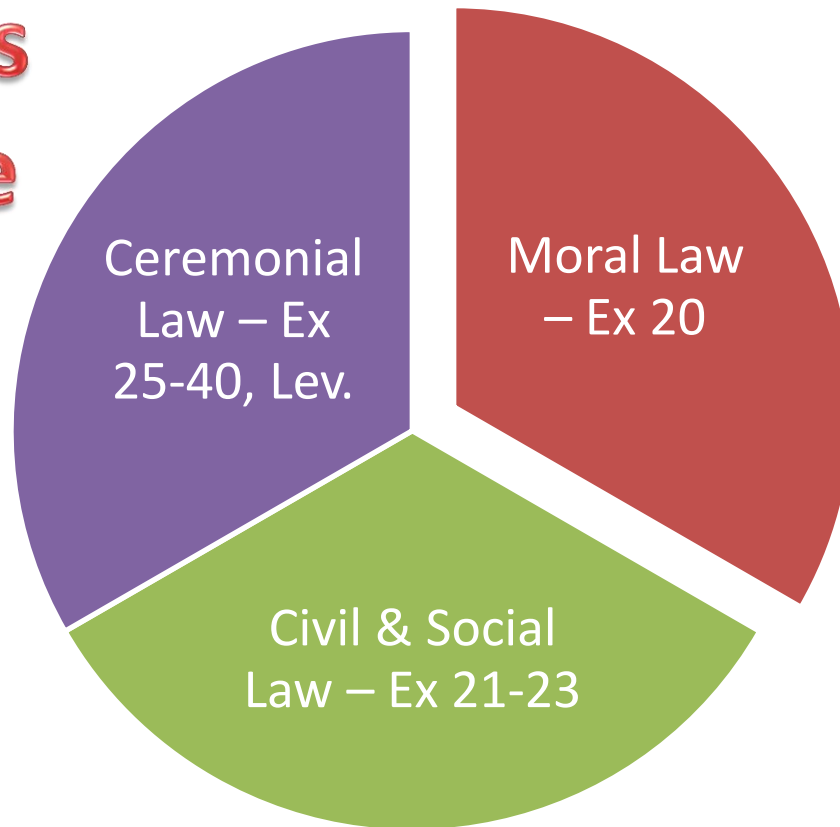


Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

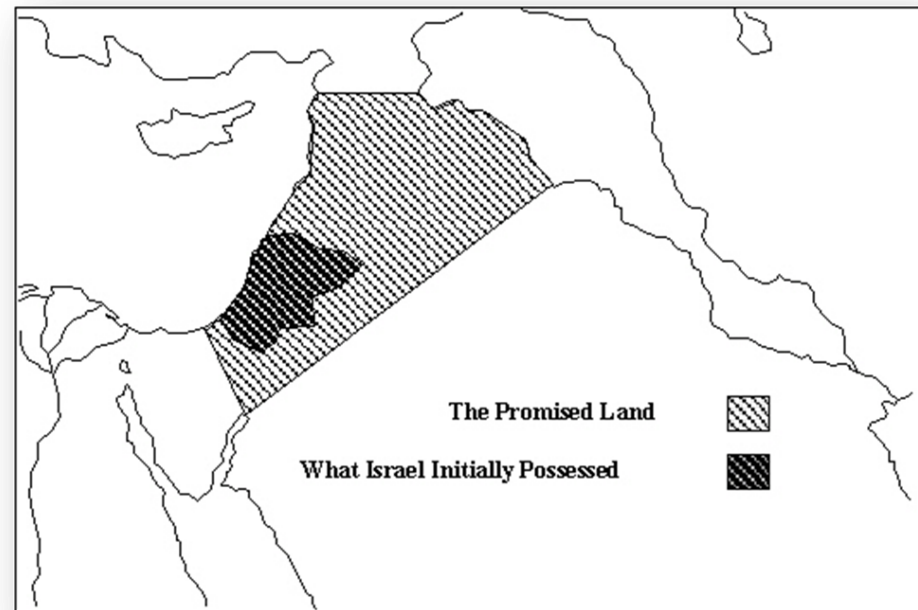
Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1 – 30:20)

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.

