

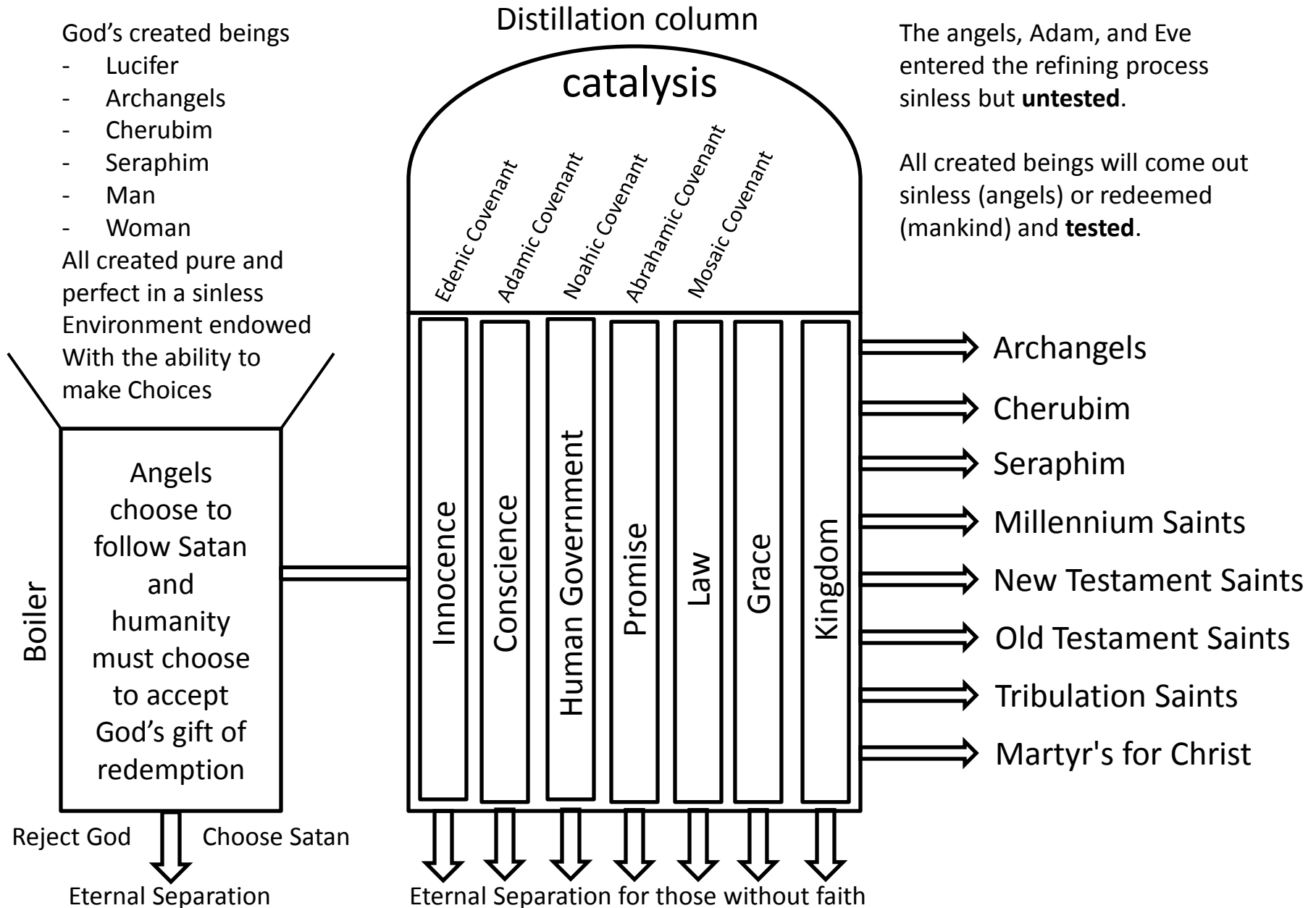
Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Revealed Plan of God from Eternity Past to Eternity Future



www.RefiningaCreation.org

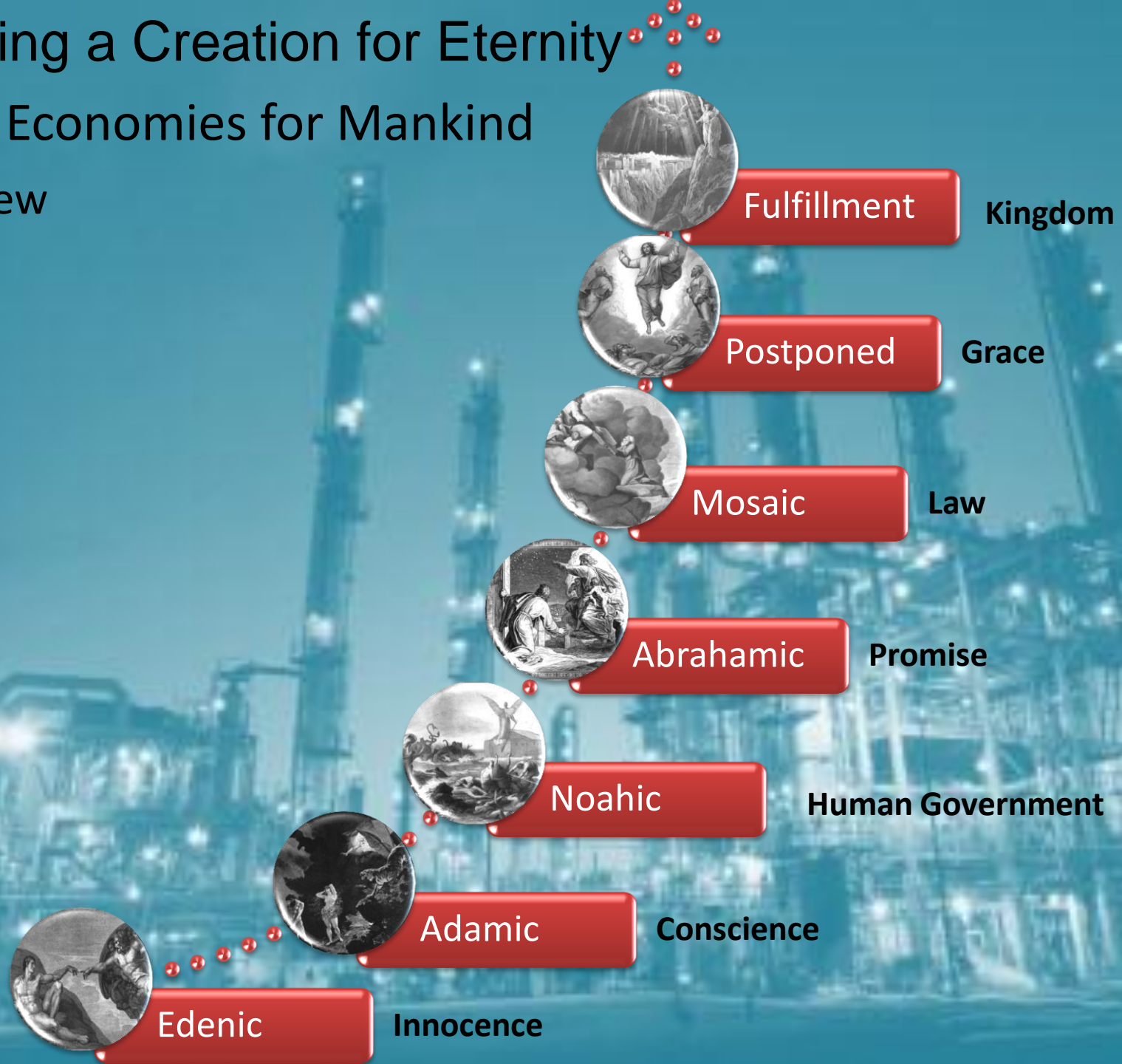
God's Refining Process for His Created Beings



