

Hymns: 60 Stand Up, Stand Up, for Jesus 7 God Will Take Care of You, 8 Great is Thy Faithfulness, 9 His Eye is on the Sparrow 26 Trust and Obey, 49 Just As I Am

Scripture: Psalm 37:1-9; 46:1-11; 105:1-10;41-45; 106:1-12

I am the greatest! His brash bragging entertained many and offended others but always added interest to his contests. How could he make such statements? He would in God-like fashion purport to predict the future regarding exactly when and how he would defeat his opponent. And he was good – very good in fact. In his prime, he was unstoppable and regarded as one of the best if not the best boxer of all time.

At age 18, Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr. won the light heavyweight division in the 1960 Summer Olympics. Four years later, he upset Sonny Liston to win the heavyweight boxing title. Shortly thereafter, Clay, reared as a Baptist, converted to Islam and changed his name to Mohammad Ali. He held the boxing crown at various times through age 36. In 1984 at age 42, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's syndrome. He died three weeks ago at age 74.

How ironic that a man who flew so high **and** had such **mastery** of his physical body could be brought so low. Was this the judgment of God?

Galatians 6

*[7] Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

*[8] For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

Hebrews 9

*[27] And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Whether in this life or at the final judgment, the price will be paid. We'll see numerous examples of this principle in God's word today.

### Review

As we finish up the Dispensation of Promise, let's pause for a moment and review what we've learned. We looked first at the important word *covenant* and found it is a binding, usually written, agreement or **promise**. The first usage of the word in the Bible appears in **the** Genesis story of Noah. From that story we learned the following **five key elements** associated with God's covenant after the flood:

1. The *parties* in covenant.
2. The *promise* or *terms* of the covenant.
3. The *duration* or *term* of the covenant.
4. The *type* unilateral vs. bilateral.
5. The *token* or *sign* of the covenant. Remember the bow in the clouds.

With this background, we pressed on to look at Genesis chapters 12 and 13. There we learned that the Lord promised to Abram:

1. Land
2. Great nation
3. Blessing to him
4. Blessing to his friends

5. Blessing to all nations (through Jesus Christ)
6. Cursing to his enemies
7. Innumerable descendants

We saw God promise the miracle birth of Isaac, Abraham's and Sarah's disbelief, and then God's fulfillment of that promise.

Next, we paused at Mount Moriah as we gazed in awe at Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac and God's grace in providing a substitute at the last moment. We noted the clear link between that scene and God's sacrifice of His Son on that same mountain and the significance of the Lamb of God in scripture.

Last time, we answered the question: Why were the Israelites slaves in Egypt for so long? We saw the Israelites, wooed by the blessings of God, had been brought to the point of no return. Remember God said He's a **jealous God** who will visit the sins of the fathers to the **fourth generation**. The Israelites and the world today are reaping the consequences of the seeds that they sowed.

Here are some of those seeds:

1. They did not believe God would provide an heir:
  - Sarai gave Abram Hagar to bear them the child God had withheld
  - Abram told God that Ishmael should be his heir
  - Both Sarai and Abram laughed at the suggestion that Sarai would bear Abram's son in their old age.
2. They worshiped other gods
  - Rachel stole her father's idols
  - Jacob had to purge his whole house of them
3. Jacob had four wives
4. Abram left the land that God had promised him in time of famine
5. Before the Israelites were enslaved by Egypt, the Egyptians were enslaved by them.
  - Sarai treated her Egyptian **slave**, Hagar, harshly
  - After Joseph's brothers sold him into **slavery**, Joseph, a Hebrew, **enslaved** all of the Egyptians near the end of the seven years of famine

With that context, let's press on and see how this dispensation ends.

But before we leave the book of Genesis, we must note how *it* ends. The book starts with creation and new life. Man turned from God and brought the curse of death on all creation. It's sobering to read the last verse of Genesis:

*[26] So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put **in a coffin in Egypt**.*

What a contrast! The book of beginnings and new life ends with death.

So with Joseph dead and a new pharaoh in charge, the Israelites were made slaves to the Egyptians. In

the fourth generation, the Lord heard their cry and raised up Moses to free them and lead them to the Promised Land.

The LORD appeared to Moses in a burning bush.

Exodus 3

[6] *Moreover he said,  
I am the God of thy father,  
the God of Abraham,  
the God of Isaac,  
and the God of Jacob.*

*And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.*

[7] *And the LORD said, I have surely  
**seen** the **affliction** of my people which are in Egypt,  
and have **heard** their **cry** by reason of their **taskmasters**;  
for I **know** their **sorrows**;*

[8] *And I am come down  
**to deliver** them out of the hand of the Egyptians,  
and **to bring** them up out of that land unto  
a **good** land  
and a **large**,  
unto a land **flowing** with milk and honey; ....*

[10] *Come now therefore, and **I will send** thee unto Pharaoh, that thou may[] bring forth my  
people the children of Israel out of Egypt.*

God used Moses to demonstrate His power through various plagues that made a **mockery** of Egyptian “gods” and **decimated** the most powerful nation on earth. We'll pick up our story after Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go.