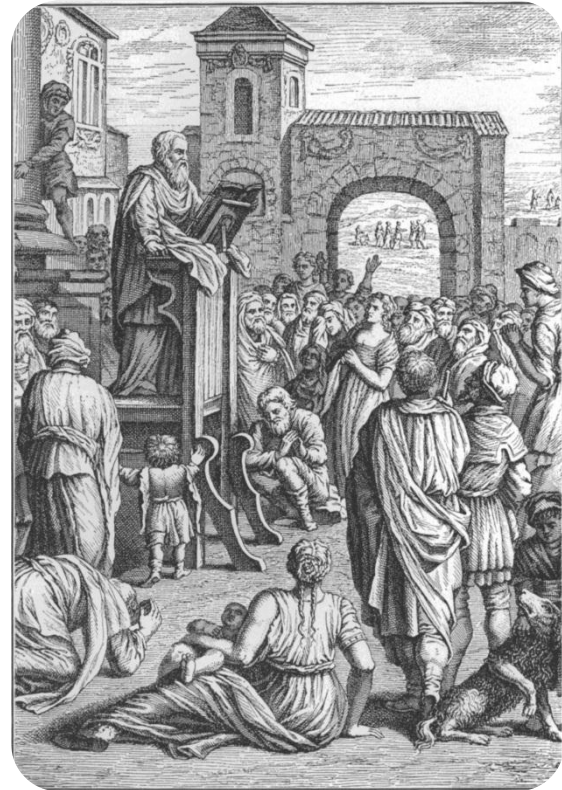
Refining a Creation for Eternity

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.”

Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

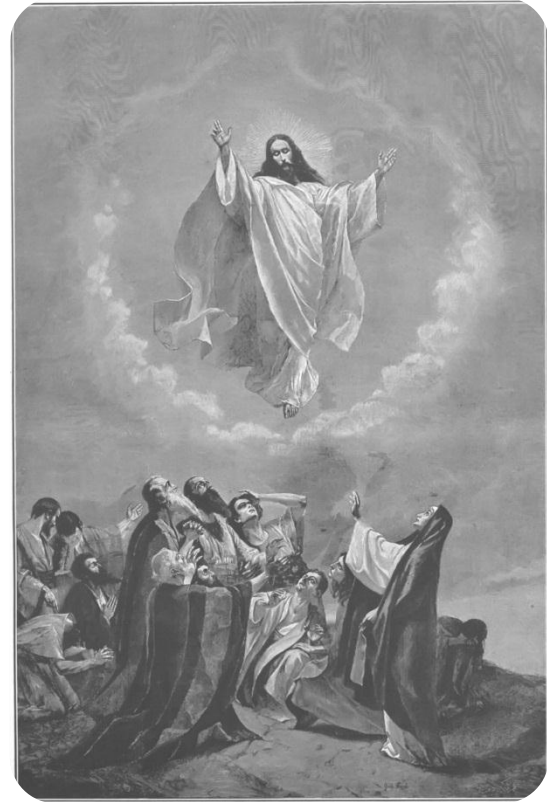
- Under Grace the responsibility on man is to accept the gift of righteousness that God freely offers to all (Rom. 5:15–18). There are two aspects of the grace of God in this economy: (1) the blessing is entirely of grace and (2) that grace is for all.

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

Persecution of the Early Church

Summary

Among these confessors and martyrs were not wanting those in whom the pure, quiet flame of enthusiasm rose into the wild fire of fanaticism, and whose zeal was corrupted with impatient haste, heaven-tempting presumption, and pious ambition; to whom that word could be applied: "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." They delivered themselves up to the heathen officers, and in every way sought the martyr's crown, that they might merit heaven and be venerated on earth as saints. Thus Tertullian tells of a company of Christians in Ephesus, who begged martyrdom from the heathen governor, but after a few had been executed, the rest were sent away by him with the words: "Miserable creatures, if you really wish to die, you have precipices and halters enough."

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

Summary (cont.)

Though this error was far less discreditable than the opposite extreme of the cowardly fear of man, yet it was contrary to the instruction and the example of Christ and the apostles, and to the spirit of true martyrdom, which consists in the union of sincere humility and power, and possesses divine strength in the very consciousness of human weakness. And accordingly intelligent church teachers censured this stormy, morbid zeal.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

Summary (cont.)