Refining a Creation for Eternity

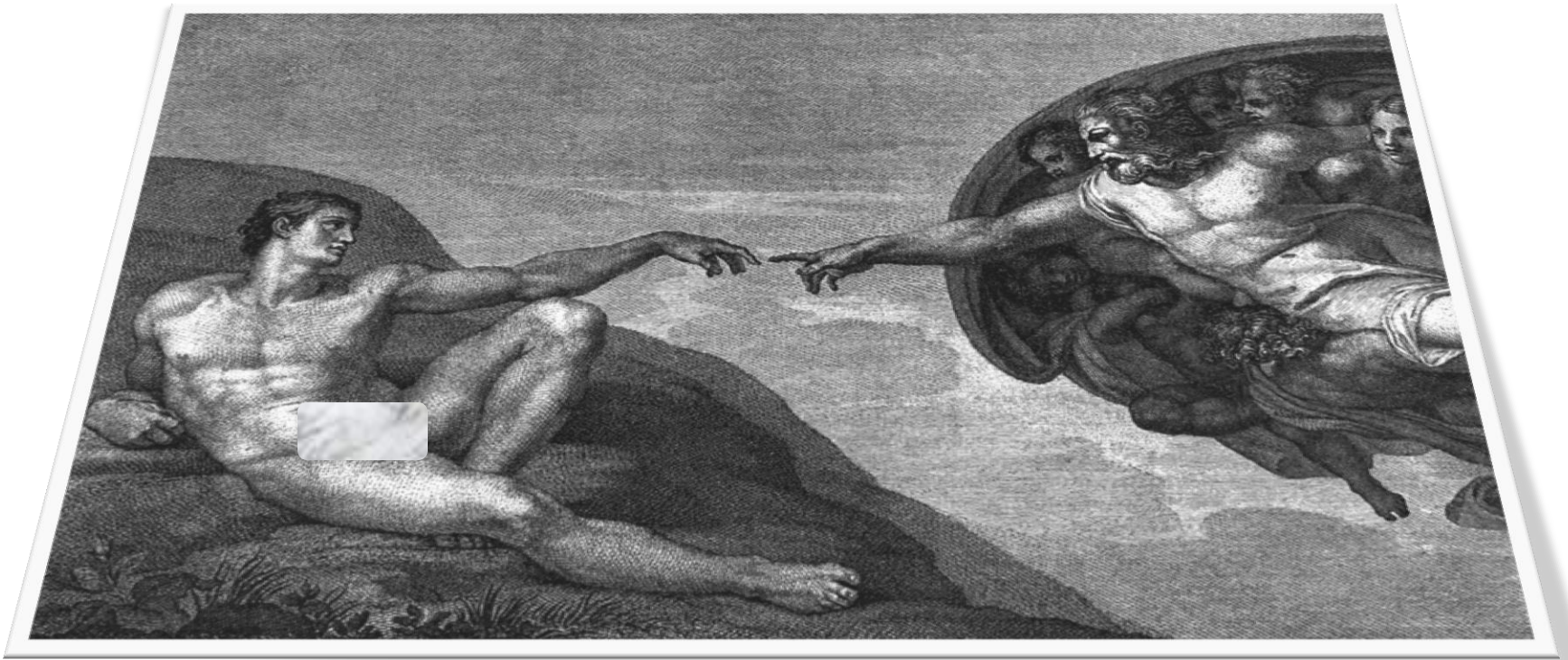
God's Economies for Mankind

Overview



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

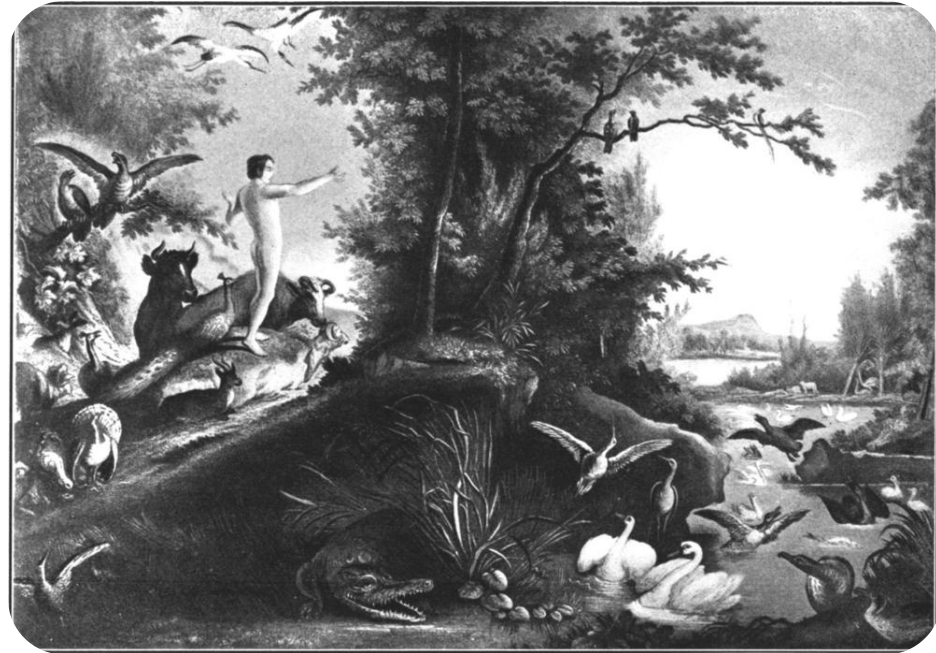
- God and Adam

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

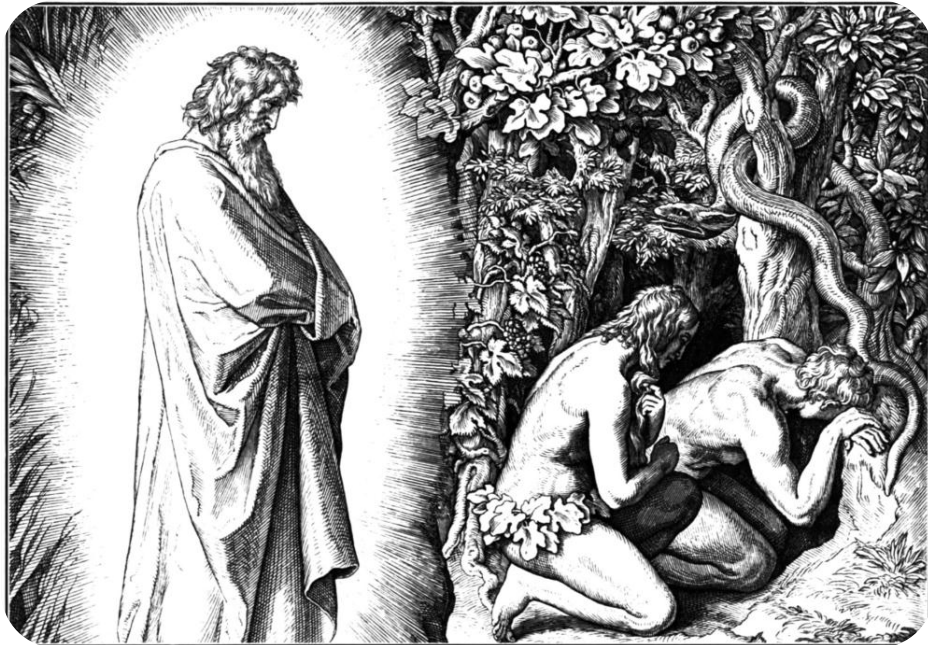
- Man's responsibilities in the garden were to fulfill the Edenic Covenant, essentially to multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it. Mankind was forbidden to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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

