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TRUTH *A flame*



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The DISPENSATION of PROMISE

By Pastor Matthew Ritchey



There were ten generations from Noah to Abram. With Noah, God had dispensed the right for humans to govern, but man had used governance to lead people in rebellion (i.e., Tower of Babel). With Abraham, God dispensed a new program in which He would create a nation for Himself through which He could bless all nations. Genesis 12:1-3 highlights several important parts of the Promise:

- ♦ land in which to dwell safely (geographical location)
- ♦ descendants would be a great nation (people united)
- ♦ make name great (known and honored in the world)
- ♦ bless you (occupy a place of honor and privilege)
- ♦ bless those that bless you, curse those that curse you (channel of blessing and judgment)
- ♦ blessings flow through you (other nations would only be blessed through that nation God would create from Abraham)

Understanding these things will lead to a proper understanding of the intended natural interpretation of the Bible. The rest of the Old Testament, including the books of Poetry and Prophets, hinge on this Promise. The teachings of Jesus are concerned with the fulfillment of this Promise (e.g., Sermon on the Mount; Sheep

and Goat judgment). The non-Pauline epistles are looking for these promises to be fulfilled. An understanding of the Dispensation of Promise should also convince us of Paul's uniqueness in Scripture. The only aspect of this Promise that affects the Body of Christ are the redemptive aspects.

To pass along an inheritance, you need to have an heir. The problem was that Sarai was barren, childless. How was Abraham supposed to bring forth a great nation with not even one descendant? Abraham asks this question in Genesis chapter fifteen. He recognizes that he does not have a child and questions how God was going to fulfill the Promise (Gen. 15:3-6). The Lord, then, makes a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:7-8). If the Lord breaks this agreement, He will show Himself to be a liar. There is not greater assurance than for a truthful, faithful God to give His word that He will do everything that He says He will do.

Despite this assurance from God, Sarah and Abraham got impatient (Gen 16:15). Their solution was for Abraham to conceive with Sarai's handmaid Hagar, who conceived and delivered a son, Ishmael. Great men of God were not perfect, and the Bible doesn't make them out to be. The Bible records humanity with all our flaws. Abram's decision had consequences that remain with us today. Religions in

Christ Died for your sins

The Need:

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a)
"...there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Romans 3:12b)

God's
Response

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins..." (Ephesians 1:7)

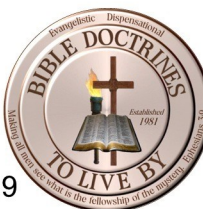
Man's
Response

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved...For I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried according to the Scriptures, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Believe it. Have Eternal Life

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery. Ephesians 3:9



the Middle East still ultimately derive from a disagreement surrounding the “true” beneficiaries of the Promise.

More specific details regarding the land are given in Genesis 17. Some theologians refer to this as the Palestinian Covenant, as it records God promising to give the land of Palestine to Abraham’s descendants forever. The Lord also changes Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah (Gen. 17:5,15). Another important addition is that the sign of circumcision is added (Gen. 17:10). Isaac is confirmed as the heir of the Promise (Gen. 17:17-19). Indeed, when the proper time arrived, the Promise went to Isaac (Gen. 25:5,11).

Isaac married Rebekah, and the couple had twins (Gen. 25:26). From the womb it was determined that the younger (Jacob) would receive the Promise (vs. 23). In the process of time, the Lord confirmed the Promise through Jacob, which included a new name, Israel (Gen. 35:9-12). Eventually, the Promise would be passed to Jacob/Israel’s twelve sons.

This Dispensation of Promise is critical to understanding biblical history, as well as prophecy past and future (i.e., the book of

Revelation). For example, see Exodus 3:6, Matthew 22:32, and Acts 3:13.

It should be obvious that God made a promise to a specific group of people – the nation of Israel. God does not back out on His promises (Rom. 3:4; 11:29). God hasn’t taken Israel’s blessings and given them to the Church (Rom. 11:1-2a; 26-27). What is happening currently is that God paused the fulfillment of that Promise to the Nation, so that He could dispense His Grace by having mercy upon all (Rom. 11:25, 32).

Today, you can have all SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS if you trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ alone to save you. If you do, you have the Holy Spirit of promise that signifies that you belong to the Lord for all eternity (Eph. 1:13-14).

We’ll develop the Dispensation of Promise a little more in the next issue.

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The Blind Man and the Lantern

I remember reading of a blind man who was found sitting at the corner of a street in a great city with a lantern beside him. Someone went up to him and asked what he had the lantern there for., seeing that he was blind, and the light was the same to him in darkness. The blind man replied, "I have it so no one may stumble over me."

Friends, let us think of that. When one man reads the Bible, a hundred read you and me. This is what Paul meant when he said we were to be "living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men." I would not give much for all that can be done by sermons, if we do not preach Christ by our lives. If we do not commend the gospel to people by our holy walk and conversation, we shall not win them to Christ.



