

Review (5 min) - **slide #1**

Presentation (45-50 min)

A. Lesson introduction

Loving parent disciplining a disobedient children

When your young child runs away from you outside or after exiting a vehicle, or in a store, what actions do you take and why

What do you as a parent quite often do with the child after discipline

What typically happens if disobedience is left unaddressed

So how does a loving heavenly Father handle His kids

Can a holy God stand in the presence of sin

And that's why He disciplines us and then reassures us of His love - He is good & merciful

As Brother Monty reminded us during this past weekend's message, His goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life (Psalm 23:6a)

Despite our sinful nature, Heavenly Father does not want any of us to perish but to be restored to relationship with Him and others

So let's consider a few examples of man's sin followed by God's work at restoring us to relationship

B. God's original plan (Genesis 1 & 2) - that His created beings would dwell in His presence forever

Original sin (in the Garden of Eden) separated man from God and resulted in several consequences

Slide #2 (Gen 3:15 and 19)

I have often referred to this as God's refined plan as the result of sin - promise of a Redeemer to save mankind from the consequences and penalty of sin. God's statement here is often mentioned as the first prophecy.

Now let's take a look at Gen 3:19 - Again God speaking, this time specifically to Adam, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

This speaks to a life of toil and hardship. Several verses in both OT & NT address this notion. Consider what God has told man about work - **slide #3**

Conclusions: God intended that man should work; He did not intend that man simply find a way to be dependent on government handouts/entitlements. I realize this could lead to an entire new topic of disabilities, social welfare, retirement, etc. Let's keep the primary intent and focus in mind.

God intended that man depend primarily on Him as heavenly Father and Jehovah Jirah, God our Provider. As children, don't we primarily look to our parents as providers? Is it not natural to do so? In that sense, don't we as children have faith in our parent or parents as providers?

Another key topic that comes into focus is that of free will and the varied consequences of choices we make daily

About 1650 years after sin in the Garden of Eden, when the lifespan of man was often 600 years or more, evil infiltrated the world. Check out what God says just prior to the worldwide flood in Noah's day

Genesis 6:5 & 11 on **slide #4**

At that time lifespan was shortened to 120 years (Gen 6:3) although it didn't immediately take effect; natural life was further shortened to 70 or 80 years according to Psalm 90:10

God could not permit sin to continue abounding, so He carried out judgment. But what do we find immediately after the flood - God's promise of no further worldwide flood, sealed with the first record of a Rainbow

C. Looking more closely at how God dealt with the Israelites in the days of Moses

Slide #5 - Exodus 12:35-36 (Egyptians sent them away with silver, gold, clothing, etc.)

Deuteronomy 29:5 (neither their clothing nor their footgear wore out during 40 yrs in desert)

Yet the people complained and wanted to return to familiarity of Egypt (Ex 16:3 and Num 14:3-4)

God gave them sweet water (Ex 15:25), and bread of heaven "manna" (Ex 16:4-5)

The people then grumbled against God and Moses since they craved meat (Num 11:4,33) Where's the beef, they asked

Urge participants to read Psalm 78

As the result of their grumbling and complaining in the desert and testing God as to whether He could provide for them, how many of the Israelite adults who initially left Egypt ultimately entered the Promised Land 40 years later? (Numbers 13:30)

So Joshua led the Israelites into the Land of Canaan (Noah's grandson) as God had promised to Abraham and his descendants

D. Israel wants an earthly king

Throughout this period God was seeking an intimate relationship with His children

Yet they acted rebellious and ungrateful - sound familiar

They wanted to be like everyone else and have their own visible king (1 Sam 8), despite already having the King of Kings as their leader

The prophet Samuel inquired of the Lord Who told Samuel what the consequences of having an earthly king would be (refer to 1 Sam 8:10-18)

So the Israelites got their earthly king who started out well but ended badly

From the royal line of Judah through David, they eventually received King Jesus but didn't understand that His kingdom was not of this world

The prophet Isaiah writes about 26 chapters dealing with the hope and future of Israel

E. New Testament Israel

Slide #6 - highlights of Romans 9-11

Eyes of most Jews blinded to truth about Messiah Jesus (2 Cor 3:14; 4:4) - exception are messianic Jews - who are they?

When will the spiritual blindness of Israel be removed?

What special provision does God make for endtime Jews?

Slide #7 - Escape from Image of Beast in Jerusalem temple (Zech 13:8-9; Mt 24:15ff; Rev 12:13-14)

F. New Testament Gentiles

Some amount the earliest ones heard Jesus in person, or more likely heard the Good News from one of His followers - and that includes you and me (Rom 10:14-15,17)

Do we truly believe that God sent His only begotten Son Jesus to pay the penalty for my sins

Are we seeking opportunities to share the ABCs of salvation with family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers

Or are we afraid of man instead of having a proper fear of the Lord

Those left behind will eventually have to decide whether to take the mark of the beast or find some other way of surviving; taking the mark very likely comes with renouncing one's faith in the living God and worshiping the image of the beast, or face death

Slide #8 - Rev 6:9; 13:15; 20:4

Over and over, man manages to separate himself from God

Our loving God disciplines us, demonstrates His goodness and mercy toward us over and over

Slide #9 - Zech 7:9 and James 2:13

God is such a gentleman - permitting the Israelites to have that for which they pleaded (bread & meat in the desert; an earthly king, etc.)

- not forcing His way inside (Rev 3:20)

G. Final opportunity to repent - message of Two Witnesses (Rev 11:3-12)

This is the God's last call to repent and choose Him over a dying world - to choose eternal life in God's presence over life in the pit

Slide #10 - Rev 16:9,11,21 (see also Romans 1:18 ff)

It is clear from these verses that many will choose the latter - an eternity separated from God; forever spent in the fiery lake of burning sulfur - how tragic

Now that you have a snapshot of God's efforts across the past 6,000 years or so to draw us to Him, how will you respond

How will you choose to invest your remaining hours, days, weeks, or even months of this life

It's well nigh time to separate ourselves from the things of this world

Let us focus on pleasing our heavenly Father every day that He gives us to influence others for eternity

H. Invite Pastor Paul to assist with Q&A (~20 min)

Ask that the questions be directly related to this evening's message or one of the preceding messages

Should you have any questions not directly related to the midweek messages, Pastor Paul and yours truly are willing to respond privately