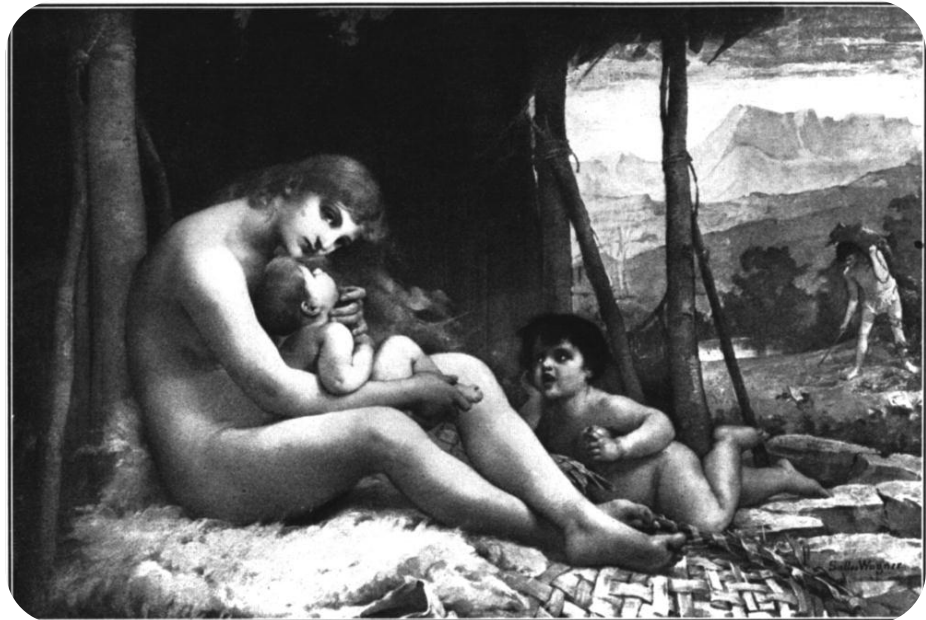
- God and Adam as the representative for mankind

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,

Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

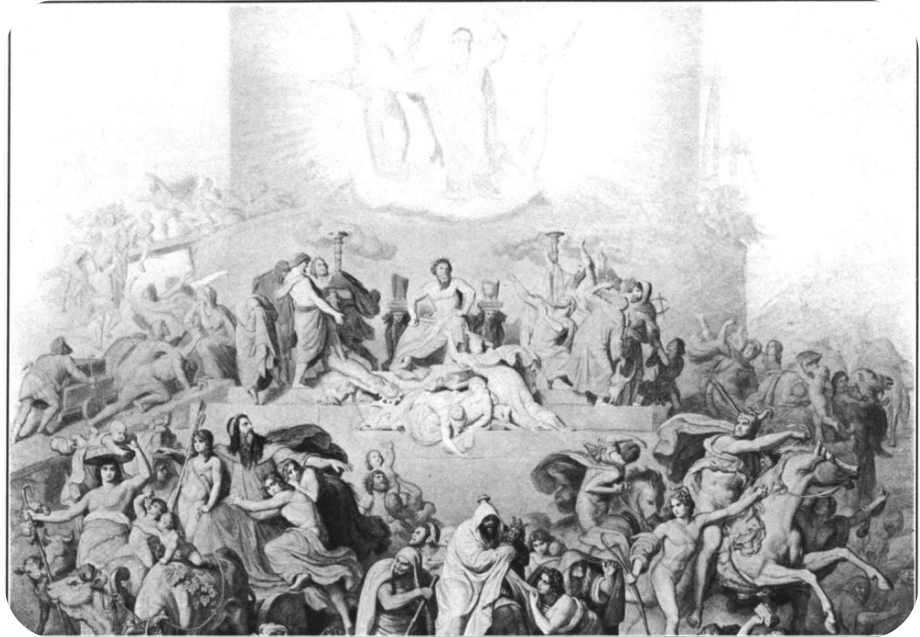
- Man's responsibilities were to fulfill the Noahic covenant. Mankind was to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Mankind was to govern itself with the full authority of capital punishment.

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.**"



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Review of past lessons

At The End Of The Third Economy

Promise of Redemption Maintained - Genesis 12:1-3

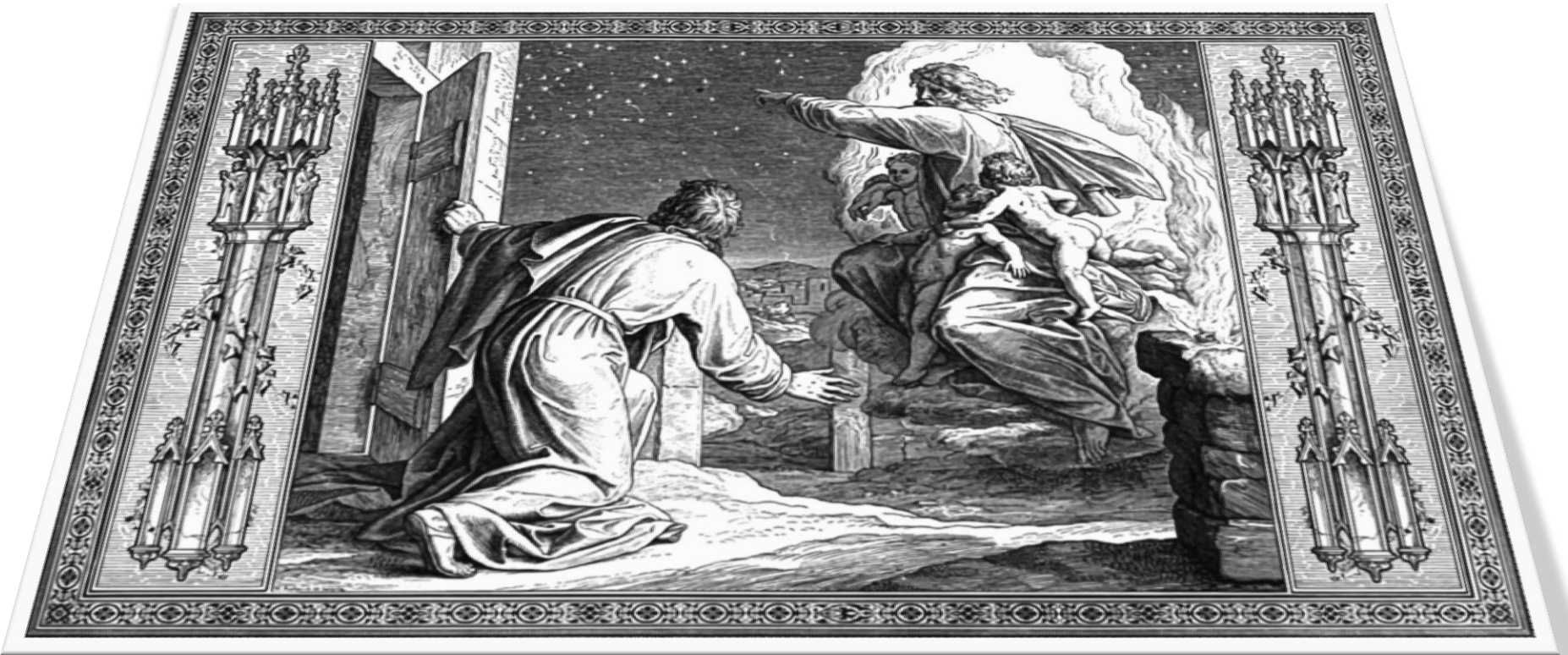
- Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you,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

Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

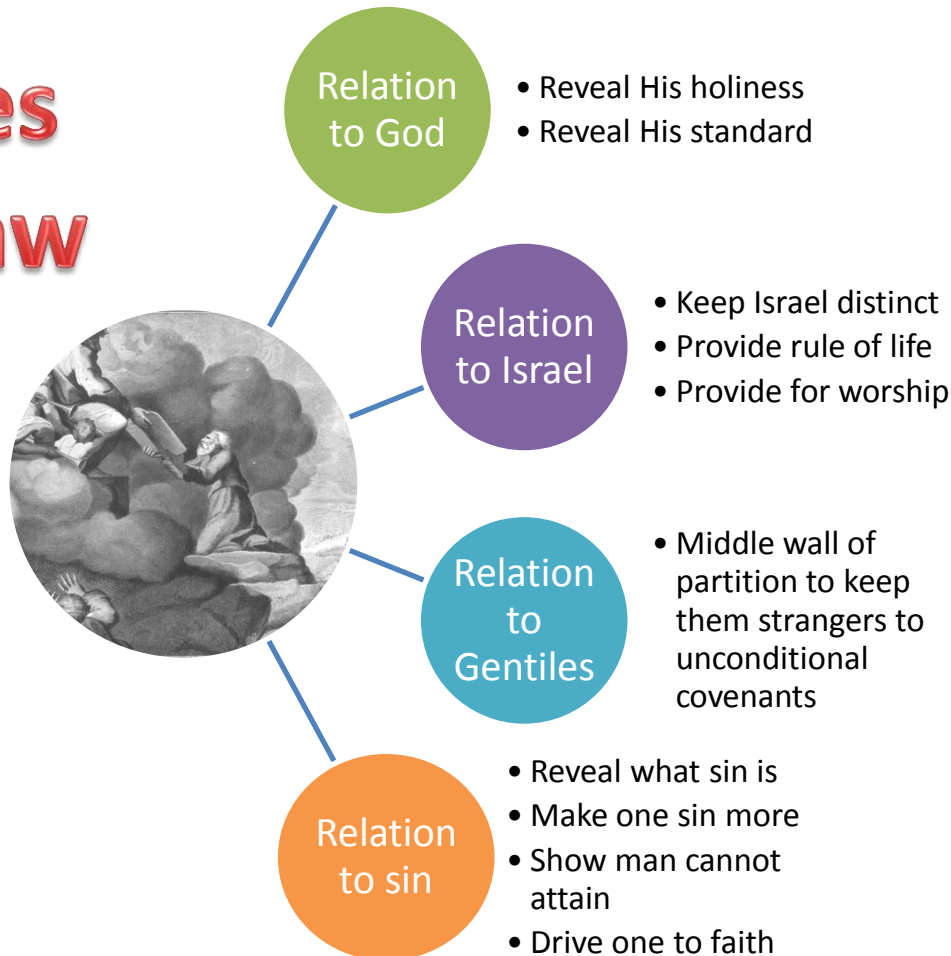


Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Fifth Economy

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

Purposes of the Law

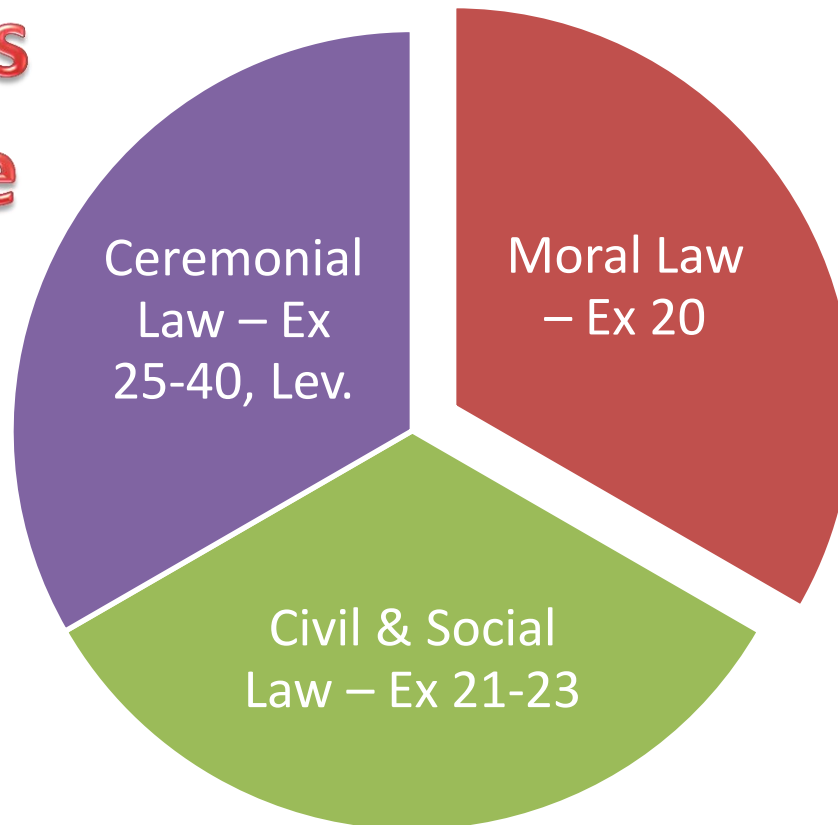


Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

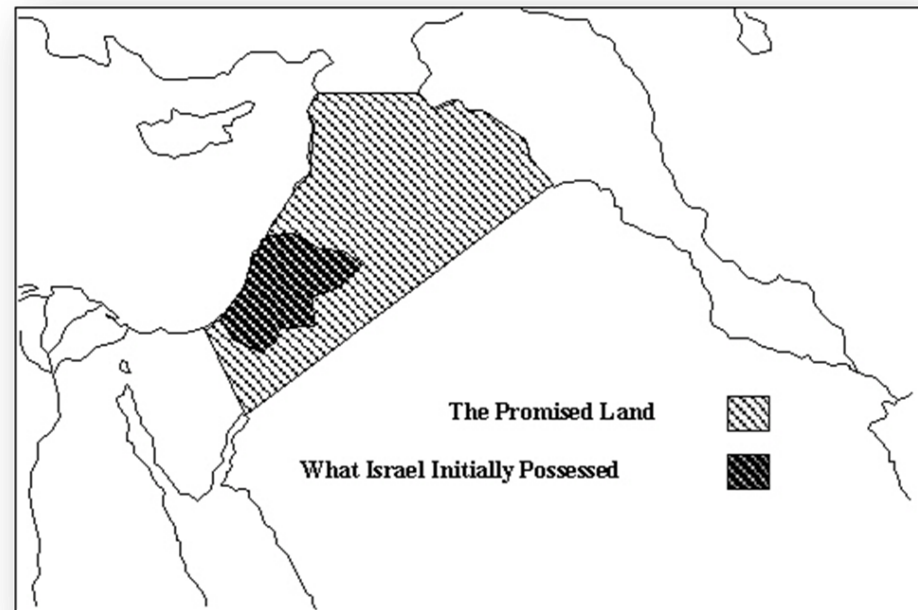
Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1 – 30:20)

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.

