

Lesson 26

(Short recap)

- So far, we have studied the first three epochs of mankind, as divided in our study for ease of understanding, and we have seen how God has revealed Himself to man through the areas of the **Word**, **Worship** and **Government**.

We also saw how God, after the fall of man, was and continues to present His rescue plan to man, and how Satan also presents his 'similar' plan, to turn man away from God. We also studied some of God's principles, and as a reminder to be clear and always consider, we saw how God established from the beginning that spiritual beings, including God Himself, can only act on earth through man.

⇒ **Psalm 115:16**; We have to have this principle very clear in order to understand how things happen here on earth.

- **1st epoch: Adam and Eve, innocence**; we studied creation and how sin entered the universe and the human race. In this period mankind rejected God's revelation in the area of the Word. We saw how man did not believe God's Word and sinned by listening to and believing Satan's word. This period ended with a judgment for mankind, which was the departure from the Garden of Eden.
- **2nd epoch: Cain and Abel, conscience**; in this period man rejected God's revelation in the **Area of Worship**. We studied how God determined the sacrifice with blood for man to relate to Him, and we saw how Cain, following the 'similar' plan presented by Satan, decided to inaugurate his own way, without blood, through the works of his hands. We have seen how humanity, guided by man's conscience, developed and how it became corrupted, culminating in the judgment of the flood.
- **3rd epoch: Noah and the nations**; after the flood, with the preservation of Noah and his family through God's grace, we study how God gave man a form of government; God was going to establish a kingdom on earth. But humanity commanded by Nimrod made official the way of Cain, the way of works, and established his own way to heaven; even a monument to rebellion was erected, the tower of Babel. God proposed His kingdom, but Nimrod made a similar kingdom, where the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. As a judgment for that time, God established the confusion of languages, from which the nations arose.
- The nations, or humanity as a whole, rejected God's revelation in all three areas, but God was not going to reject the nations. Out of love for the nations, out of love for man, God would go ahead with his plan to rescue the humanity. The whole Bible is a story of God's love for man. There is nothing that would make God give up loving man and continue with His rescue plan. Glory be to God himself!
- God will now no longer speak to nations or to humanity as a whole, God will now deal with individuals. God will then call one man and will form a new nation from that man, a nation that will bless the other nations that rejected him.

- God's program for the nations as a whole has been put on hold. In the future, God will deal specifically with the nations, as the groups they are. Within the nations there are individuals who follow God, but there is not a single nation that has the creator God of heaven and earth as its sovereign God. God can no longer use a nation, so he will call a man, and from this man he will form a family, from this family he will form a people and from this people he will form a nation.
- When God reveals his plan to the humanity, in order for man to follow it, he must first see that it is God's plan, accept it and follow it; this applies to all the epoch (eras) we are studying. The first step in seeing and following God's revelation is to re-establish our relationship with God. For us today in our time, before we re-established our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, we were unable to understand God's plan. Then, after receiving Jesus, our lives changed completely, our spiritual eyes were opened, and we began to understand God's plan. But it was necessary first to re-establish our relationship with God.
- In the 4th epoch that we're about to start studying, God will first re-establish a relationship with a man, with an individual. It's interesting that we still feel the effects of this time today, because God still deals with humanity through individuals.

7. **ABRAHAM AND THE FORMATION OF ISRAEL**

7.1 Abraham's call

- ⇒ **Genesis 11:26~30**; The family of Terah, Abram's father
- ⇒ **Genesis 12:1~3**; God appears to Abram and makes him a promise
- This was the chronological order of events:
 - 1st God appears to Abram, in the city of Ur of Chaldea, and speaks these words to him: ⇒ **Genesis 12:1~3**
 - Then follows; ⇒ **Genesis 11:31~32**
- What did God say to Abram (*note that it's not Abraham*) in ⇒ **Genesis 12:1~3**? Abram, get out of your country, from your relatives and from your father's house. God did not speak to Terah, Abram's father. What did we see happen? The whole family left, ⇒ **Genesis 11:31~32**. Only the first condition was met, 'Abram left the land.' And what happened? Abram stayed in Haran.
 - ⇒ **Acts 7:2~4**; The N.T. explains that Abram was called by God and not his father.

Abram took his father's entire household with him, and he wasn't supposed to. But God's mercy and goodness are so great that He allowed Abram to take care of his father until the end; to honor his father. With the death of his father, God said: 'Now one more condition has been met, Abram get out of your father's house'.
- But there was still one more condition, why? Who did Abram take with him? His relatives, Lot his nephew ⇒ **Genesis 12:4**. God allowed it, he's used to the 'nonsense' and mistakes we make! God waits until Abram separates from Lot, as we will see later in the study.

