

# LESSON -1

## AGES AND DISPENSATIONS

### PART -1

**References** : 2 Peter 3 :5 -13, Genesis Ch : 1 -3,  
Revel 20 : 2 - 21 : 8

**Memory verse** : 2 Peter 3 : 8 - 9

**Objective** : The eternal God has a definite programme regarding man and the universe. It is very important for us to understand God's eternal plan so that we may ensure our future.

**Introduction** : Too many people think that death is the end of everything to man. There are some who think that there is life beyond death but are not sure of it. They believe in the cycle of rebirths after which salvation (*Mukti*) can be finally attained. But only the Bible the Word of God gives us a clear and correct idea about our salvation and life after death.

Bible contains both scientific and historical facts, though it is not to be regarded as a scientific or historical book. As a matter of fact, history is an account of past things. But in the case of biblical history, it deals with the past, present and future events. No other book in the world is as authentic and informative and all inclusive as the Bible. It contains predictions about various modern inventions such as supersonic aircrafts, satellites, missiles, television, computer etc.. Many people keep it aside as a myth, whereas some find it hard to understand. Still others think it to be too holy to be read by the common folks. But actually, the Bible stands as a testimony to God's power and grace revealed to man. For understanding these revelations, however, an indepth study by the guidance of the Holy Spirit is needed.

Though the Bible contains messages for everyone, it does not appear to be graspable to a casual reader. The reason is that the facts in the Bible come within our grasp only gradually in proportion to our spiritual growth. Say for instance, a new born child may not recognise even its parents in the beginning. But gradually, the child recognises them and its knowledge develops into a wider range of knowing others as well.

## **CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE**

Do you know anything clearly about the origin of this universe? You will not find the answer anywhere else. The Bible asserts, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1 :1).

The whole universe containing the sun, the moon and the stars and the galaxies were created by God millions of years ago. However, the earth was destroyed by water (2 Pet. 3:5-7). This explains the chaotic state of the earth in the Genesis account (Gen.1:2a). The original earth was created for habitation. It was full of vegetation, animals etc.

Do you know who were the inhabitants of that earth? Why was the earth destroyed? From the Bible we gather the fact that a group of angels under Lucifer were living on the first earth. Because of their pride, God cast them out and destroyed the earth by water (Isa.14: 12-14, Jere. 4:23-28).

## **RENOVATION OF THE EARTH**

Though the earth was thus plunged in to a chaotic condition, God did not allow it to be so for ever (Jere 4 : 27). The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Gen 1: 2b) just as a mother bird broods over her eggs. Let us see how God restored the earth in its former state "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God" (Heb. 11 : 3).

### **1. God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1 : 3)**

The former chaotic state of the earth was due to the darkness caused by the absence of sunlight . We know that the polar regions are covered with snow because of the darkness prevailing there half of the year. The earth was in a similar or more chaotic state. Then God commanded the light to come upon the earth. Here we may understand that the sun had already existed but its light, was obscured by the clouds.

2. God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters" (Gen. 1 : 6). God made firmament and divided the waters above and the waters beneath.
3. God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place and let the dry land appear" (Gen. 1 : 9). Thus the land and the sea were separated. Again God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit according to its kind" (Gen. 1: 11).
4. God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night" (Gen 1 : 14). Thus the Sun, Moon and the Stars became visible.
5. God said, "Let the waters abound with abundance of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth".
6. God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind".

## **CREATION OF MAN**

God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness" (Gen. 1 : 26). "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed in to his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gen. 2 : 7).

See the difference between the creation of man and everything else! God created everything by His Word whereas He made man in His own image and according to His likeness. God is a Spirit (Jn. 4 : 24). Therefore man's likeness to God was not physical. But rather it was a spiritual and moral likeness which can be explained in terms of God's eternal attributes such as glory, righteousness, holiness etc. For example, let us take any seed of a tree. That very seed contains the shape of the tree, leaves, the quality and the variety of the fruit etc. Yet, the seed needs development through long years to be conformed to the mother tree, Similarly, though we are created in God's image and likeness, we need spiritual growth to grow to the fulness of God, to be like Him.

## **FALL OF MAN :**

Man was the crown of all creation. He was endowed with wisdom and entrusted with the dominion over all creation. He was placed in the garden of Eden with complete freedom of choice.

We have already seen that the original earth was given to Lucifer and his group but later they were cast out. When the man was created and placed in the renovated earth as its guardian, Lucifer the Satan grew jealous and devised schemes to grab the dominion from man. So Satan deceived man and achieved his end. Thus man lost the dominion over the earth. Now God's programme is to restore the lost dominion to man. The theme that sounds throughout the Bible is **redemption of mankind from the lost estate.**

For our convenience to study, we can divide the period from the creation to the restoration of man into ages and dispensations.