

The Dispensation of Conscience

After man sinned, he was no longer *innocent* therefore God's next method to persuade man to willingly love and serve Him was to appeal to his conscience. This ***Dispensation of Conscience***, which began with man being expelled from the Garden of Eden and ended with the flood, lasted for approximately 1,656 years.

This dispensation is referred to as "*The Age of Conscience*" because of the fact that man was tested on the basis of obedience to his own conscience – that is, to his knowledge of what was right or wrong. Since there were no "*laws*" until after the flood, man was free to obey, or disobey, the dictates of his own conscience. Because man's conscience was awakened in him as a result of his eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, man became conscious of sin and, as a result of this consciousness, became responsible to God for his conduct on the basis of his conscience.

God's purpose during this "*Age of Conscience*" was to prove to man that, when left to his own choice between right and wrong, nothing but failure can result.

Did God know what would be the ultimate outcome of these dispensations?

Yes, because God always knows the end from the beginning, however, God takes man through these various dispensations in order to reveal to him that no matter what his environment, or circumstances, are, he cannot make himself fit for eternity with God, or Heaven, because man needs a *Savior*! During this dispensation of Conscience, God demanded that man obey the dictates of his knowledge of right and wrong, that he refuse evil and live by faith in the coming *Redeemer* promised in Genesis 3:15. However, man overrode his conscience, disobeyed God, and sinned again and again, and, because man failed to worship and serve God, He sent Judgment in the form of a universal flood and destroyed all flesh with the exception of one man, Noah, and his family. This is revealed in Genesis 6:5-8, "*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*"

The book of Genesis tells us not only about the beginning of man, and all of creation, but also about the beginning of such things as; ranching, weapons, instruments, industry, arts, inventions, poetry, and on and on. Most of these beginning are recorded in the fourth chapter.

Who were the 'sons of God' mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4?

There has been much speculation about the who the "*sons of God* were that are mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4, which reads, "*And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after*

that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Some have claimed that "*the sons of God*" just refer to the Godly men of Noah's day, however, because God's Word reveals that "*only Noah, and his family,*" were Godly in the Lord's sight. No! "*the sons of God*" were not the Godly men of that day.

Unlike the meaning that "*sons of God*" has when used in the New Testament, when this expression is used in the context of the Old Testament, it does not define "*those who serve God,*" but rather, "*those (creatures) who were **created** by God,* who were a product of God's creation. In fact, when the phrase "*sons of God*" is used in the Old Testament it always refers to "*angels,*" (spirit beings) *created by God.*" It *never* refers to human beings. Besides the passage in Genesis 6, the only other time that this phrase, "*sons of God,*" is used in the Old Testament is in the book of Job, where it is used three times (Job 1:6; 2:1 and 38:7), and, each time it is used it clearly refers to "*angelic spirit beings*" created by God before He ever created man. In fact, the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Bible in use when Jesus was on earth, translates this phrase, "*the angels of God.*"

Can "*spirit, fallen angelic, beings*" procreate? Is it possible for a spirit being to commit adultery with a human being? God, in Jude 1:6, states, "*The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He [God] hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*"

Jude 1:7 tells us what terrible sin these "*angels*" committed that made God have an especially harsh judgment for them when it states, "*Even as [that is, in the same similar way] Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them **in like manner,** giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, [sexual immorality and perversion]...*" These "*angels*" mentioned sinned in the same fashion as Sodom and Gomorrah, which involved perverted sexuality.

2 Peter 2:4-5 deals with the same subject and states, "*For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*"

This passage in 2 Peter 2, not only confirms the fact of God's harsh judgment upon the "*angels*" that sinned, but it also confirms the fact that these angels sinner during the time of Noah and the flood.

Note, that this union of these "*spirit beings – fallen angels*" with the "*daughters of men*" produced abnormal beings which Genesis 6:4 refers to as "*Nephilim.*" This same Hebrew word, which is translated as "*Nephilim*" in the New International version, is translated as "*giants*" in the King James Translation.