The church of Smyrna speaks thus: “We do not commend those who expose themselves; for the gospel teaches not so.” Clement of Alexandria says: “The Lord himself has commanded us to flee to another city when we are persecuted; not as if the persecution were an evil; not as if we feared death; but that we may not lead or help any to evil doing.” In Tertullian’s view martyrdom perfects itself in divine patience; and with Cyprian it is a gift of divine grace, which one cannot hastily grasp, but must patiently wait for.

But after all due allowance for such adulteration and degeneracy, the martyrdom of the first three centuries still remains one of the grandest phenomena of history, and an evidence of the indestructible divine nature of Christianity.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

Summary (cont.)

No other religion could have stood for so long a period the combined opposition of Jewish bigotry, Greek philosophy, and Roman policy and power; no other could have triumphed at last over so many foes by purely moral and spiritual force, without calling any carnal weapons to its aid. This comprehensive and long-continued martyrdom is the peculiar crown and glory of the early church; it pervaded its entire literature and gave it a predominantly apologetic character; it entered deeply into its organization and discipline and the development of Christian doctrine; it affected the public worship and private devotions; it produced a legendary poetry; but it gave rise also, innocently, to a great deal of superstition, and undue exaltation of human merit; and it lies at the foundation of the Catholic worship of saints and relics.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the Old Testament Canon

Preliminary Considerations

The principles operative in the historical process of canonization are three:

- (1) inspiration by God;
- (2) recognition by men of God; and
- (3) collection and preservation of the books by the people of God.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the Old Testament Canon

Preliminary Considerations

Inspiration by God. God took the first step in canonization when He inspired the books. Thus, the simple answer to the question as to why there are only thirty-nine books in the Old Testament canon is that those are all that God inspired. Obviously, if God did not inspire and thus give divine authority to a book, no council of men could ever do it.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the Old Testament Canon

Preliminary Considerations

Recognition by men of God. Once God gave a book its authority, men of God assented to that authority by their recognition of it as a prophetic utterance. There is every reason to believe that this recognition followed immediately upon the publication of the message. As Edward J. Young states, “There is no evidence that these particular books existed among the ancient Jews for many years before they were recognized as canonical. Indeed, if a book was actually revealed by God, is it conceivable that such a book would circulate for many years before anyone recognized its true nature?” The evidence, in fact, is to the contrary. Moses’ writings were received in his day (Ex. 24:3; Jos. 1:8). Joshua’s book was added to the canon immediately (Josh. 24:26). Daniel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, had received the latter’s book along with “the books” (Dan. 9:2).

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the Old Testament Canon

Preliminary Considerations

Collection and preservation by the people of God. Moses' books were collected and preserved beside the Ark (Deut. 31:26). "Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote them in the book and placed it before the Lord" (1 Sam. 10:25). Daniel had a collection of "the books," and there is every indication throughout the Old Testament that prophetic writings were collected as soon as they were written. During Josiah's day, the "law of Moses" was "found in the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 23:24–25), where it had been stored. Proverbs 25:1 notes that "these ... are the proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, transcribed." Ezra the priest had preserved a copy of "the law of Moses" that he brought with him out of Babylon after the captivity (Ezra 7:6). Therefore, inspiration produced the canonical books, and subsequent recognition and collection preserved them for posterity.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the Old Testament Canon

Summary and Conclusion

The history of the canon indicates a gradual development of the collection of prophetic books which were added continually to the Law as they were written.

The Old Testament canon was probably completed about 400 B.C., and perhaps by about 200 B.C. the twenty-two books that had undergone this process of canonization began to assume an alternate threefold classification: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The origin of the threefold division is obscure. One suggestion is that a third category may have been created for liturgical reasons (to fit their festal year). A more plausible approach is that the threefold classification is a result of topical arrangement into legal, historical, and nonhistorical books.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the Old Testament Canon

Summary and Conclusion

Whatever the reason for a threefold classification, there are several lines of evidence to support the view that the Old Testament was originally canonized into the twofold division of the Law (five books) and the Prophets (seventeen books): (1) the way in which the historical books are linked together into a unit; (2) the most common New Testament designation of the Old Testament, “Law and Prophets”; (3) the reference in Daniel to the Law and “the books”(Dan. 9:2); and (4) the recognition of the “Former” prophetic books by the “Latter.” Nevertheless, because of the early tendency to separate the Prophets into two groups, the final form of the Hebrew canon eventually became threefold: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the New Testament Canon