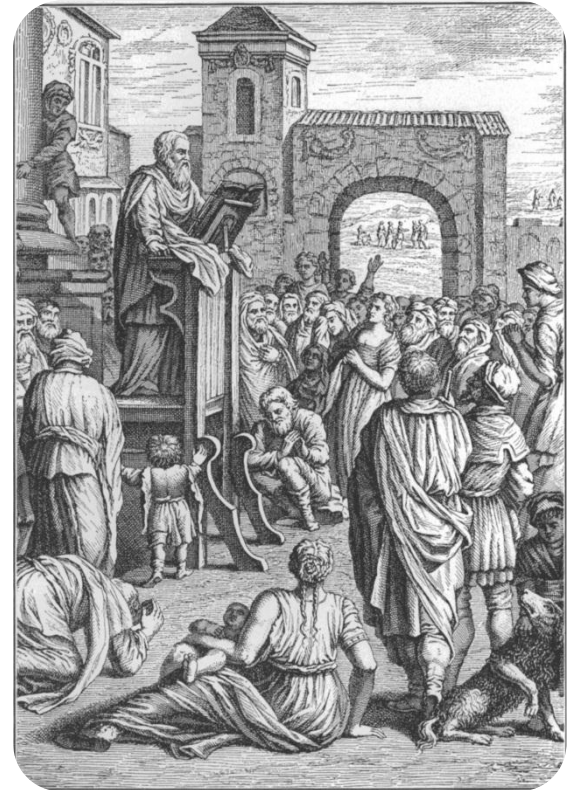
Refining a Creation for Eternity

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

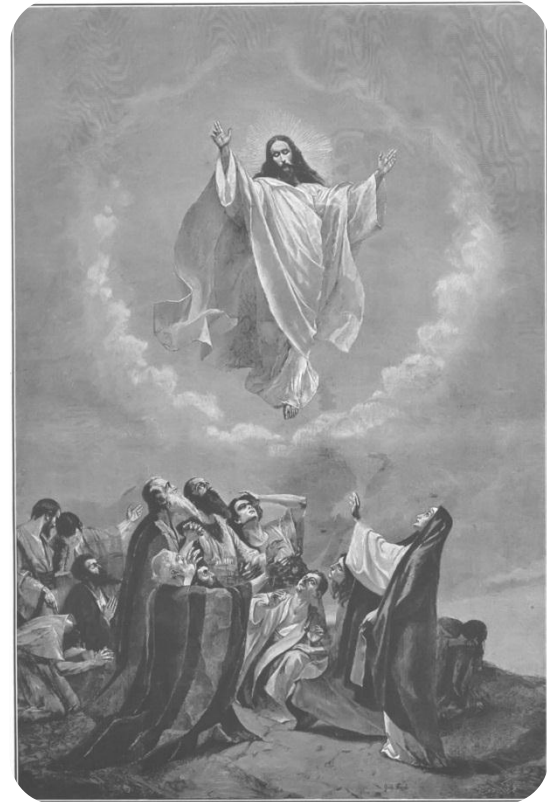
- Under Grace the responsibility on man is to accept the gift of righteousness that God freely offers to all (Rom. 5:15–18). There are two aspects of the grace of God in this economy: (1) the blessing is entirely of grace and (2) that grace is for all.

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

Review of past lessons

The Apostasy of the Church (General characteristics)

A Sign of the Last Days

A Massive New Testament Subject

Apostasy Concerns Every Major Doctrine

An Internal Matter

Apostasy Knows No Limits

Apostasy Can Happen Quickly

Apostasy is Satanically Energized

Apostasy is Destructive

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Apostasy of the Church

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).

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Apostasy of the Church

General characteristics of apostasy

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?”

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Apostasy of the Church

General characteristics of apostasy

10. The Need for Aggressive Action - Test All Things

One such command is, “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). How do believers “test all things”? One of the greatest gifts given to us by God is a reliable Standard of divine truth through the closed canon of Scripture. The Holy Spirit, who authored the Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21), is not schizophrenic. It is impossible for the Holy Spirit to say one thing at one time and something contradictory another time. In other words, it is an impossibility for the Holy Spirit to reveal something in Scripture and then something entirely different through a human teacher, prophet, theologian, doctrine, philosophy, etc...Thus, believers can protect themselves from the apostasy that is so prevalent in our day by simply comparing everything we hear with the eternal Word of God.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Apostasy of the Church

General characteristics of apostasy

10. The Need for Aggressive Action - An Unpopular Command

Paul discussed the reality of apostasy more in the Book of 2 Timothy than in any of his other letters. There, Paul exhorted young Timothy, who was pastoring in Ephesus, to devote himself to Scripture. He said, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). This pastoral injunction seems so simple. Yet this is the area where the contemporary American church is most negligent.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Apostasy of the Church

General characteristics of apostasy

10. The Need for Aggressive Action - A Critical Command

The most effective bulwark against apostasy is a return to the centrality of Scripture. Productive things begin to transpire when God's Word is once again given its proper place. Paul pleaded with Timothy to preach the Word when it is both popular to do so and when it is not (2 Tim. 4:2). Interestingly, of the many items that the early church gave themselves to such as prayer, evangelism, communion, and benevolence (Acts 2:41-47), the first item mentioned was a single-minded devotion to apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42). Unless Scripture occupies a preeminent place in our lives and churches, spiritual maturity is an impossibility (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet 2:2). The Scripture has the ability to feed the deepest yearnings and needs of the human heart (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4). Job explained, "I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Blessed Hope

The Rapture of the Church

Our modern understanding of rapture appears to have little or no connection with the eschatological event. However, the word is properly used of that event. Rapture is a state or experience of being carried away. The English word comes from a Latin word, *rapio*, which means to seize or snatch in relation to an ecstasy of spirit or the actual removal from one place to another. In other words, it means to be carried away in spirit or in body. The Rapture of the church means the carrying away of the church from earth to heaven.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Blessed Hope

The Rapture of the Church

The Greek word from which we take the term “rapture” appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, translated “caught up.” The Latin translation of this verse used the word *rapturo*. The Greek word it translates is *harpazō*, which means to snatch or take away. Elsewhere it is used to describe how the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and brought him to Caesarea (Acts 8:39) and to describe Paul’s experience of being caught up into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2–4). Thus there can be no doubt that the word is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to indicate the actual removal of people from earth to heaven.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Blessed Hope

The Components of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18)

1. The return of Christ (v. 16).

The Lord Himself will return for His people, accompanied by all the grandeur His presence deserves. There will be a shout of command (whether uttered by the Lord or an archangel is not stated), and the trumpet of God will summon the dead in Christ to their resurrection as well as sounding a warning to those who have rejected Him and thus have missed the Rapture.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Blessed Hope

The Components of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18)

2. A resurrection (v. 16).

At this time only the dead in Christ will be raised. This means believers since the Day of Pentecost, for though there were believers before then, none of them were placed “in Christ.” The dead in Christ will be raised just before the living are changed. Yet both groups will experience their respective changes “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52). The entire procedure will be instantaneous, not gradual. The word for “moment” is the word from which the word “atom” comes. When the atom was discovered it was thought to be indivisible; therefore, it was named “atom.” Even though subsequently the atom was split, the word retains its meaning of indivisible. The resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living will occur in an indivisible instant of time.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Blessed Hope

The Components of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18)

3. A rapture (v. 17).

Strictly speaking, only living believers are raptured (though we use the term to include all that happens at that time). This means they will be caught up into the Lord's presence without having to experience physical death.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Blessed Hope

The Components of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13–18)

4. A reunion (v. 17).

The reunion will be with the Lord and with the loved ones who have died.