These, so-called, "*giants*" were not only he in size, being up to 14 feet in height, but they, according to the added meaning of the word "*Nephilim,*" were, as this word also means, "*different, strange, perverted, unusual, unconventional, abnormal,*" even, "*weird, bizarre, and alien.*"

These creatures, the off-spring of fallen angels who had committed fornication with “*the daughters of men,*” were half demon, half human, creatures which God “*bound in special chains of darkness to await the judgment day*” (Jude 1:6).

Was the Ark of Noah large enough to hold all the animals of the world?

Scripture tells us that the size of the ark was 430 feet long – 75 feet wide – and 45 feet high – a capacity that would have carried 90,000,000 lbs – (ninety ***million*** pounds), which would be equivalent to 600 railroad freight cars, or, a train of box cars ***four miles long!*** The ark had three decks and, with the above measurements that Scripture gives us, each deck would have had 33,750 square feet of floor space – that’s a **B-I-G** ark!

Since it was most likely that the small, and medium-sized, animals would have been put in cages, in tiers, one above the other, when trying to figure out how much room they needed, we must think in terms of *cubic space*, and, multiplying the length, by the width, by the height of the ark, we get a figure of one million and a half cubic feet for the entire cubic space of the ark, which means that there were ***500,000*** [one half million] cubic feet for each deck.

If one counted all the animals in the whole wide world – the elephants, the camels, the rats, the mice, the giraffes, the fish and marine life – he would find, according to one expert in animal classification, that there are about one million different species of animals living on the earth today.

However, when one subtracts all the fish and marine life, that would have lived in the water, from the total number of the different species of animals, one is left with a figure of about 17,500 species of animals that would have actually been inside the ark, and since God told Noah, “*You shall bring two of every sort into the ark*” (Genesis 6:19), the total number of animals inside the ark would have been about 35,000.

In trying to figure out how much room was needed for 35,000 animals, one has to keep in mind that, since the animals were of different sizes – he has to take into consideration the size of a large mammal, like the elephant, and the size of a small rodent, like the rat or mouse, and then average these sizes together to determine what size animals we’re talking about when we say 35,000 animals – and, so, upon averaging out the size of the large animals with the small ones, one could pretty accurately say that the “*average*” size of the animals on the ark would have been about the size of sheep. This being true, one could go on to say that the space needed to house all the 17,500 species of animals on the ark would be equivalent to the space needed to house 35,000 sheep, and 35,000 sheep would take up the space of about 146 railroad boxcars.

Since there are about 850,000 different species of insects in the world, that means there were about 1,700,000 insects, counting both males and females, on the ark, each one of which would have needed about two inches of flying space, which means that, collectively, they would have needed the space equivalency of about 21 railroad boxcars.

The total space, then, needed to house all the animals, and insects, in the whole world, would be the space equivalency of: the 146 railroad boxcars (needed for all the animals) added to the space equivalency to the 21 railroad boxcars (needed for all the insect), which comes out to a total space equivalency of 167 railroad boxcars, and, since the measurements of the ark that God instructed Noah to build had a space equivalency of 522 railroad boxcars, Noah could have

put all the animals, and insects, of the world on the first floor of the ark alone while he and his family could have lived on the second floor. This means that not only would the third floor of the ark have been free to be used for recreational facilities, but, also, there would have been plenty of room for all the animals that are now extinct, which means that there would have been plenty of room even for a pair of brontosaurus dinosaurs, especially if they were babies.

How were the animals gathered into the ark?

According to Genesis 9:2-4, animals did not have a fear, and dread, of man until after the flood, because, prior to the flood, man was a vegetarian which meant that he did not hunt animals. Because animals were also vegetarians, this is what they were fed on the ark.

Genesis 7:9 states, *“They came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded.”* The animals entered the ark of their own accord, by an instinct that God had planted within them.

How long did it take to build the ark?

Genesis 6:18 tells us that Shem was a married man when God told Noah to build the ark, and, since Genesis, chapter 5, indicates that men did not marry until they were at least 65 years old, means that Shem was at least 65 years old when God told Noah to build the ark. Since Genesis 11:10 tells us that, two years *after* the flood was over, Shem was 100 years old, and since the flood lasted one year and 17 days, we can (by subtracting 2 years and 1 year and 17 days from 100 years, deduce that Shem would have been about 96 years old when the flood started, and, since he was 65 years old when God told Noah to build the ark, (by subtracting 65 from 96), we can deduce that it took about thirty-one years to build the ark.