The Source of Canonization

God is the source of canonicity. A book is canonical because it is inspired, and it is inspired because God moved in and through the men who wrote it. In this sense, canonicity is passive; it is something received from God. There is also an active sense of the word canonization, the sense in which the people of God were active in the recognition and collection of the books God had inspired. The historical process of canonization is concerned with this latter sense.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the New Testament Canon

The Stimuli for Canonization

Books were prophetic. One of the initial reasons for collecting and preserving the inspired books was that they were prophetic. That is, since they were written by an apostle or prophet of God, they must be valuable, and if valuable, they should be preserved. This reasoning is apparent in apostolic times, by the collection and circulation of Paul's epistles (cf. 2 Peter 3:15–16; Col. 4:6). The postapostolic period continued to reflect this high regard for the apostolic writings of the New Testament by their voluminous and authoritative quotations from those inspired books.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the New Testament Canon

The Stimuli for Canonization

Demands of early church. Closely connected with the foregoing reason for preserving the inspired books were the theological and ethical demands of the early church. That is, in order to know which books should be read in the churches (cf. 1 Thess. 5:27 and 1 Tim. 4:13) and which books could be definitely applied to the theological and practical problems of the Christian church (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16–17), it became necessary to have a complete collection of the books that could provide the authoritative norm for faith and practice.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the New Testament Canon

The Stimuli for Canonization

Heretical stimulus. On the negative side there was the heretical stimulus. At least as early as A.D. 140 the heretical Marcion accepted only limited sections of the full New Testament canon. Marcion's heretical canon, consisting of only Luke's gospel and ten of Paul's epistles, pointed up clearly the need to collect a complete canon of New Testament Scriptures.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the New Testament Canon

The Stimuli for Canonization

Missionary stimulus. On the positive side, there was the missionary stimulus. Christianity had spread rapidly to other countries, and there was the need to translate the Bible into those other languages (see chaps. 27–29). As early as the first half of the second century the Bible was translated into Syriac and Old Latin. But because the missionaries could not translate a Bible that did not exist, attention was necessarily drawn to the question of which books really belonged to the authoritative Christian canon.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the New Testament Canon

The Stimuli for Canonization

Persecutions and politics. The final phase of full and general recognition of the whole canon of New Testament writings also involved a negative and political stimulus. The Diocletian persecutions of about A.D. 302/303–5 provided forceful motivation for the church to sort, sift, and settle on the New Testament Scriptures. For certainly the books they would risk their lives to preserve must have been considered sacred to them.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Development and History of the New Testament Canon

The Stimuli for Canonization

Persecutions and politics. the destruction of biblical manuscripts during the pre-Constantine persecutions, especially under Decius (249–51) and Diocletian (302/3–305), was widespread throughout the Roman Empire. Even after Diocletian abdicated (305), the persecution begun in his reign continued until the Edict of Toleration (311) and the Edict of Milan (313). Diocletian's Edict in 302 was followed by the systematic destruction of the Scriptures and other church books, which resulted in the loss of untold numbers of biblical manuscripts. Only the library at Caesarea (in the East) was spared. This library housed a collection of thirty thousand books that were used by Origen, Pamphilius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Jerome. Later, even this great library was destroyed by the Moslems (A.D. 638) as they took control of much of the territory of the ancient Roman Empire. That loss is of inestimable value.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy



