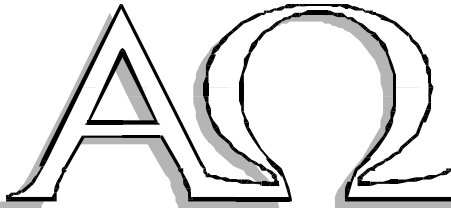


Creation Revelation



God is in the details

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Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one
of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.

R1

Psalm 119:160

God's Master Plan

Life is half spent before we know what it is. George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, 1651

Life is like an onion that one peels crying. *French proverb*

It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives. Samuel Johnson, in Boswell's

Life, 1791

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. Jesus of Nazareth, John 17:3-4

God's Purpose

God had a purpose in creating the world and the universe and everything in it. God did not need to create man for fellowship. He had fellowship within the Trinity.¹

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; **Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing**, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; Acts 17:24-25

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self **with the glory which I had with thee before the world was....** Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, **which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.** John 17:5, 24

God created man for His Glory. Man and the rest of God's creation can glorify God and bring Him Joy.² It is therefore man's purpose in life to glorify God and to take delight in God and worship Him.³ As man moves through life, all other selfish purposes of man are nothing compared to the implications of his relationship to God. Whatever

choices man makes must be made with the understanding of man's ultimate purpose of glorifying God.

Even **every one** that is called by my name: for **I have created him for my glory**, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Isaiah 43:7

It is significant that Jesus summed up His life with these words:

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. John 17:4

Jesus continues with a description of how He glorified God that should serve as a model for our life purpose:

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. **For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;** and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. **I pray for them:** I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. John 17:6-9

From this we can glean that our entire purpose in life is to glorify God by telling others about Him and praying for them.

We are meaningful to God and He rejoices over us.⁴

Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt **no more be termed Forsaken;** neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for **the LORD delighteth in thee,** and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, **so shall thy God rejoice over thee.** Isaiah 62:3-5

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, **he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.**

Zephaniah 3:17

In Genesis chapter 1, God created man in His image. This means that man was created to be like God and to represent God. Man would be like God, but not identical. The idea was that man would simply be like God and would represent Him. The implication is that in this likeness man had "intellectual ability, moral purity, spiritual nature, dominion over the earth, creativity, ability to make ethical choices, and immortality."⁵ Therefore, In Genesis chapter 2, God gave man a choice to exercise his free will to choose obedience to God. In Genesis chapter 3, man chose to disobey God and therefore the image of God, although not lost, became distorted. It is within God's plan to restore the distorted image. Our redemption in Christ is "a progressive recovering of more of God's image." It is only at Christ's return where the Bible speaks of the "complete restoration of God's image."⁶

And as **we have borne the image of the [one] made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly [one].** 1

Corinthians 15:49 *Darby Bible*

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but **we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him;** for we shall see him as he is. 1John 3:2

Because we are significant in God's eyes He made a plan to rescue us.

God's Objectives

God had certain objectives in His plan for the world and mankind. The major objectives of God's plan involve redemption of fallen man through the sacrifice of Christ.⁷ Bible prophecy is closely related to God's plan for Man's salvation. It is through various dispensations, covenants, and

prophecies that God slowly reveals His plan to mankind.

“Predestination” refers to God’s purpose in providing us grace and redemption. God does not exist in a time dimension. He exists outside of time. Because of this He knows the end from the beginning. He knows who will be saved and who will not.⁸ God knew that man would fall, and He had a plan for man’s salvation before the creation of the world. Paul speaks of God’s foreknowledge (omniscience) in Romans 8:

For whom he did **foreknow, he also did predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Romans 8:29-30

Predestination does not mean that God determined in advance who would be saved and who wouldn’t, but it simply means that He knows in advance who would accept His grace and receive His free gift of salvation. Even though God predestined man for salvation, many will not heed His call. He simply gave mankind the ability to make choices.⁹ That God knew that man would fall, and that He provided beforehand for man’s redemption, can be seen in the following:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you, **1 Peter 1:18-20**

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has **saved us and called us with a holy calling**, not according to our works, but **according to His own purpose and grace** which was **given to us in Christ Jesus before time began**, **2 Timothy 1:8-9**

In creation God revealed His omnipotence, omniscience, and sovereignty. But only in redemption could God reveal His love, His righteousness, and His grace. It is because of this that the story of human history is of God revealing who He is.¹⁰