What was life like before the flood?

After man sinned, and before the flood occurred, the climate of the world was vastly superior to the climate of the world, as it now exists. This was because many scientists believe there was, before the flood, a *canopy of vapor* over the earth. Some scientists call this canopy a *“floating blanket,”* while others refer to it as *“a cloud canopy.”*

In Genesis 1:6-8, we read, *“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.”*

Perhaps the Living Bible makes it a little clearer to us. It states, *“And God said, ‘Let the vapors separate to form the sky above and the oceans below.’ So God made the sky, dividing the vapor above from the water below. This all happened on the second day”* (Living Bible).

Keep in mind that, according to Genesis 1:2, when God began re-making the earth, the earth and heavens were covered with water – *dark, deep, formless, empty water!* Then, on the first day of re-creation, God created light, He divided the darkness from the light, and He called the light, *“day,”* and the darkness He called, *“night.”*

On the second day of creation, God divided the water of the heavens **above** from the water of the earth **below**, creating an “*expanse*,” a *firmament*”, or “*atmosphere*,” **between** the water **above** the earth and the water **upon** the earth. It is important to keep this picture in our mind – “*water **above** the earth*” – and “*water **upon** the earth*.”

The conditions of the earth described in Genesis 1:7 are waters on the earth – (oceans, lakes, rivers, etc.) the atmosphere (firmament) surrounding the earth, and, then a “*ring of water*” surrounding the earth *and* its atmosphere.

One translation defines the “firmament” of Genesis 1:7 as, “*layers of atmosphere dividing the waters of the earth from the waters above*,” and this is a condition which would create a canopy of vapor over, or around, the earth, a kind of floating blanket of water between the earth and the deadly radiations bombarding the earth from the sun and outer space, providing a highly efficient shield for man on earth.

This “*ring of water*,” or “*canopy*,” between the earth and the heavens above, intercepted the direct rays of the sun and provided a “*hothouse*” effect. This would also create uniform temperature, as the heat, penetrating the canopy, would diffuse evenly, equally, and regularly, over the whole globe. This uniform warm, and humid temperature, not only made the development of life slower, and more prolonged, on earth, but it also precluded air mass movement, which means that, rather than there being rain, and storms, there was only a daily mist (as stated in Genesis 2:5-6) which maintained an equable humidity everywhere over the whole earth.

It is because of the rays of the sun, which are most active in the aging of life and which bring about decay and fermentation, where intercepted by this “*canopy of water*” that man and animal lived to be a greater age at the time of creation than they do today.

As a result of the flood, this ideal condition on earth changed as the canopy of water collapsed and became the chief source of flood waters, which God calls, “*the floodgates of heaven*” in Genesis 8:2.

The removal of this protective shield of water around the earth brought about a radical climatic change on earth that was responsible for the following Biblical truths:

1. *Seasons* are mentioned for the very first time **after** the flood (Genesis 8:22).
2. *Sunlight*, is also mentioned for the first time **after** the flood (Genesis 15:12).
3. Man, now living in direct sunlight, because he needed food that would make him stronger, was, for the first time, given “*flesh to eat*” **after** the flood.
4. Food, also for the first time, “*fermented*,” as a result of the direct rays of the sun (Genesis 9:20-21).

If the same climatic condition that existed *before* the flood had existed *after* the flood, there would have been no Sahara, no vast deserts, no barren wastes, no bleak mountain ranges, no arctic, and no disease-breeding heat of the tropics.

2 Peter 3:6 speaks of, “*The world which then existed, [that is, before the flood] was destroyed in a deluge of water.*” Then verse 7 speaks of a different world today, when it says,

*“But the heavens and the earth, which are **NOW**,” and, then verse 13 says, “nevertheless we look for a new heaven and a new earth.”*

Note that God speaks of:

1. A world that **WAS**, in the past before the flood, and
2. A world that **IS**, in the present, and
3. A world that **IS TO BE**, in the future!

Praise God, we are looking for a new heaven and a new earth!