Exodus 14

[9] *But the Egyptians pursued after them,  
**all the horses**  
**and chariots of Pharaoh**,  
and his horsemen,  
and his army,  
and **overtook** them encamping by the sea, ...*

[10] *And **when** Pharaoh drew nigh,  
the children of Israel lifted up their eyes,  
and, **behold**, the Egyptians marched after them;  
and **they were sore afraid**;  
and the children of Israel **cried out** unto the LORD.*

[11] *And they said unto Moses,  
Because there were no **graves** in Egypt, **hast** thou taken us away **to die** in the wilderness?*

*wh[y] ha[ve] [you] dealt th[is] way with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?*

*[12] Is **not** this **the** word that we [told you] in Egypt, saying,  
Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?*

God had consecrated them to serve Him, not the Egyptians. This is very telling of the heart of these people.

*For it had been better for us to  
serve the Egyptians, than that we should  
die in the wilderness.*

*[13] And Moses said unto the people,  
**Fear** ye **not**,  
**stand** still,  
and **see** the **salvation** of the LORD,  
which he will sh[o]w to you to day:  
for the Egyptians  
whom ye have seen to day,  
ye shall see them again no more  
for ever.*

*[14] The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*

*[21] And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea;  
and the LORD  
caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night,  
and made the sea dry land,  
and the waters were divided.*

*[22] And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.*

*[23] And the Egyptians pursued,  
and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even **all** Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

And after all of the host of Israel crossed over,

*[26] ... the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.*

*[27] And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea,  
and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared;  
and the Egyptians fled against it;  
and **the LORD overthrew** the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.*

*[28] And the waters returned,  
and covered the chariots,  
and the horsemen,*

*and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them;  
**there** remained not so much as **one** of them.*

*[30] Thus **the LORD saved Israel** that day out of the hand of the Egyptians;  
and Israel saw the Egyptians **dead** upon the sea shore.*

*[31] And Israel **saw** that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians:  
and the people  
**feared** the LORD, and  
**believed** the LORD,  
and his servant Moses.*

God had worked one of the great miracles of the Bible in freeing the Israelites and destroying the armies of Egypt. That same God who fought for the Israelites, is still mighty for his people today. Despite our circumstances – when our backs are against the wall and we're without hope -- we need never fear and should never lose heart.

#### Exodus 19

*[4] Ye have seen **what** I [the LORD] did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*

*[7] And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces **all these words which the LORD commanded him.***

*[8] And all the people answered together, and said,  
**All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.***

*And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.*

Those words were The Ten Commandments and the law of the Lord. They are the new contract made with man – enumerating a detailed moral, religious, and legal code. We'll examine how that worked out starting next time as we move on to the Dispensation of the Law.

#### Summary

##### **The Context / New Administration**

God made unconditional promises (covenants) to a called-out group of people

##### **The Assignment**

Serve God and build a nation in the land that God had given them.

##### **The Moral Test**

His people were to simply believe God.

##### **The Fall**

They doubted God and resorted to their own plans to produce offspring that God had promised. When a famine plagued the land, they fled to Egypt and became too comfortable there.

##### **The Judgment**

Slavery into the fourth generation in the same land where they first sought refuge and had flourished.

This concludes the tragic story of the fourth dispensation.

### Application

As we saw, this dispensation focused on

1. the promises of God and
2. man's responsibility to trust that God will do what He has promised.

God demonstrated that He is true to his word and able to fulfill all of His promises.

Included in those promises is judgment. When we started out today we considered sowing and reaping.

We saw a boxer who was taught the truth, turn from that truth, engage in outlandish boasting, reach the pinnacle of his profession, succumb to the ravages of a debilitating disease, and finally pass into eternity – apparently without Jesus Christ.

In the book of Genesis we have another good example of sowing and reaping. Jacob, the **younger**, wore **goatskins** to trick his father into giving him the blessing intended for his **elder** brother Esau. Later, Jacob was tricked by his father-in-law, Laban, to marry his **elder** daughter, Leah, instead of his **younger** daughter, Rachel.

Jacob continued his wayward behavior by marrying multiple wives and reaping a whirlwind of family problems. He was deceived by his children and faced intense, prolonged sorrow regarding his family and children. His sons used **goat's** blood to deceive Jacob into believing that his favorite son, Joseph, was killed by a wild animal.

Genesis 37

*[34] And Jacob  
rent his clothes, and  
put sackcloth upon his loins, and  
mourned for his son many days.*

*[35] And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but **he refused to be comforted**; and he said, For **I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning**. Thus his father **wept** for him.*

Jacob reaped great sorrow throughout much of his life.

You may have in mind someone in our day who seems to be getting away with it-- someone who denies God and lives like the devil. He may hold his fist high and defy God, but I submit to you that the very sin he embraces eats away at him. He's held in bondage to it and cannot escape. And of course in the end, he will stand before Almighty God and account for his deeds. Without saving faith in Jesus Christ, he will meet his justice in the Lake of Fire.

But **that** need not be the end of the story for us. While he who sows to the flesh will reap corruption, let's not forget the end of that verse:

*but he that sow[s] to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

We need to keep our focus on things above and not on things of this world, for those things that matter have eternal value. The hymnist writes:

*Be still, my soul; the hour is hastening on  
When we shall be forever with the Lord,  
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,  
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.  
Be still, my soul; when change and tears are past,  
All safe and blessed we shall meet [our Lord] at last.*

**Benediction**

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,  
according to the power that worketh in us,  
Unto him be glory in the church  
by Christ Jesus  
throughout all ages,  
world without end.  
Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)*