



## VII. THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE (Genesis 12:1-3)

### A. The Contents of the Dispensation

1. The bookmark events
  - a. The beginning: the call of Abram
  - b. The end: the exodus from Egypt
2. The passage covered
  - a. From Genesis chapter 12
  - b. To Exodus chapter 19
3. The time period spanned: about 600 years
4. Note: This dispensation is commonly called by one of two names: (1) the dispensation of promise because of its connection to the promise given to Abraham or (2) the dispensation of the patriarchs because of its emphasis on family (patriarchal) rule.

### B. The Conditions of the Dispensation

1. Gentiles
  - a. The beginning of this dispensation continued God's dealings with a Gentile people. It was during this time that God introduced circumcision and divided His chosen people from the world.
  - b. The people continued to be reliant upon their consciences in their dealings with the Lord (Romans 2:12-15).
  - c. These people lived prior to the law and were recipients of God's longsuffering and mercy (Acts 14:16-17; Acts 17:29-30).
2. Patriarchs
  - a. This period of time saw the transition from God dealing with nations to God dealing with a family.
  - b. God worked through the family line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:6).
  - c. These men, along with the twelve sons of Jacob, were known as the patriarchs—the fathers (Acts 7:8-9).
  - d. They were chosen to be God's special people (Genesis 12:1-3); the people through whom God would do His special works.
  - e. They were initially established as a family rule (Genesis 18:17-19). They were not called a nation until they were removed from Egypt (Deuteronomy 4:34; Exodus 33:13).

### C. The Commission of the Dispensation

1. Initial portion given specifically to Abram
  - a. He was to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house to seek a land shown to him by God (Genesis 12:1).
  - b. As soon as Abram completed the first part of the commission, he was shown the land promised to him by God (Genesis 13:14-17; Hebrews 11:8-10).



- c. He was to believe in God's promise of a son (Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 4:17-22).
2. Portions extending to Abraham's seed
  - a. God implemented circumcision (Genesis 17:9-13).
    - (1) It was the token of the covenant (Genesis 17:11).
    - (2) It was to be "an everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17:13).
    - (3) Israel's failure to get circumcised would not destroy the covenant, but it would require that individual be cut off and lose the privileges of the covenant (Genesis 17:14).
  - b. They were to embrace and look for the promises (Hebrews 11:13-16; Genesis 48:21; Genesis 50:24-25; Exodus 2:23-25).

#### D. The Covenant of the Dispensation

1. The recipient of the covenant
  - a. It was initially given to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7; Genesis 13:14-17; Genesis 15:1-21; Genesis 17:1-14; Genesis 18:18; Genesis 22:15-18). Note: This demonstrated that the covenant was not to be made with Lot or his lineage: (1) Moab (Genesis 19:37; Deuteronomy 2:9) or (2) Benammi (Genesis 19:38; Deuteronomy 2:19).
    - (1) The initial call (Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7)
      - a) The call to separate (Genesis 12:1)
        - i) "Get thee out of thy country."
        - ii) "Get thee...from thy kindred."
        - iii) "Get thee...from thy father's house."
      - b) The promise of personal blessing (Genesis 12:2)
        - i) "I will make of thee a great nation."
        - ii) "I will bless thee."
        - iii) "I will...make thy name great."
      - c) The promise of universal blessing (Genesis 12:2-3)
        - i) "Thou shalt be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2).
        - ii) "I will bless them that bless thee" (Genesis 12:3; Matthew 25:40).
        - iii) "I will...curse him that curseth thee" (Genesis 12:3; Matthew 25:45).
        - iv) "In thee shall **all families** of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8).
    - (2) The repetition due to obedience (Genesis 13:14-17)
      - a) This was repeated to Abram only after all three stipulations were met.
      - b) When Lot separated, the LORD spoke.
    - (3) The exercising of Abram's faith and sign of the covenant (Genesis 15:1-21)
    - (4) The confirmation and token of the covenant (Genesis 17:1-14)
    - (5) The test of Abraham's faith involving Isaac (Genesis 22:15-18)