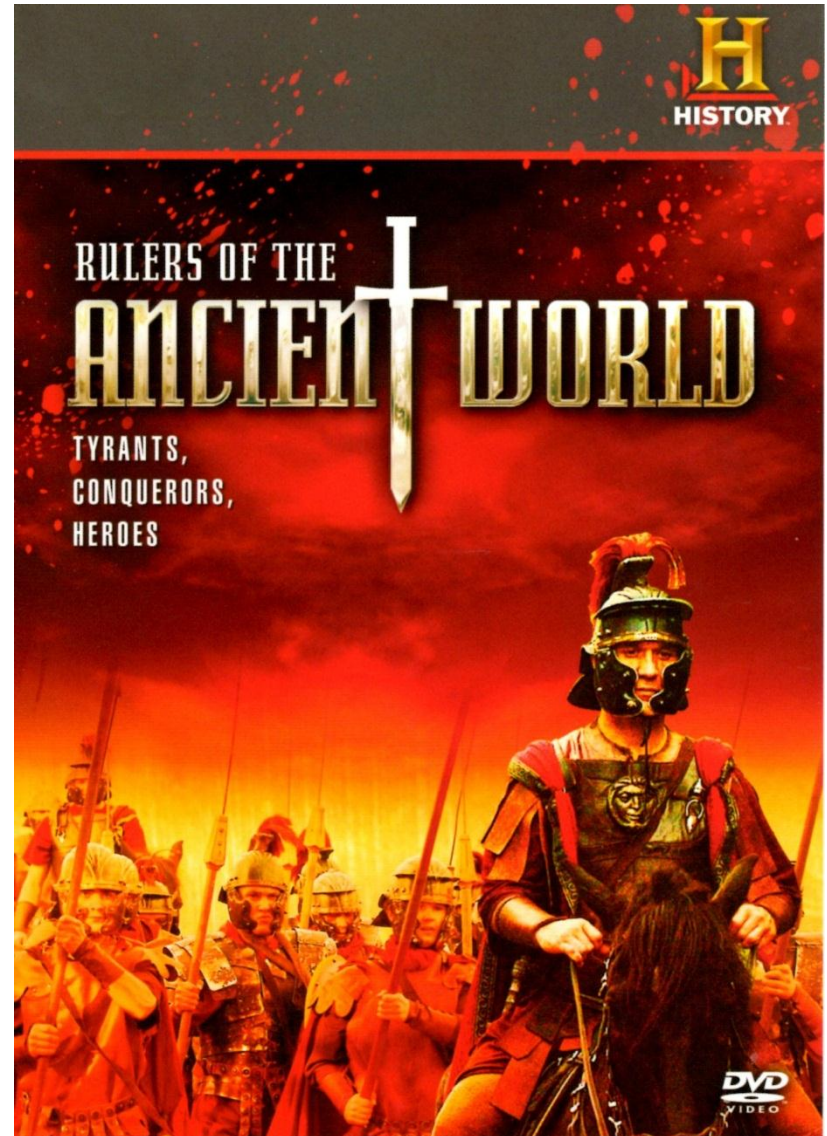
Refining a Creation for Eternity

Rulers of the Ancient World

Constantine The Great

Start: 19:00

End: 25:41



Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The First Council of Nicaea, 325

in the year 325, the twentieth of his reign, the emperor summoned the bishops of the empire by a letter of invitation, putting at their service the public conveyances, and liberally defraying from the public treasury the expenses of their residence in Nicaea and of their return. Each bishop was to bring with him two presbyters and three servants. They travelled partly in the public post carriages, partly on horses, mules, or asses, partly on foot. Many came to bring their private disputes before the emperor, who caused all their papers, without reading them, to be burned, and exhorted the parties to reconciliation and harmony.

The whole number of bishops assembled was at most three hundred and eighteen; that is, about one sixth of all the bishops of the empire, who are estimated as at least eighteen hundred (one thousand for the Greek provinces, eight hundred for the Latin), and only half as many as were at the council of Chalcedon. Including the presbyters and deacons and other attendants the number may, have amounted to between fifteen hundred and two thousand.

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One of four city gates in Nicaea (modern day Iznik, Turkey).
Founded in the fourth century BC and location of the First (325) and Seventh (787) Ecumenical Councils.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

One of four city gates in Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Part of the city wall in Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Part of the city wall in Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Modern day street in Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Modern day park in Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).
Overlooking Lake Iznik.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Modern day park in Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).
Overlooking Lake Iznik.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Outside of Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).



Refining a Creation for Eternity

St. Sophia Church in Nicaea
(modern day Iznik, Turkey).
Location of the Second Council
of Nicaea (Seventh Ecumenical
Council) in 787.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

St. Sophia Church in Nicaea
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Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The First Council of Nicaea, 325

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible, and invisible.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten, i.e., of the essence of the Father, God of God, and] Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made [in heaven and on earth]; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he cometh to judge the quick and the dead.

“And in the Holy Ghost.