- Why did God choose Abram? Because he wanted to. There was nothing special about Abram, except for the faith with which he responded when God called him. Abram was no better than any other man.

⇒ **Joshua 24:2**; Abram's family were idolaters.

What do you think Abram's creation was like? It was an idolatrous creation. If we look into history, we see that the city of Ur in Chaldea was a city dedicated to the moon goddess, called Nana. It was in this idolatrous family that Abram was brought up!

- But we saw in ⇒ **Acts 7:2**, that '*the God of glory appeared to Abram*'! Where were we when Jesus called us? In idolatry, in sorcery, black magic, indifference, materialism, worldliness, just like Abram. There are some who come straight away and answer: 'Here I am Lord', but others have to be dragged along. It's like the birth of a child: normal delivery, little pain; caesarean section; or forceps.

- '*they served other gods*'. That's where Abram came from. It's so good to see these 'superheroes' of faith. We think they're superheroes, but they're not, they're just like us.

⇒ **James 5:17~18**; Elijah was subject to the same passions as us; but he prayed, and it didn't rain and then he prayed, and it did rain.

So, what was the difference? Faith! They knew and trusted their God.

- 'When the God of glory appeared to Abram,' I think Abram thought, 'this is what I was looking for! I've had enough of this moon goddess who doesn't answer anything I ask'. It's the same thing that happens today when someone is born again: 'Oh, that's what I've been looking for'; they've looked for everything for years. That's what happened to Abram.

- God had three objectives in calling this man and making a great nation out of him:

➤ **1st objective:** to form a people who would receive the Word of God and keep it. Until Moses, nothing had been recorded, there was no Bible, not even the OT. God's revelation was oral, as we saw at the beginning of the course (Moses appears well after Abram).

➤ **2nd objective:** to have a people who would be a testimony. A people formed by God is concrete proof that God exists.

➤ **3rd objective:** to have a people from whom the Messiah would be born. When God was to become incarnate on this planet, he would be born from this special people.

- Israel is the spring of the world; Israel is the center of the world! Set your sights on Israel, because that's where you'll understand God's program. If you don't understand Israel in biblical history, in God's history, if you don't put Israel in its proper place, you won't understand anything about the things of God. The Devil has done terrible things since the beginning, to make the world hate this nation, to take this nation off the 'map'.

⇒ **Jeremiah 31:35~36**; if Israel ceases to exist, the universe ends.

⇒ **Genesis 12:3**; blessings for those who bless Israel and curses for those who curse Israel.

⇒ **Psalms 122:6**; we should pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

One of the goals of the study is to put Israel in its rightful place in biblical history and in God's plan.

- God's three objectives for the creation of Israel have already been fulfilled:
 - **1st objective**; the people of Israel as to receiving the Word of God:
 - ⇒ **Romans 3:1~2**; The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.
 - **2nd objective**: Israel was made to be a witness to the other nations:
 - ⇒ **Isaiah 43:9~15**; God here is speaking harshly to the nations (**V.9**), and speaking to the people of Israel, that they are the witnesses.
 - ⇒ **Isaiah 44:6~8**; Isaiah is relating that God is the only true one in the universe and that Israel is a witness.
 - Even in its infidelity and rebellion, Israel is a witness. What people on earth still retain the same characteristics of a people, of unity, as Israel does, some 2,000 years removed from its land? Can you explain this historically? When they returned to their land in 1948, they had been scattered among the other nations for almost 2000 years. You meet a Jew, wherever he is from, and he says he's Jewish; you say: he's a Brazilian-Jew, a German-Jew, etc. It's supernatural! It's because God has decreed that they are a '*people of witness*', it's God's vocation and nobody changes it, hallelujah!
 - **3rd objective**: Israel to be the nation where God would incarnate on earth:
 - ⇒ **Romans 9:4~5**; '*From whom Christ (the Messiah) is descended, according to the flesh; he is descended from the Jews.*'
- It was all given to the Jews! Could it be that God liked them better? There are people who think so, but not for that reason. In the first three periods, the nations rejected God, so God made a nation so that He could 'become flesh' and redeem man and bless the other nations. This nation was made for this purpose, not because God liked Israel better. The nation was formed for these purposes, to receive His Word, to be a witness and so that the Messiah would be born in the flesh.
 - ⇒ **John 4:22**; '*Salvation comes from the Jews.*'
 - ⇒ **Matthew 1:1**; '*Son of David, son of Abram.*'

A people favorite, not; a people prepared for it!