

Parson to Person
1 Corinthians 15
(The Resurrection) – Part 24
(The New Heaven and New Earth)

It is of great interest to me that the plan of God unfolds systematically and recursively from dispensation to dispensation leading to the cross—and thereafter builds upon a reflective restoration process—concluding in a New Heaven and New Earth. This is the plan of God as described in the whole of Scripture.

Dispensational Corresponding Counterparts

A careful and semi-detailed examination of the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, shows us that each dispensation is to some degree reflective of a corresponding counterpart. For example, the dispensation of Innocence reflects into the New Heaven and New Earth—as both describe the sinless perfect condition of all things. Conscience reflects into The Millennial Kingdom—as both mirror one another by a deeper knowledge of God, His creation, and man. Both dispensations accommodate extended “mortal” life—but allow for death. However, in reverse/restorative/redemptive order—The Curse was introduced after the fall, but will be restrained during The Millennial Kingdom.

As we study each dispensation we will discover that similarities and patterns are a constant throughout the dispensational model.

The Foreordained Plan of Redemption—The Departure

The first four dispensations: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, and The Old Covenant, demonstrate the foreordained plan of God—revealing our need for a Savior.

From the beginning of Creation, we note wholeness and perfection—in the dispensation of Innocence. However, mankind’s rebellion led to sin, conscience, division from God, and division among men. This led to the dispensation of Conscience. Thereafter, we see that God allowed for guided self-governance—in the dispensation we refer to as Human Government. However, the fallen nature of man was further manifested by way of human-centric rebellion and disobedient global unification. As the result, God separated the people into nations and chose to set apart a specific demographic (the nation of Israel) for His purposes. This began The Old Covenant dispensation—during which time God made Himself known to Israel, that He might make Himself known through Israel, for the benefit of the whole world.

During the Old Covenant era, God used a series of systematic educational lessons—designed to discipline and further instruct His chosen people. Moreover, the Law God gave through Moses was introduced in order to further prove human weakness and our need for a Savior. Man is incapable of human-generated, performance-driven righteousness—and therefore requires divine remedy.

Enter Jesus—His First Incarnational Earthly Ministry

God’s love for His creation was manifested in the personal incarnation He alone provided. The need for deliverance had then come to the point of greatest realization. Therefore, God chose this point in His-story to introduce (into time) the only remedy for sin and death: Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son.

The Centrality of the Cross

Jesus, the tangible image of the invisible God, came to satisfy the righteous standards. He alone was qualified to take upon Himself the penalty man justly deserved—and provide the way of escape. He suffered in our place for our sins, was crucified, died, was buried (for

three days and three nights)—yet experienced a miraculous physical resurrection from death.

Through God’s pre-purposed plan, Jesus secured for the believer forgiveness of sins and life eternal—apart from human-centric/human-driven performance. Salvation is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone.

Israel’s Rejection

At Jesus’ first incarnational earthly ministry, Israel, to a great degree, rejected Him. Therefore, as foreknown and previously declared, God set Israel under discipline until the appointed time of her national repentance. The temporary spiritual blindness she suffers today is part of God’s redemptive process. Therefore, the nature of this blindness should not be considered permanent—for God will graciously illuminate her again.

The Foreordained Plan of Redemption—The Return

The last four dispensations—The Church Age, The Tribulation, The Millennial Kingdom, and The New Heaven and New Earth—demonstrate the foreordained plan of God in redemption: a return to “that which is perfect.”

After Jesus’ first incarnational earthly ministry, God chose to provide for Himself another specially called group of people—the Church. During The Church Age, God has graciously chosen to use this newly formed group of people to express His deep love for all. He secured the Church without abandoning His earlier chosen nation (Israel) as they await their coming God-promised repentance.

The Church Age is a dispensation of grace intended as an offering of blessing toward all who put their faith in God—through Jesus the Messiah. It is a globalized, progressively unfolding, integrational “soft opening” of the New Covenant promised to Israel.

Those who trust Jesus as Messiah today (now in the Church Age) become recipients of the “soft-opening” blessings associated with that promise. However, although Church Age believers will experience many of the promised blessings found within the New Covenant, this reality does not imply that we are in the dispensation of the “grand opening” promised to Israel. That will occur during the literal, physical, 1000-year, earthly reign of Jesus—The Millennium.

Reflectively, we know that much of what was true for Israel during the Old Covenant is true for believers in the Church Age: God made (and makes) Himself known to Israel, that He might make Himself known through Israel, for the benefit of the whole world; and during the Church Age God makes Himself known to the Church, that He might make Himself known through the Church, for the benefit of the whole world. Conversely, we might suggest that God made Himself known to the world, that He might make Himself known to Israel and the Church, for His benefit and glory.

Although the Church is the chosen people of God in the Church Age, God has not finished His work in and through Israel. They initially were and still are His chosen people.

Following the Church Age, God will bring the then-living people of Israel to their knees—before providing them the blessings of the New Covenant. The dispensation wherein this will occur is known as The Tribulation! The Jews who recognize Jesus’ first incarnational earthly ministry will not suffer the Tribulation—for its intended purpose will have been previously accomplished. The Tribulation is a dispensation of judgment—designed to force Israel (and the unbelieving Gentiles) to their knees.

Reflectively, we know that the Tribulation will be a man-centric time of attempted self-governance in a man-centered globalization. It, like that attempted during Human Government, will be an act of

rebellion toward God. Moreover, it will be a time of global violence and bloodshed. The lifespan of man was limited during Human Government; conversely, the Tribulation will be shortened—or no flesh will be saved.

Enter Jesus—His second incarnational earthly ministry!

Following Jesus' Second Coming, He will restore Israel to her promised land and unfold the promises previously made. The coming fulfillment of the New Covenant promises will occur during the Millennial Reign of Christ—also known as The Millennial Kingdom or Kingdom Age.

During the Millennial Reign, the New Covenant blessings will come to fruition in what is believed to be educational increments. Both Jews and Gentiles will worship the Lord as assigned—but without unified global allegiance to Christ. As was true during the dispensation of Conscience, the Millennial Kingdom will be a time of great revelation. The nature of that revelation will make known the glorious blessings awarded those who trust the Lord, and the horrifying consequences toward the rebellious.

After the 1000-year Millennial Age, all unbelievers will stand in judgment before the Lord at the Great White Throne—the final judgment of all unbelievers. Thereafter, the New Heaven and New Earth will be enjoyed by all the redeemed. This is a return to the wholeness and blessing foreshadowed during the first dispensation: Innocence. In this case, redemption will have been accomplished—sin, death, and The Curse will be no more. The redeemed shall forever be with the Lord.

Dispensational Corresponding Counterparts—In Review

In review, we can see that the latter four dispensations, The Church Age, The Tribulation, The Millennial Kingdom and The New

Heaven and New Earth, are reflective of the first four: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government and The Old Covenant.

As you ponder these truths, I pray the picture will grow into greater and greater clarity—amidst our discovery of the glorious purposes and plan of God.

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:7–12).

I love you all,
Pastor Paul