

## LESSON - 5

# DISPENSATION OF PROMISE

**Reference** : Gensis. 12 - 22 Chap Heb. 11 : 8 - 27

**Memory verse** : Heb.11 : 9 - 10

**Objective** : Trust on God's promise fully and get encouraged to face all trials in life with a blessed hope.

**Introduction** : Life has its own problems and difficulties like sickness, grief, death etc. As we go through such bitter experiences how can we face them with courage? If someone comes forward with the promise of help, how relieved we may feel ! If so, how relieving and encouraging will be the promise of the Almighty God. In the Bible we find several men of God who received God's promises, which enabled them to face all the hardships and bitter experiences. Abraham was a great man of faith who lived in the 10th generation from Noah. God called him out from among the idol-worshippers in the city of Ur in Mesopotamia. Then God gave promise to him as well as his descendants.

In this lesson we will study about the dispensation of promise. Its duration is 430 years from the call of Abraham to the giving of the Law through Moses.

### **THE CALL OF ABRAHAM :**

In the last lesson we saw how the descendants of Noah became rebellious and idol-worshippers. As generations passed by, idolatry became all too common. By the time of Abraham who was in the lineage of Shem, practically the whole world became idolatrous. In that generation, God revealed Himself to Abraham and called him out. The main purpose of calling Abraham were:

- 1) To found a nation believing in the only True God.
- 2) To present the promised Messiah to the world.

- 3) To allocate a special land for that people so that they should not inter - mingle with other nations and lose their national integrity and identity.

Abraham heard the call of God and obeyed. He left his own country and kindred, and reached Haran with his family (Acts. 7:1-3). While at Haran, Terah, his father died. then God again appeared to Abraham and gave him promises (Gen. 12:1-4). These promises were unconditional. Notice carefully the promises of God given to Abraham. Abraham believed God and started out towards the land that God would show him. His wife Sarah and Lot his brother's son also accompanied him. Abraham was seventy five years old then.

### **GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM :**

This promise was confirmed to Abraham in different ways several times.

- 1) I will make you a great nation.
- 2) I will bless you.
- 3) I will make your name great.
- 4) You shall be a blessing.
- 5) I will bless those who bless you.
- 6) I will curse him who curse you.
- 7) In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

In the seventh blessing, the fact that all the families of the earth would be blessed indicate salvation of the whole mankind through Jesus Christ born in the lineage of Abraham.

### **THE PROMISE OF THE SEED : (*Genesis 17 :19, 22 : 17*).**

The promise of the seed implies as well that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Jesus Christ the Son of God born as the Seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:3, 22:18, Gala. 3:16)

It also implies on a much wider scale that all believers are the spiritual sons of Abraham. They are blessed with blessings of the faithful Abraham. (Gen 12:3, Gala. 3:7-9 and 29).

### **PROMISE OF THE LAND :**

- a) God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham's desendants as their

inheritance. God had fixed the boundaries of the land. North-Lebanon, South- the River of Egypt, West- Mediterranean Sea, East- The River Euphrates (Gen. 15:18-21, Deut. 11:24). But the children of Israel have never yet been able to possess the land fully. But in the millennium (Christ's reign of one thousand years) they will possess and occupy the land in full measure as per the original allotment.

- b) Abraham looked forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God. His spiritual sons, the believers are also looking forward to the heavenly city. They will certainly possess it. (Heb. 11:9-10, Reve. 21:2).

### **CONDITIONS :**

The conditions God required of Abraham's family were that they must believe on God's promises fully and live in their promised Land (Gen. 26 : 2, 3). Man's duty in the dispensation of promise was to dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness.

### **FAILURE :**

Even Abraham the father of believers was no exception to the common failure of unbelief several times. When there was a severe famine in the land, Abraham went to Egypt, for which he paid dearly (Gen. 12:10-20). Hagar, the servant of Abraham from Egypt and her son Ishmael became a problem for Abraham's family (Gen. 16:4, Gen. 21:9-12).

Just think of the consequence of deviation from God's path, upon the believers themselves and their generations! Let us see Abraham's descendants and their gradual deterioration in spirituality. Isaac was not as spiritual as Abraham. Of Isaac's sons, Esau was ungodly (Heb. 12:16). Jacob, in spite of God's vision, was not that godly. He experienced its bitter fruits. Among the sons of Jacob, none had spiritual insight except Joseph. The people of Israel, their descendants tested the Lord by unbelief, grumbled and were subject to various horrible punishments ( Cori. 10:6-10). Thus we find that the blessed promises obtained in the dispensation of promise did not help them find salvation and deliverance.

### **PUNISHMENT :**

This dispensation too, like others, failed and ended with punishment. Because of famine, Abraham first went to Egypt and Jacob

later. In as much as a punishment to it, the Israelites were in bondage (Exo. 1: 8-22) in Egypt.

### **THE WAY OUT (EXODUS) :**

God by His mercy and fore-bearance raised Moses to deliver the people from bondage and to lead to Canaan. By the blood of the Passover Lamb, God rescued them from the angel of destruction and led them all the way to the promised Land.

Let us take God at His Word and absolutely trust on His promises. It is promises that give and sustain our hope. When we stick closer to promises, we will abound in assurance and hope.

#### ***Exercise - 5***

##### ***Answer the following questions***

- 1) What is the duration of the dispensation of promise ?  
How is this name suited to this period ?
- 2) What were the main purposes of calling Abraham ?
- 3) What were the promises given to Abraham and his children ?
- 4) What were the boundaries of Canaan ?
- 5) When will the Israelites occupy the land in full measure ?
- 6) What were the conditions God required from Abraham's family ?
- 7) What was man's duty in the dispensation of promise ?
- 8) What was the punishment given to the people of this dispensation?
- 9) How were the Israelites delivered from their bondage ?
- 10) Prove that the ' Children of Abraham ' failed in the test given in the dispensation of promise ?

