



## Session 5 | The Dispensation of Conscience

### The Second Dispensation | Conscience

- Why is it called the dispensation of conscience?
  - Because mankind now lives "with science"
  - Science is, "the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment."
  - For the first time since creation, man has now "experimented" with good and evil.
- Where do we find this dispensation in the Bible? Genesis 3:1 - 8:14
- What is the fundamentally new revelation?
  - Genesis 3:7, "they knew that they were naked"
    - This revelation brought fear, shame, and blame into human experience
  - Genesis 3:14-19 - the curse on the serpent, the created order, and all mankind
  - Genesis 3:15 - the promise of a Redeemer -
    - THIS IS THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL PROPHECY OF ALL THE BIBLE.
    - The promise: the Seed of a woman will bruise the serpent's head.
      - There is only one who can legitimately be called "seed of a woman."
      - See Isaiah 7:14
      - To "bruise" is to *press down upon with force*. See Job 9:17 and Psalm 139:11.
      - To "bruise the head" is to give a fatal wound.
    - The promise: the serpent would bruise the heel of the Seed.
      - A bruised heel is painful, but not fatal.
- What is fundamentally or by revelation true for all time? (What carries over?)
  - Fear, shame, and blame
  - The promise of Satan's ultimate and total defeat
- What has changed since this dispensation? (What doesn't carry over?)
  - Protection of the murderer has been removed
  - Worship at the altar with physical sacrifice
    - Note about Biblical application: do not make a doctrine out of a historical example. Just because some act of faith was once done by a person of faith, does not mean that all believers are required to do the same.

- Conflicts, revealed in this dispensation, with today's society
  - Our society views man as inherently whole, while this dispensation reveals man as inherently incomplete because he is outside of relationship with God and living in a broken world.
    - The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* used by mental health practitioners codes all variety of mental “sickness,” assuming that without the symptoms of the patient is well.
    - The Biblical view is that every patient is fallen and has self-determination capabilities. Therefore, his/her problems are behavioral not mental illness.
  - Our society views the earth as inherently sacred, while this dispensation reveals earth as wholly cursed.
    - The groaning of the earth will not be resolved by a UN Conference.
    - The Christian is called to stewardship of the earth, but not to be a servant of the earth.
  - Parts of Christian society (Reformed Theology) believes that fallen man cannot choose to do good, as a result of the fall.
    - Their view of salvation in this (and all) dispensations: the Spirit regenerates the elect, and only then do the elect do anything good.
    - Such a scheme is impossible to reconcile with a dispensation of “conscience.” RC assumes the corruption of the conscience.
- Conflicts if you remove this dispensation
  - You continue to have mankind in a state of innocence and sufficiency .
  - You fail to recognize that creation gives a distorted view of origins .
  - You are unable to make sense of the plot of the Hebrew Scriptures nor the purpose of the crucifixion and resurrection.
- How was man saved in the dispensation of innocence?
  - For the purposes of this study, salvation = "in a right standing with God that guarantees eternal life"
  - He had no revealed promise of going to heaven when he died
  - From the book of Job (written after this dispensation), he had promise of a resurrection from death when the Promised One arrived (Job 19:25-27).
  - Since we are not sure when this revelation was given, it is possible to assume that post-garden man was aware of the resurrection
  - The promise of life after the Promised One conquered death was the salvation promise in this dispensation
  - Each person was required, in faith, to follow his conscience and align with what was known about God through revelation and Adam's experience, looking for the day when the Promised One would provide defeat of Satan.