5. A reassurance (v. 18).

The truth of the Rapture both comforts and encourages us (for the word does have both meanings).

Paul's descriptions of the Rapture in both 1 Corinthians 15:51–58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 give no support to the partial Rapture view, which teaches that only spiritual believers will be raptured at several times during the Tribulation period. Paul stated clearly that “we shall be changed” at that time, and he wrote those words to the Corinthians, many of whom could hardly be called spiritual.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Two Types of Resurrections

1. Restoration Back to Physical Life

The first type is only a restoration back to natural physical life. What this means is that later the person will die again physically. This restoration-type resurrection occurred twice in the Old Testament:

Elisha raised the Shunammite's son back to life (2 Kings 4:32–37), and a man was suddenly resurrected from the dead when his dead body touched the bones of Elisha the Prophet (2 Kings 13:20–21).

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

The Two Types of Resurrections

1. Restoration Back to Physical Life (cont.)

In the New Testament, restoration-type resurrection occurred at least four times: the resurrection of the daughter of Jarius (Mat. 9:18–26; Mk. 5:21–24, 35–43; Lk. 8:40–42, 49–56); the son of the widow of Nain (Lk. 7:11–17); Lazarus (Jn. 11:1–44); and the resurrection of many of the saints the moment Yeshua died (Mat. 27:52–53).

These two cases in the Old Testament and four cases in the New Testament were all resurrections of the first type: resurrections, which were merely restorations, back to natural physical life. All of these people died again later.

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The Two Types of Resurrections

2. True Resurrection Life

The second type of resurrection from the dead is the type that means resurrection life, in which one is no longer subject to death (Rom. 6:9). True resurrection life means a person is no longer capable of dying physically, because there was a change in the nature of the body that has been resurrected.

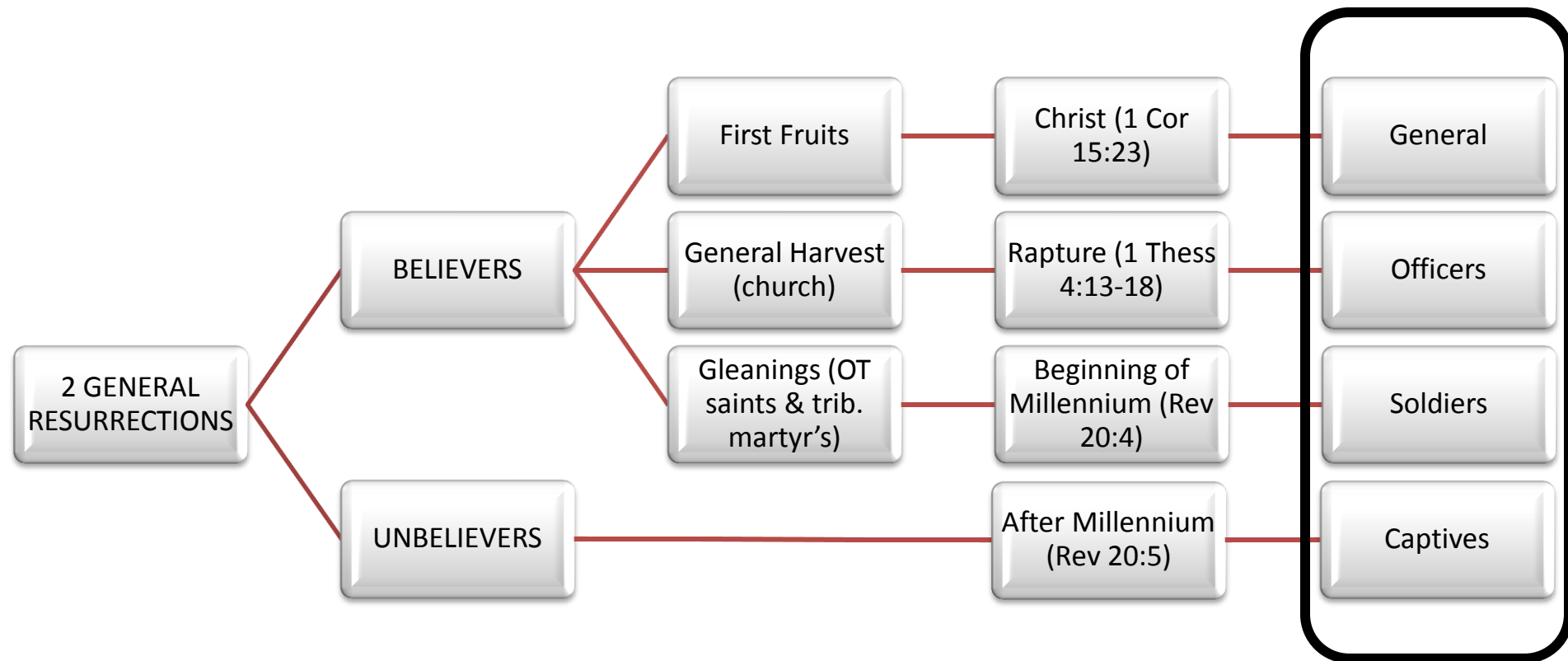
So far, Jesus is the only One who has been resurrected in this way; He is the only One who has undergone the second type of resurrection, that of resurrection life. That is why Yeshua is called the first-fruits of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23; Col. 1:15, 18; Rev. 1:5).

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The Sixth Economy

God's Resurrection Program

Order of *Tagma*
1 Cor. 15:23



Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

History of the Church

FIRST PERIOD:

- The Life of Christ, and the Apostolic church.
- From the Incarnation to the death of St. John. A.D. 1–100.

SECOND PERIOD:

- Christianity under persecution in the Roman empire.
- From the death of St. John to Constantine, the first Christian emperor. A.D. 100–311.

THIRD PERIOD:

- Christianity in union with the Graeco-Roman empire, and amidst the storms of the great migration of nations.
- From Constantine the Great to Pope Gregory I. A.D. 311–590.

FOURTH PERIOD:

- Christianity planted among the Teutonic, Celtic, and Slavonic nations.
- From Gregory I. to Hildebrand, or Gregory VII. A.D. 590–1049.

FIFTH PERIOD:

- The Church under the papal hierarchy, and the scholastic theology.
- From Gregory VII. to Boniface VIII. A.D. 1049–1294.

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History of the Church

SIXTH PERIOD:

- The decay of mediaeval Catholicism, and the preparatory movements for the Reformation.
- From Boniface VIII. to Luther. A.D. 1294–1517.

SEVENTH PERIOD:

- The evangelical Reformation, and the Roman Catholic Reaction.
 - From Luther to the Treaty of Westphalia. A.D. 1517–1648.

EIGHTH PERIOD:

- The age of polemic orthodoxy and exclusive confessionalism, with reactionary and progressive movements.
 - From the Treaty of Westphalia to the French Revolution. A.D. 1648–1790.

NINTH PERIOD:

- The spread of infidelity, and the revival of Christianity in Europe and America, with missionary efforts encircling the globe.
 - From the French Revolution to the present time. A.D. 1790–1880.