[“And those who say: there was a time when he was not; and: he was not before he was made; and: he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or thing, or the Son of God is created, or changeable, or alterable; they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.”]

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Council of Nicaea, 325

The council of Nicaea is the most important event of the fourth century, and its bloodless intellectual victory over a dangerous error is of far greater consequence to the progress of true civilization, than all the bloody victories of Constantine and his successors. It forms an epoch in the history of doctrine, summing up the results of all previous discussions on the deity of Christ and the incarnation, and at the same time regulating the further development of the Catholic orthodoxy for centuries. The Nicene creed, in the enlarged form which it received after the second ecumenical council, is the only one of all, the symbols of doctrine which, with the exception of the subsequently added filioque, is acknowledged alike by the Greek, the Latin, and the Evangelical churches, and to this, day, after a course of fifteen centuries, is prayed and sung from Sunday to Sunday in all countries of the civilized world.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Seven Ecumenical Councils

First Council of Nicaea (325)	The result of this council was the establishment (by anticipation) of the doctrine of the true divinity of Christ, the identity of essence between the Son and the Father.
First Council of Constantinople (381)	The council enlarged the Nicene confession by an article on the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, in opposition to the Macedonians or Pneumatomachists, and issued seven more canons, of which the Latin versions, however, give only the first four, leaving the genuineness of the other three, as many think, in doubt.
Council of Ephesus (431)	It condemned the error of Nestorius on the relation of the two natures in Christ, without, stating clearly the correct doctrine. It produced, therefore, but a negative result, and is the least important of the first four councils, as it stands lowest also in moral character.
Council of Chalcedon (451)	The fourth general council fixed the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ in opposition to Eutychianism and Nestorianism, and enacted thirty canons (according to some manuscripts only twenty-seven or twenty-eight), of which the twenty-eighth was resisted by the Roman legates and Leo I.
Second Council of Constantinople (553)	issued fourteen anathemas against the three chapters, so called, or the christological views of three departed bishops and divines, Theodore of Mopsueste, Theodoret of Cyros, and Ibas of Edessa, who were charged with leaning toward the Nestorian heresy.
Third Council of Constantinople (680)	condemned Monothelism (and Pope Honorius) and consummated the old Catholic christology
Second Council of Nicaea (787)	sanctioned the image-worship of the Catholic church, but has no dogmatical importance.

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Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople (modern day Istanbul, Turkey). From 360 to 1453 served as the HQ of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The current structure was completed in 537. Muhammad had prophesied that the first Muslim to pray in Hagia Sophia would go to paradise.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

On May 29, 1453, The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Mehmet II, conquered Constantinople after a 54 day siege. He directly went to Hagia Sophia and ordered the church to be converted into a mosque. In 1931 it closed and in 1935 reopened as a museum.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Hagia Sophia from the
Strait of Bosphorus



Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Gregory I and the Papacy

Protestant church historians generally maintain that institutionalized Roman Catholicism began with Gregory's appointment as bishop of Rome in 590. Though he refused the title of pope, administratively he organized the papal system of government that characterized the entire medieval period. Thus all the major bishoprics of the West looked to him for guidance and leadership. He likewise standardized the liturgy and theology of the burgeoning Roman church. Doctrines such as the veneration of Mary, purgatory, an early form of transubstantiation, and praying to departed saints found their infant pronouncements in his writings.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Islam

During the sixth and seventh centuries, the rise of a new monotheistic faith, Islam, drew great numbers of members away from the Roman Catholic Church. The religion centers on Mohammed (circa 570–632), the prophet of Allah, who claimed he had received a series of revelations from the angel Gabriel. Those revelations were later inscripturated in the Qur'an (Koran). The hub of the Qur'an, called the Witness, is that there is one God, Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet. To say this in faith is to become a Muslim, one who submits to God.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Islam

In addition to reciting the Witness, Muslims observe four other pillars of faith. Devout Muslims pray five times daily, pay alms to the poor, fast during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan, and make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The theology of Islam thus concentrates on winning the favor of Allah through the practice of the faith.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Islam