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When I first joined BDTLB, I wrote a series of articles in Truth Aflame entitled, **“Where America Went Wrong.”** This series addressed the subject, with all the churches existing across the nation why were things so mixed up? The answer then, is very much the same answer today, though the world is certainly far worse today than it was twenty years ago. People often make the point that the perversion and immorality that we are witnessing today is greater than it has ever been in history. My response to that is one of uncertainty. I’m not sure if there is a greater amount of perversion today, or that it just seems that way due to the advancements in technology that has allowed things to be viewed quicker and on a much larger scale than ever before. Take, for instance, homosexuality and lesbianism, are they greater today? In the giving of the Law, Moses was commanded to write, **“If a man with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them committed an abomination...”** (Lev. 20:13). (Note the larger passage sets forth a broad range of immoral practices and their punishment under the Law.) The question must be asked, if these practices weren’t already prevalent in the world, especially in the pagan Gentile world, why mention them? A very quick internet search finds that homosexuality, lesbianism, same-sex unions, LGBTQ connections are to be found in the ancient Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman worlds.

So, it would not be out of line for God to have Moses include this in the Law. Going back to the earlier period of Abraham, it is the men of Sodom who seek to do wickedly (“know them”) to the two men visiting Lot. (The word “know” in Gen. 19:5, is contextually used in the same manner as it is used in Genesis 4:1 and Luke 1:34.) The Apostle Paul addresses this very subject when he wrote, **“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly** (shameful), **and receiving in themselves that recompence** (requital, proper payment) **of their error which was meet. (Rom. 1:27).** We truly are living in a Romans 1 world, a world immersed in uncleanness, vile affections, and reprobate minds. There is much more that can be written on this subject, but we’ll save that for another day.

What we have in America today is a total disregard for the Word of God in nearly every area of life. Truth has been replaced with opinion, “That’s your truth, but I have my own truth.” This is not another truth, it is differing opinion. In the 60’s and 70’s it was situational ethics: “If it feels good, do it.” But I am sad to say, the hippie philosophy of yesterday is in truth the overriding thought process of today; situational ethics is the guiding force in America today. There is no right and wrong, there are only feelings, and America is being

that they have no idea what real Biblical manhood looks like. Even in the church, we are so heavily influenced by the culture that we miss Biblical manhood.

If you are vigilant and standing fast uncompromisingly in what you believe, you will act like a man. You will endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Timothy 2:4). You will avoid being ensnared. The lack of men and Biblical manhood today is *not* a cultural problem. It is a spiritual problem. **“...the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”** Daniel 11:32b

Be strong

Haven’t we already covered this? Men who are vigilant and uncompromising will act like men. We will be strong. We can watch, stand fast in the faith, and act like men, but if we don’t apply this fourth pillar of Biblical manhood all we are doing is acting! You see, the first three pillars of Biblical manhood are in the active

mood. That means we must do it. We must be vigilant. We must stand fast. We must act like men. Now Paul says be strong, but it is in the passive voice. In other words, this is something God is doing in and through us! Our strength comes not from our vigilance and prayer. Our strength comes not from our uncompromising stand for the truth. Our strength comes not through the action we take. Our strength comes from His Spirit strengthening our inner man as we watch, pray, stand, and do! Our strength comes when we surrender to His Holy Spirit.

If your strength is not coming from the Holy Spirit because you have not surrendered to Him, I would contend that you are **not** a man, no matter how many manly things you do. You are just *acting* like a man. The true measure of Biblical manhood is **if** you are surrendered to Him!

The world asks, “What is a man?” Let us surrender our lives to His will and show them.





Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

I Corinthians 16:13

God's Word gives us a clear working definition of a man. The world does not! In fact, the world offers a definition that intentionally and continuously undermines the definition of a man. Make no mistake, we are caught in the midst of a "take no prisoners" spiritual battle that has been raging and gaining momentum since the fall in the garden. We can debate whether Adam was physically present when Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but we cannot debate his lack of vigilance (watch ye) and steadfastness (stand fast in the faith); the first two pillars of Biblical manhood. All these years later, the need for men who watch and stand fast is even greater!

Romans 1:21 – 32 describes the incremental decline of man. The passage begins with mankind making a choice. It says, "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God." The result of that terrible choice was callousness. That callousness would lead to open rebellion on the world stage. As the passage continues, we see in verse 28 man wanting to remove any knowledge of God. Why would a mankind in rebellion against God want no knowledge of Him? The answer is simply that any knowledge of Him is

convicting. By this point in the incremental decline, man is **filled** with **all** unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, etc. (29 – 31).

Romans 1:32 serves as the capstone, or maybe more clearly, the headstone on the grave of mankind. It describes a society where mankind takes pleasure in the gross, rampant, unrighteousness laid out in 29 – 31. What a fitting description of our world today! We look around at a culture that finds great entertainment value in all forms of unrighteousness. I can think of no greater time in history when Biblical manhood is so desperately needed.

We must be the generation that obeys the imperative to watch. We must watch over our mind, our family, our home, and our church. We must watch unto prayer. We must keep the culture at bay.

We must also be the generation that obeys the imperative to stand fast in the faith. Compromise is *not* an option! We must prepare by studying the Word like souls depend on it, because souls do depend on it! Men's eternities hang in the balance.