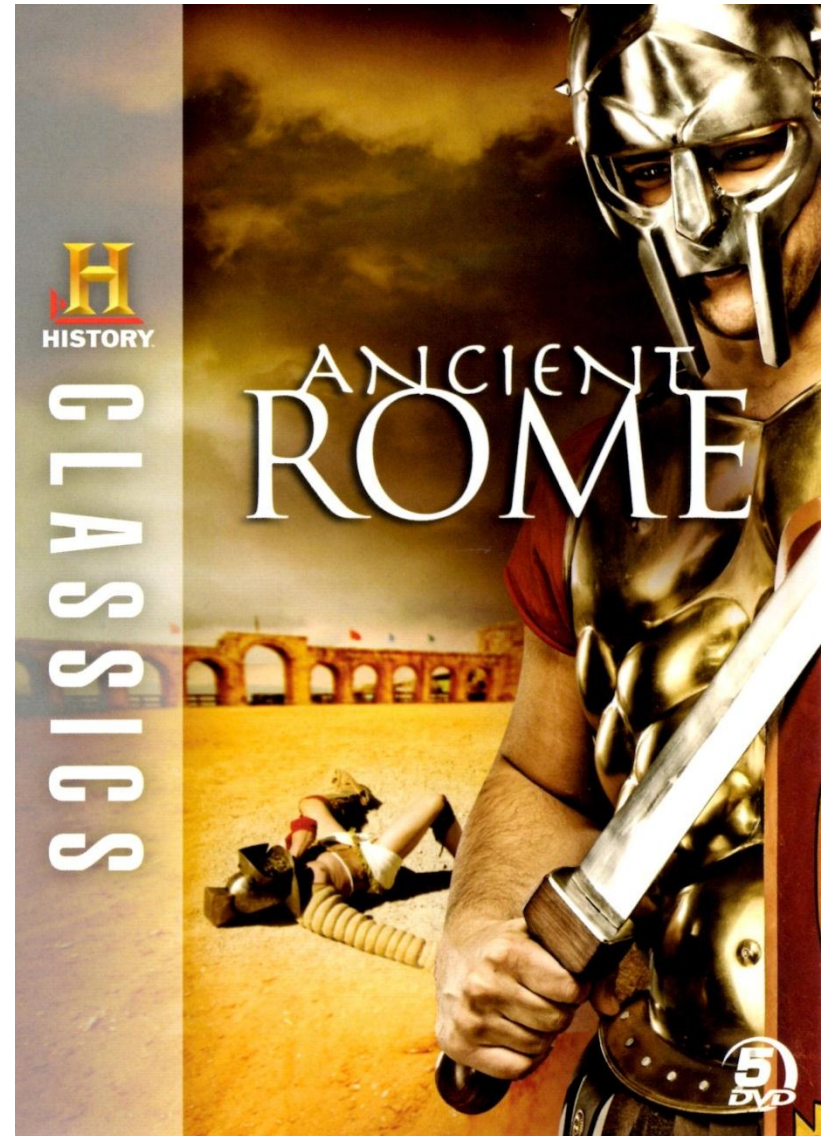
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Ancient Rome

Roman Vice

Start: 1:21:30

End: 1:27:30



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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

98 – 117 AD – Trajan; Christianity forbidden

Pliny (governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor from 109 to 111) came in official contact with the Christians. He himself saw in that religion only a “depraved and immoderate superstition,” and could hardly account for its popularity. He reported to the emperor that this superstition was constantly spreading, not only in the cities, but also in the villages of Asia Minor, and captivated people of every age, rank, and sex, so that the temples were almost forsaken, and the sacrificial victims found no sale. To stop this progress, he condemned many Christians to death, and sent others, who were Roman citizens, to the imperial tribunal. But he requested of the emperor further instructions, whether, in these efforts, he should have respect to age; whether he should treat the mere bearing of the Christian name as a crime, if there were no other offence.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

98 – 117 AD – Trajan; Christianity forbidden (cont.)

To these inquiries Trajan replied: “You have adopted the right course, my friend, with regard to the Christians; for no universal rule, to be applied to all cases, can be laid down in this matter. They should not be searched for; but when accused and convicted, they should be punished; yet if any one denies that he has been a Christian, and proves it by action, namely, by worshipping our gods, he is to be pardoned upon his repentance, even though suspicion may still cleave to him from his antecedents. But anonymous accusations must not be admitted in any criminal process; it sets a bad example, and is contrary to our age” (i.e. to the spirit of Trajan’s government).

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

117 – 138 AD – Hadrian

He is represented both as a friend and foe of the church. He was devoted to the religion of the state, bitterly opposed to Judaism, indifferent to Christianity, from ignorance of it. He insulted the Jews and the Christians alike by erecting temples of Jupiter and Venus over the site of the temple and the supposed spot of the crucifixion.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

137 – 161 AD – Antoninus Pius

Antoninus Pius protected the Christians from the tumultuous violence which broke out against them on account of the frequent public calamities. But the edict ascribed to him, addressed to the deputies of the Asiatic cities, testifying to the innocence of the Christians, and holding them up to the heathen as models of fidelity and zeal in the worship of God, could hardly have come from an emperor, who bore the honorable title of Pius for his conscientious adherence to the religion of his fathers;³² and in any case he could not have controlled the conduct of the provincial governors and the fury of the people against an illegal religion.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

161 – 180 AD – Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher on the throne, was a well-educated, just, kind, and amiable emperor, and reached the old Roman ideal of self-reliant Stoic virtue, but for this very reason he had no sympathy with Christianity, and probably regarded it as an absurd and fanatical superstition. He had no room in his cosmopolitan philanthropy for the purest and most innocent of his subjects, many of whom served in his own army. He was flooded with apologies of Melito, Miltiades, Athenagoras in behalf of the persecuted Christians, but turned a deaf ear to them. Only once, in his *Meditations*, does he allude to them, and then with scorn, tracing their noble enthusiasm for martyrdom to “sheer obstinacy” and love for theatrical display. His excuse is ignorance. He probably never read a line of the New Testament, nor of the apologies addressed to him.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

161 – 180 AD – Marcus Aurelius (cont.)

About the year 170 the apologist Melito wrote: “The race of the worshippers of God in Asia is now persecuted by new edicts as it never has been heretofore; shameless, greedy sycophants, finding occasion in the edicts, now plunder the innocent day and night.” The empire was visited at that time by a number of conflagrations, a destructive flood of the Tiber, an earthquake, insurrections, and particularly a pestilence, which spread from Ethiopia to Gaul. This gave rise to bloody persecutions, in which government and people united against the enemies of the gods and the supposed authors of these misfortunes. Celsus expressed his joy that “the demon” [of the Christians] was “not only reviled, but banished from every land and sea,” and saw in this judgment the fulfillment of the oracle: “the mills of the gods grind late.” But at the same time these persecutions, and the simultaneous literary assaults on Christianity by Celsus and Lucian, show that the new religion was constantly gaining importance in the empire.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

180 – 192 AD – Commodus

Marcus Aurelius was succeeded by his cruel and contemptible son, Commodus (180–192), who wallowed in the mire of every sensual debauchery, and displayed at the same time like Nero the most ridiculous vanity as dancer and singer, and in the character of buffoon; but he was accidentally made to favor the Christians by the influence of a concubine, Marcia, and accordingly did not disturb them. Yet under his reign a Roman senator, Apollonius, was put to death for his faith.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

193 – 249 AD – Septimius Severus to Philip the Arabian

With Septimius Severus (193–211), who was of Punic descent and had a Syrian wife, a line of emperors (Caracalla, Heliogabalus, Alexander Severus) came to the throne, who were rather Oriental than Roman in their spirit, and were therefore far less concerned than the Antonines to maintain the old state religion. Yet towards the close of the second century there was no lack of local persecutions; and Clement of Alexandria wrote of those times: “Many martyrs are daily burned, confined, or beheaded, before our eyes.”