God’s purpose is to save mankind, but He will not force us. When the angels sinned and fell, God immediately displayed His righteousness by judging them and kicking them out of heaven. But man is different. God provides a way for the salvation of man by God, Himself, taking on human flesh, and providing the required sacrifice for redemption. In that, God demonstrates not only His righteousness, but also His love.¹¹

Dispensations

There are **seven dispensations** in God’s dealing with man. **Dispensations** are administrations within a period of time representing the different ways God governed in the lives of men. These dispensations were periods of testing. God had certain **expectations** – when man failed those expectations (man’s responsibility), the dispensation ended.¹²

According to Lewis Sperry Chafer:

*Dispensationalism is derived from normal, or literal interpretation of the Bible. It is impossible to interpret the Bible in its normal, literal sense without realizing that there are different ages and different dispensations.*¹³

All of the dispensations represent covenants between God and man. These dispensations represent God’s progressive revelation of His divine purpose of salvation to mankind. The primary covenants for God’s purpose of saving mankind are the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption. These two covenants are the same act, so are represented as the dispensation of grace. All the other dispensations represent a gradual unfolding of God’s plan leading to the New Testament (new covenant of grace) and beyond. Most of the dispensations deal with God’s moral and ethical requirements of mankind.¹⁴

In the Old Testament God gave the Mosaic Law to direct the lives of Israel. In doing so he used the Old Covenant represented by the Old Testament to introduce the New Covenant represented by the

New Testament. He introduced this New Covenant by prophecy in the Old Testament.¹⁵

Covenants are eternal agreements made by God with humanity, revealing what God will do for people individually or collectively. God made covenants with mankind at different times in history that specifically relate to what He would do and expect in a particular dispensation. Man has free will in rejecting or accepting the covenant, but violation of the covenant will result in a judgment that brings the dispensation to an end.¹⁶

The **seven dispensations** are:¹⁷

1. **Innocence (The Edenic Covenant)** – from Adam to the Fall (man communicated directly with God);
2. **Conscience, or self-determination (The Adamic Covenant)** – from the Fall to the Flood (God ruled through man's conscience);
3. **Civil [Human] government (The Noahic Covenant)** – from the Flood to the Tower (God gave man authority over the lives of men);
4. **Promise (Patriarchal rule)** – from the Tower to Egyptian captivity;
5. **Mosaic Law (Rule by Old Testament Law)** – from the Egyptian captivity to Jesus Christ;
6. **Grace (Salvation for all based on Christ's works)** – from Jesus to the Second Coming;
7. **Millennium (Direct rule by Jesus Christ)** – Second Coming to end of the Millennium.

Through these various dispensations, God would slowly reveal Himself, prove the need of salvation through the continual failures of man, and lead mankind toward their salvation by redemption through the Savior Jesus Christ.

Innocence (The Edenic Covenant)

Innocence, the first dispensation, was governed by the **Edenic Covenant**: (Gen 1:28-29; Gen 2:15-17)¹⁸

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion** over the fish of the sea,

and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing **seed**, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the **fruit** of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be **for meat**. **Genesis 1:28-29**

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to **dress it and to keep it**. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not eat** of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. **Genesis 2:15-17**

Man was **expected** to honor six obligations.¹⁹

1. To **replenish the earth** with children (Gen 1:28).
2. **Use nature** for physical needs – food and shelter (Gen 1:28).
3. **Have dominion** over animal life (Gen 1:28).
4. **Eat fruit** and vegetables (Gen 1:29).
5. **Labor** for sustenance (Gen 2:15).
6. **Obey God** – abstain from forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16, 17).

The only requirement that had moral significance was the requirement not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This requirement represented a choice – to obey or not to obey.²⁰

Adam's failure, as seen in Genesis chapter 3, "resulted in his expulsion from the garden and in the fall of the human race from a state of innocence into a condition characterized by sin."²¹

Conscience (The Adamic Covenant)

Conscience, or self-determination, the second dispensation, was governed by the **Adamic Covenant** (Gen 3:14-19).²² This covenant was based on Adam's firsthand knowledge of the benefits of good and consequences of evil.²³

And the LORD God said unto the **serpent**, Because thou hast done this, thou art **cursed** above all cattle, and above every

beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and **her seed; it shall bruise thy head**, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly **multiply thy sorrow and thy conception**; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it** all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; **In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread**, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and **unto dust shalt thou return**. Genesis 3:14-19

Man was now able, through conscience and experience to distinguish good and evil. Man was required to live by his conscience, avoiding evil. Under this covenant:²⁴

1. The **serpent was cursed** (Gen 3:14).
2. **God promised redemption** through the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15).
3. The **woman experienced multiplied sorrow and pain in childbearing** (Gen 3:16).
4. The **earth was cursed** (Gen 3:17, 18).
5. **Sorrow, pain, burdensome labor, and physical death** became part of life experience (Gen 3:19).