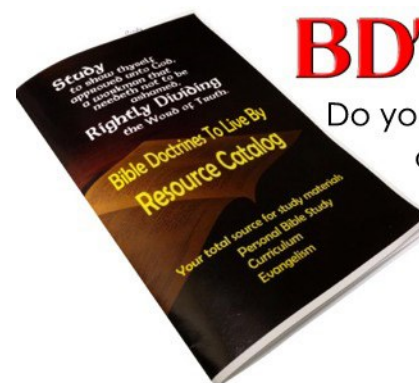
Quit you like men

Act like men! Herein lies one of the greatest deceptions Satan has ever employed. The world is full of men and boys who have been so corrupted by the culture

This is where America (and the "Christian" world) went wrong. Listen to the words of a famous individual: **"...I am the way, the truth, and the life..." (John 14:6)**. That famous man is Jesus Christ; He is **the truth**. In Jesus' prayer (the true Lord's prayer) He prayed for the people so that His Heavenly Father would **"Sanctify them through thy word: thy word is truth."** (Jn. 17:17)

America was founded by religious men who based their early documents upon "Judeo-Christian" beliefs based upon the Word of God. But, soon, those documents written by man rose in importance and overshadowed the Scriptures. Today, using those same documents, the gates of freedom have swung open to include immorality, decadence, and false teaching. No matter if it fails to be line with the God-given Word, the founding documents are used to support it, and it is justified because it feels right.

But this is not the real issue, it is but the surface issue that we see. No, the real issue is that ongoing battle between God and Satan over the souls of mankind that had its roots in Genesis 2-3. Satan lost the ultimate battle at Calvary, but today he is, as Paul writes, **"In whom (the lost) the god (Satan) of this world (age) hath blinded the minds of them that which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine unto them"** (2 Cor. 4:4).



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Friends, decadence is everywhere today, and it is the direct result of sinful man rejecting Christ and the gospel of salvation. It's also prevalent because believers ceased being the bearers of light, and instead chose the political arena to "save America," and to "restore American greatness." That the church has lost sight of its real purpose, to preach the saving Gospel of God's Grace and save **Americans** must not be denied. This great failure has permitted a once great nation, a nation that led the world in the sending of missionaries, great Bible conferences, and evangelism, to become the third largest heathen nation in the world today.

We've entered a new year. What will we do with it? Will we continue down the same road of feel "goodism" and spiritual slumber, or we will awake (**Eph. 5:14-18**) and rise up as the army of God, the ambassadors of reconciliation (**2 Cor. 5:14-20**)? Will we take to ourselves the whole amour of God and **stand** (**Eph. 6:11-17**)? I'm not speaking of parading down the streets waving Christian and American flags, I'm not calling for boycotts. I'm calling for the Body of Christ to get out of their easy chair life and take up the banner of the cross. Begin to do the work God has given us to do. Friends, we are in a battle, that battle between God and Satan, and as such we **must stand** and be counted. To become the **VOICE** of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

TRUTH for Youth

Volume 6, Number 2.



By Matthew Ritchey

Ants are not very big, but the Bible uses them as an example of something that can do great work. The ant faithfully does what God created it to do. You may not be very big compared to adults, but God can use you to do great things for Him!



"And the child Samuel grew, and was in favor both with God, and also with men." 1 Samuel 2:26.



Samuel was a young boy when his mother took him to serve in the temple. He was probably younger than most of you when he started. Samuel could not do the things the adult priests could do, but he was faithful to do what was asked of him. Eli the priest's adult sons were said to disobey God and made the people unhappy. Young Samuel pleased God in the small ways that he served, and he made the adults happy.



"And [the servant] said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." 2 Kings 5:3.

The Bible tells us of a young servant girl. King Naaman had a skin disease where his skin would rot and fall off. This servant girl told someone about a man of God named Elisha. Because this young girl was willing to tell someone about God, Naaman was healed and worshipped God. One of the things you can do for God now is tell others about Jesus Christ. People can be saved by trusting in His death, burial, and resurrection.



"There is a lad here, which has five loaves and two small fish: but what is that among so many?" John 6:9



A crowd of over 5,000 people had come to see Jesus. The disciples did not know how they were going to feed so many people. The only person who had brought food was a young boy, and he did not have much. Yet, the young boy was willing to give what he had to the Lord. The Lord used his small lunch to perform a miracle. You may not think you have much to give to the Lord, but He does not need a lot. We need to be willing to use what we have to serve the Lord.



Daniel. Miriam. Mary. Josiah. David. Timothy. These are all young people whom the Lord used in a great way. They were willing to talk about the Lord and let the Lord use what they had to serve Him. Also, they were willing to learn more about the Lord.

Think of the ant again. We do not always notice the work that ants are doing, but they continue to work. You are not too little for the Lord to use in a special way. Samuel wasn't old enough to serve as a priest, but he was willing to do the small things to help.

Are you willing to do the small things for the Lord so that He can use them in a big way?



"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" Colossians 3:20.

One of the ways you can serve the Lord now is to obey the adults that God has put in your life.

Use the space below to draw some ways you can obey.

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