

Conscience as Our Guide?

Genesis 4:1-16, Romans 2:14-15

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- The “Dispensations” of my life.
- “Dispensations are different ways that God has sought to govern mankind in the outworking of his plan for human history.
- Review of the DISPENSATION of INNOCENCE

Conscience as Our Guide?

A. The Development of our Conscience

1. **A by-product of man’s sin is now a consciousness of evil.**
 - Genesis 3:22-23--*“Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’—therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.”*
2. **An internal Sense of “Oughtness”-- the Law of HUMAN NATURE**
 - a. Every person knows innately how he “ought” to act, whether he acts that way or not.
 - b. This universal consciousness of “right” and “wrong” comes from God.
 - Romans 2:14--*“For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves”*
 - Romans 2:15-- *“Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.”*
 - c. God also gives us a CONSCIENCE, that inner voice that holds us to the standard.

B. The Dispensation of Conscience-- Genesis 4-7

1. **The TEST: Can man be governed by his conscience?**
2. **Some passed the test.**
 - a. Examples:
 - **Abel** : Genesis 4:1-5 -- *“Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, ‘I have acquired a man from the LORD.’ Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”*
 - **Enoch**: Genesis 5:24 -- *“Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him”*
 - **Noah**: Genesis 6:8 -- *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”*
 - b. Salvation is not by “passing the test” but by “calling upon the name of the Lord.”
 - Genesis 4:26-- *“Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.”*
 - Acts 2:21-- *“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”*
 - Hebrews 11:4-- *“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”*

- Hebrews 11:5-6-- *"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, 'and was not found because God had taken him'; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

3. Others failed the test.

- Cain:** Genesis 4:6-15 -- *"So the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.' Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' And He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.' And Cain said to the LORD, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.' And the LORD said to him. 'Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him."*
- Entire human race,** except of Noah's family: Genesis 6:5-8-- *"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So, the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."*

4. The Judgment: UNIVERSAL FLOOD

5. God's GRACE: Saving of Noah and his family.

C. The Disposition of Conscience Today

- As a secondary means of governing man.**
- The effectiveness of our conscience as a guide depends upon the condition of our conscience.** Our conscience can be ...
 - "Defiled" or "corrupted"
 - Titus 1:15 -- *"To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled."*
 - "Seared"
 - 1 Timothy 4:1-2-- *"the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron."*
 - "Guilty"
- Steps to a good, clean Conscience before God and man**
 - Confess sins and seek forgiveness from God and man.
 - Immerse yourself in God's Word
 - Live according to the dictates of your conscience.