Islam spread quickly. As Mohammed preached faith in Allah, he met tremendous resistance and in 622 fled from Mecca to Medina—the most important event in Islamic history. By 630 he had reconquered Mecca and established control over much of the Arabian peninsula. By 732 his successors had overcome Palestine, northern Africa, and Spain and were only stopped at the Battle of Tours in France. The military vacuum left by the collapse of western Rome and the jihad, or holy war, proclaimed by the Qur'an, help to explain the swift conquest of Islam. Huge territories once dominated by Christianity were lost, many of which have never been recovered.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

East and West

After the fall of Rome, the Eastern and Western wings of the Roman Catholic Church faced differing circumstances. With no emperor to interfere, the Western popes gained power as they dealt with the chaos left by the barbarian invaders. By contrast, the Eastern Empire's ruler interfered in the affairs of the Eastern church, which also had to spend resources and energy fighting Islam.

The two branches of the church also took different positions on a number of issues. In the second century they had disagreed over when to celebrate Easter. They also differed on the issue of celibacy for clergy below the rank of bishop and on the use of statues and pictures of saints in churches. The most serious disagreement came in 867 when the Eastern patriarch accused the Western church of heresy for saying that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son rather than just from the Father.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

East and West

Relations between the two churches became increasingly hostile until a minor issue brought the factions into a confrontation in 1054. All the bitter feelings and differences from the past erupted in the discussion. The meeting ended with the Roman delegates excommunicating the patriarch and his followers. Not to be outdone, the patriarch anathematized the pope and the Western church. From that time on the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church have gone in different directions.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Crusades

Muslims were predominantly Arabs until the eleventh century when the Seljuk Turks assumed control over much of Islamic territory. Much more fanatical and brutal, the Turks harassed Christian pilgrims and threatened the security of the Eastern church. Hence, in 1095 Pope Urban II issued a call to deliver the holy places of Palestine from Muslim hands. The response of Christian Europe was overwhelming. From 1095 to 1291, waves of Christian warriors set out to accomplish Urban's goal. Few of the Crusades were successful.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Crusades

There were seven major crusades, with dozens of smaller ones. The first crusade (1095–1099) was the only successful one. The crusaders established the Latin Kingdom in Jerusalem, which lasted several decades. They built castles to defend their holdings and organized several orders of knights to protect the holy places. But their effort was in vain. Gradually, the Muslims regained control of Palestine and drove out the Christians.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Crusades

The Crusades radically transformed Christian Europe. Culturally, as crusaders returned from the East, they brought new foods and clothing with them. Educationally, books from the ancient world that had been preserved by the Muslim Arabs became available to Europeans. Economically, trade revived, the church gained new wealth from the wills of soldiers lost in battle, and a new class—the middle class—began to take hold in the West. Politically, as kings taxed their subjects to gain revenue, their power increased. In many ways, the Crusades were a defining moment in the medieval church. People's loyalties were no longer directed solely toward the church. Over time the church was simply not as important in their lives as it once was.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Martin Luther

Luther was born November 10, 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, into an affluent copper miner's family. Steered firmly by his father, Luther decided to seek a degree in law. But one July day in 1505, a violent thunderstorm knocked him to the ground, and he screamed, "Help me, St. Anne! I will become a monk" (Bainton, 1950, 78). That vow changed his life.

To his father's consternation, Luther joined the Augustinian cloister in Erfurt. There he opened and studied the Bible for the first time. His fervent yearning to serve, please, and love God stemmed from a haunting fear of God's judgment. To win God's favor, he committed himself to a rigorous schedule of study, meditation, and fasting. But his life of rigid asceticism brought no peace. God was his judge, not his Savior.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Martin Luther

In 1511 his Augustinian order sent him to the University of Wittenberg where he completed his Th.D. in October 1512. He then secured a permanent appointment there as a professor of Bible. But his struggle over God's holiness and justice deepened. Sometime between 1517 and 1519 Luther found the peace he sought. Through reading the New Testament, especially Romans, he came to understand that justification was not by works but through faith. Neither Luther nor the world would ever be the same.