- b. The covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5, 24). Note: It is imperative to note that the covenant went through Isaac to the exclusion of Ishmael.
  - c. The covenant was confirmed to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15; Genesis 35:1-15). Note: It is crucial to know that the covenant did not go through Esau (Genesis 25:21-26; Genesis 27:21-29) who was the origin of the Edomites (Genesis 32:3; Genesis 36:1, 8, 9).
2. The provisions of the covenant
- a. The **promise of a land** (Genesis 12:1; Genesis 13:1-18, esp. 14-17; Genesis 15:7-21, esp. 18-21; Genesis 17:1-9; Acts 7:1-5)
    - (1) The repetition of the promise
      - a) This was repeated to Abram only after all three stipulations were met.
      - b) When Lot separated, the LORD spoke.
    - (2) The land of promise
      - a) “The land of Canaan” (Genesis 12:5)
      - b) “The Canaanite was then in the land” (Genesis 12:6).
      - c) “The Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land” (Genesis 13:7).
      - d) “From the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18-21)
    - (3) The land inhabited by the wicked (Deuteronomy 9:1-6)
  - b. The **promise of a great nation** (Genesis 12:2; Genesis 18:18)
  - c. The **promise of many nations** (Genesis 17:4-6, 20)
  - d. The **promise of blessing** (Genesis 12:2; Genesis 22:17)
  - e. The **promise of a great name** (Genesis 12:2; Genesis 17:5)
  - f. The **promise of a multiplied seed** (Genesis 13:16; Genesis 22:17)
  - g. The **promise of an extended blessing** to all families and nations (Genesis 12:2-3; Genesis 18:18; Genesis 22:18)
  - h. The **promise of a seed** (Genesis 3:15; Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16)
3. The nature of the covenant—unconditional
- a. Made by God alone (Genesis 15:7-21; Jeremiah 34:18)
    - (1) Evidence as per Abram’s request (Genesis 15:7-8)
    - (2) God required a sacrifice to be made (Genesis 15:9-11; Jeremiah 34:18-19). Note: Jeremiah 34:18-19 refers to this type of covenant when two parties walk between a divided sacrifice. The difference here is that God passed between the pieces without Abram. As such, this was an unconditional covenant. God promised to fulfil it regardless of the faithfulness of Abram and his seed.
    - (3) God made His covenant with Abram (Genesis 15:12-17).
      - a) Abram went into a deep sleep (Genesis 15:12).
      - b) God spoke unto Abram (Genesis 15:13-16).
      - c) God passed between the pieces (Genesis 15:17).
    - (4) God’s covenant described Abram’s inheritance (Genesis 15:18-21).



- b. Made to be everlasting (Genesis 17:7-8, 13, 19)
  - (1) An everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:7, 13, 19)
  - (2) An everlasting possession (Genesis 17:8)
4. The token of the covenant—circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14)

E. The **Crisis** of the Dispensation

1. The children of Israel went to sojourn in Egypt (Genesis 45:16-20; Genesis 50:26).
2. The children of Israel became the enemy of Egypt (Exodus 1:7-22).
3. The children of Israel became comfortable with Egypt and its ways (Exodus 14:10-12; Exodus 16:3; Leviticus 18:3; cp. Exodus 32:1).

F. The **Condemnation** of the Dispensation

1. The Israelites lost their freedom (Exodus 1:7-12).
2. Their burdens were made heavy (Exodus 1:13-14).
3. Their sons were to be killed (Exodus 1:15-22).
4. They cried by reason of their bondage (Exodus 2:23).

G. The **Compassion** of the Dispensation

1. The midwives saved many Jewish children (Exodus 1:17-21).
2. God heard Israel's cries and groaning (Exodus 2:23-25).
3. God called Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egypt (Exodus 3:7-10).
4. God brought Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 4:20; Deuteronomy 7:6-8). Note: This was a defining point in Israel's history and was referred to numerous times as a description of the greatness of God. Jeremiah 23:5-8 tells of a time when this frame of reference will be changed.

H. The **Change** of the Dispensation—Moses, the Transitional Man

1. He was born in Egypt under the sentence of death (Exodus 2:1-3).
2. He was raised in the palace as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:10).
3. He chose his people over the advantages of royalty (Hebrews 11:24-26).
4. He was rejected by his own people as deliverer (Acts 7:22-25).
5. He spent the prime of his life isolated on the backside of the desert (Exodus 3:1; Acts 7:29).
6. He did his best to excuse himself from God's call to deliver Israel (Exodus 3:11-14; Exodus 4:10-15).
7. He was used to deliver Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 12:28-39).
8. He was used to give God's law to Israel (Exodus 19:1-9).
9. He led Israel for forty years in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 29:5).
10. He was refused entrance into the promised land (Deuteronomy 3:23-26).