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

193 – 249 AD – Septimius Severus to Philip the Arabian (cont.)

In the beginning of the third century (202) Septimius Severus, turned perhaps by Montanistic excesses, enacted a rigid law against the further spread both of Christianity and of Judaism. This occasioned violent persecutions in Egypt and in North Africa, and produced some of the fairest flowers of martyrdom.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

193 – 249 AD – Septimius Severus to Philip the Arabian (cont.)

Gordianus (208–244) left the church undisturbed. Philip the Arabian (244–249) was even supposed by some to be a Christian, and was termed by Jerome “*primus omnium ex Romanis imperatoribus Christianus*.” It is certain that Origen wrote letters to him and to his wife, Severa.

This season of repose, however, cooled the moral zeal and brotherly love of the Christians; and the mighty storm under the following reign served well to restore the purity of the church.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

249 – 260 AD – Decius and Valerian

Decius Trajan (249–251), an earnest and energetic emperor, in whom the old Roman spirit once more awoke, resolved to root out the church as an atheistic and seditious sect, and in the year 250 published an edict to all the governors of the provinces, enjoining return to the pagan state religion under the heaviest penalties. This was the signal for a persecution which, in extent, consistency, and cruelty, exceeded all before it. In truth it was properly the first which covered the whole empire, and accordingly produced a far greater number of martyrs than any former persecution. In the execution of the imperial decree confiscation, exile, torture, promises and threats of all kinds, were employed to move the Christians to apostasy. Multitudes of nominal Christians, especially at the beginning, sacrificed to the gods (*sacrificati*, *thurificati*), or procured from the magistrate a false certificate that they had done so (*libellatici*), and were then excommunicated as apostates (*lapsi*); while hundreds rushed with impetuous zeal to the prisons and the tribunals, to obtain the confessor's or martyr's crown.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

249 – 260 AD – Decius and Valerian (cont.)

The confessors of Rome wrote from prison to their brethren of Africa: “What more glorious and blessed lot can fall to man by the grace of God, than to confess God the Lord amidst tortures and in the face of death itself; to confess Christ the Son of God with lacerated body and with a spirit departing, yet free; and to become fellow-sufferers with Christ in the name of Christ? Though we have not yet shed our blood, we are ready to do so. Pray for us, then, dear Cyprian, that the Lord, the best captain, would daily strengthen each one of us more and more, and at last lead us to the field as faithful soldiers, armed with those divine weapons (Eph. 6:2) which can never be conquered.”

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

249 – 260 AD – Decius and Valerian (cont.)

Valerian (253–260) was at first mild towards the Christians; but in 257 he changed his course, and made an effort to check the progress of their religion without bloodshed, by the banishment of ministers and prominent laymen, the confiscation of their property, and the prohibition of religious assemblies. These measures, however, proving fruitless, he brought the death penalty again into play.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

249 – 260 AD – Decius and Valerian (cont.)

The most distinguished martyrs of this persecution under Valerian are the bishops Sixtus II. of Rome, and Cyprian of Carthage.

When Cyprian received his sentence of death, representing him as an enemy of the Roman gods and laws, he calmly answered: “Deo gratias!” Then, attended by a vast multitude to the scaffold, he proved once more, undressed himself, covered his eyes, requested a presbyter to bind his hands, and to pay the executioner, who tremblingly drew the sword, twenty-five pieces of gold, and won the incorruptible crown (Sept. 14, 258). His faithful friends caught the blood in handkerchiefs, and buried the body of their sainted pastor with great solemnity.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

303 – 311 – AD – Diocletian

In the first twenty years of his reign Diocletian respected the toleration edict of Gallienus. His own wife Prisca his daughter Valeria, and most of his eunuchs and court officers, besides many of the most prominent public functionaries, were Christians, or at least favorable to the Christian religion. He himself was a superstitious heathen and an oriental despot. Like Aurelian and Domitian before him, he claimed divine honors, as the vicar of Jupiter Capitolinus. He was called, as the Lord and Master of the world, *Sacratissimus Dominus Noster*; he guarded his Sacred Majesty with many circles of soldiers and eunuchs, and allowed no one to approach him except on bended knees, and with the forehead touching the ground, while he was seated on the throne in rich vestments from the far East. “Ostentation,” says Gibbon, “was the first principle of the new system instituted by Diocletian.”

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

303 – 311 – AD – Diocletian (cont.)

As a practical statesman, he must have seen that his work of the political restoration and consolidation of the empire would lack a firm and permanent basis without the restoration of the old religion of the state. Although he long postponed the religious question, he had to meet it at last. It could not be expected, in the nature of the case, that paganism should surrender to its dangerous rival without a last desperate effort to save itself.

But the chief instigator of the renewal of hostility, according to the account of Lactantius, was Diocletian's co-regent and son-in-law, Galerius, a cruel and fanatical heathen. He prevailed at last on Diocletian in his old age to authorize the persecution which gave to his glorious reign a disgraceful end.

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The Sixth Economy

Persecution of the Early Church

303 – 311 – AD – Diocletian (cont.)

In 303 Diocletian issued in rapid succession three edicts, each more severe than its predecessor. Maximian issued the fourth, the worst of all, April 30, 304. Christian churches were to be destroyed; all copies of the Bible were to be burned; all Christians were to be deprived of public office and civil rights; and at last all, without exception, were to sacrifice to the gods upon pain of death. Pretext for this severity was afforded by the occurrence of fire twice in the palace of Nicomedia in Bithynia, where Diocletian resided. It was strengthened by the tearing down of the first edict by an imprudent Christian (celebrated in the Greek church under the name of John), who vented in that way his abhorrence of such “godless and tyrannical rulers,” and was gradually roasted to death with every species of cruelty.

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Persecution of the Early Church

303 – 311 – AD – Diocletian (cont.)

But the conjecture that the edicts were occasioned by a conspiracy of the Christians who, feeling their rising power, were for putting the government at once into Christian hands, by a stroke of state, is without any foundation in history. It is inconsistent with the political passivity of the church during the first three centuries, which furnish no example of rebellion and revolution. At best such a conspiracy could only have been the work of a few fanatics; and they, like the one who tore down the first edict, would have gloried in the deed and sought the crown of martyrdom.

Refining a Creation for Eternity

Acts 2:7–12

They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? “And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? “Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and **Cappadocia**, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”



Refining a Creation for Eternity

1 Peter 1:1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who reside as aliens,
scattered throughout Pontus,
Galatia, **Cappadocia**, Asia, and
Bithynia, who are chosen



Refining a Creation for Eternity

“Cappadocia became the home of some prominent bishops who carried the flag of the Nicene Creed and played a very important role in the formation of today’s Christianity. These are Basil the Great (330-379), Gregory of Nyssa (340-394) and Gregory of Nazianzus (330-389) known as the Cappadocian Fathers. Their social and educational background made them leaders of the time and they organized the monastic movement in Cappadocia.”



Cimok, F. (2005). Biblical anatolia: From genesis to the councils. Istanbul, Turkey: A Turizm Yayinlari.

Allsteadt, E., Göreme National Park near Cappadocia, Turkey

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Inside a Cappadocia cave church.



Refining a Creation for Eternity

Cappadocia apartment cave.



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Allsteadt, E., Göreme National Park near Cappadocia, Turkey