Across the river from Wittenberg, a Dominican monk named Johann Tetzel was selling indulgences. These were small pieces of parchment that guaranteed forgiveness of sins for a price. Brazenly he trumpeted, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." Such arrogance enraged Luther. He preached fervently against indulgences, and on October 31, 1517, he nailed Ninety-Five Theses for debate on the Castle Church door at Wittenberg. In them he argued that indulgences could not remove guilt, did not apply to purgatory, and provided a false sense of security. He later wrote, "The pope has no jurisdiction over purgatory, and if he does, he should empty the place free of charge" (Bainton, 1950, 81). The Reformation had begun.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli was born in Wildhaus, Switzerland, in 1484. Educated in the best universities and ordained a priest, Zwingli seemed destined to serve his life in the priesthood. But through theological inquiry and personal struggle, he came to saving faith in 1516. By 1523 he was leading the Reformation in Zurich. In 1526 his teaching and preaching convinced the city council to permit clergy to marry, abolish the mass, ban Catholic images and statues, dissolve the monasteries, and sever all ties with Rome. Additionally, the Zurich reformers published their vernacular New Testament in 1524 and the entire Bible in 1530, four years before Luther's translation became available.

Breaking his vow of celibacy, Zwingli secretly married Anna Reinhart in 1522. He made their wedding public in 1524. Like Luther, he demonstrated that spiritual leadership did not demand celibacy. His break with Rome was radical.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Calvin

With Zwingli dead, the Swiss reformers lacked a leader. John Calvin (1509–1564) filled that gap. As the reformer of Geneva, he inspired John Knox, the Dutch Reformation, the English Reformation, and the Puritans and Pilgrims of North America.

Calvin was born in France on July 10, 1509, and studied theology at the University of Paris and law at the University of Orleans. Sometime during the 1520s he trusted Christ and joined the young Protestant cause. An explosion of anti-Protestant fury forced Calvin to flee Paris. For three years he was on the run in France, Switzerland, and Italy.

During this time he also began writing. By March 1536 he had published *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. At first a slim volume, the *Institutes* went through five revisions. The 1559 edition is the definitive one containing four books of eighty chapters. With its theme of “God, the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the World,” it was the systematic theology of the Reformation.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The English Reformation

As a nation, England was ripe for reformation. The work of Wycliffe and his followers, the Lollards, had prepared the way. The writings of Luther circulated through the land. In addition, William Tyndale (1494–1536) and Miles Coverdale (1488–1568) had each produced highly accurate translations of the Bible that were widely available. But the catalyst for the break with Rome came with the marital problems of the English king, Henry VIII.

Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon had produced no sons; however, Henry's affair with Anne Boleyn resulted in her pregnancy. When Henry sought an annulment of his marriage, the pope refused. In 1534 Henry, therefore, removed England from the pope's jurisdiction and made himself head of the English church (now called the Anglican church). Henry also confiscated Catholic land.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The English Reformation

As Protestant and Catholic forces in England struggled for control, confusion and crisis reigned for the next decade. But when Elizabeth I, Henry's daughter, came to the throne, she chose a middle road built upon national unity and not theological considerations. The core of her solution was that the Anglican church would be Protestant in its theology and Catholic in its ritual. She therefore neutralized Catholicism in England but did not satisfy her most vocal critics, the Puritans.

Puritanism was a complex movement that primarily yearned for the purification of the Anglican church. Puritans wanted to complete the Reformation in England. They claimed that Elizabeth had not gone far enough in her reforms. Congregational in church government and Calvinist in theology, the Puritans would later be expelled from the Anglican church. This, in turn, led to the emigration of many to North America.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Life Sealed in the Spirit

How to approach God

Ephesians 2:1–10

¹ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Promise of Redemption Maintained

Redemption is available to all who believe in Christ but there is a future redemption for the Nation of Israel in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. Before Christ left this earth, He told the Nation of Israel that they will not see Him until they say “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matt 23:39). Christ will return as King in power and glory to reign for 1,000 years and He will establish Israel in the land promised to Abraham. By the end of the Tribulation, Israel will cry out to Jesus.

Titus 2:11–14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Angelic Conflict

The first epistle of Peter was written to believers who were scattered and undergoing persecution for their faith. It was not Satan personally attacking them but an indirect assault through the cosmic system: the culture, the ideas, and the unbelievers around them whose thinking was dominated by those false, human viewpoint ideas, which are also termed demonic in James 3:15. The context of 1 Peter strongly suggests indirect attacks of Satan through the cosmic system and not direct engagements with Satan and demons.

1 Peter 5:8–10

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.