The conscience cannot produce moral perfection over a sinful nature. Only through Christ can man have victory over sin.²⁵ The following Scriptures provide insight into the working of man's conscience.

So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, **being convicted by their own conscience**, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last:

and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. John 8:7-9

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; **having their conscience seared with a hot iron**; 2 Timothy 4:1-2

I find then a law, that, **when I would do good, evil is present with me**. For I **delight in the law of God after the inward man**: But I see **another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind**, and **bringing me into captivity to the law of sin** which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

There is therefore now **no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**. For **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death**. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, **God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh**: Romans 7:21-25; 8:1-3

Even though man had the ability to distinguish good and evil, this covenant shows that man will not necessarily choose good over evil.²⁶ Man failed under this covenant where evil prevailed continually. Because of this, God sent the Flood to destroy the earth.²⁷

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**. Genesis 6:5

Only righteous Noah and his family were saved (Gen 6:8, 9; 7:1, 7).

Human Government (The Noahic Covenant)

Human Government, the third dispensation, involved the **Noahic Covenant**, where

man was responsible to govern the world for God (Gen 9:1-17):²⁸

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.** But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; **at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:** for in the image of God made he man. And you, **be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.** And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, **I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;** And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. **And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.** And God said, This is **the token of the covenant** which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: **I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.** And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: **And I will remember my covenant,** which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; **and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.** And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting

covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth. **Genesis 9:1-17**

Under this covenant:²⁹

1. Man was to **be fruitful and multiply and replenish (lit. "fill") the earth** (Gen 9:1).
2. Man's **relationship to the earth and the order of nature** was confirmed (Gen 9:2-11).
3. **Human government** was established (Gen 9:6).
4. God **promised** to never again destroy the world by a universal flood (Gen 9:11-17).

Man was to scatter and populate the earth. Instead they chose to stay near Babel. God now allowed meat as food, but the blood was not to be consumed. Government was established whereby capital punishment for murder was ordered. Never again would God destroy the earth by a universal flood.

Noah failed almost immediately with his drunkenness. Additionally, Ham ridiculed his father, Noah. And, man failed in meeting the obligations of this covenant by congregating near Babel and failing to scatter and fill the earth. General wickedness prevailed again in the hearts of men.³⁰

And **Noah** began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: **And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.** And **Ham**, the father of Canaan, **saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren** without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And **Noah** awoke from his wine, and **knew what his younger son had done unto him.** **Genesis 9:20-24**

The failure of man under this covenant of conscience resulted in the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues (Gen 11:1-9).³¹

And **the whole earth** was of **one language, and of one speech**. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, **let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth**. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, **the people is one, and they have all one language**; and this they begin to do: and **now nothing will be restrained from them**, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there **confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech**. So **the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth**: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called **Babel**; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and **from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth**. Genesis 11:1-9

Promise (The Abrahamic Covenant)

Promise (Patriarchal rule) – The fourth dispensation involves the **Abrahamic Covenant** and extends from the Tower of Babel to the Egyptian captivity (Gen 12:1-7; 22:15-18).

God entered into an unconditional covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Israel). Under this covenant God promised to:

1. Make Israel **a great nation** (Gen 12:2);
2. **Bless the seed** of Abraham (Gen 12:3);
3. To give Abraham **a great name** (Gen 12:2);
4. To make Abraham (Israel) **a blessing** (Gen 12:2);
5. To **bless those that bless** Abraham (Israel) and **curse those that curse** Abraham (Israel) (Gen 12:3);
6. To give Abraham (Israel) **the Promised Land** (Gen 12:7);

7. And, through Abraham's descendants (Israel) to **bless all the families of the earth** with a Redeemer (Gen 12:3; 22:16, 18).

This covenant is found in the following:

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, **unto a land that I will shew thee**: And I will make of thee **a great nation**, and I will bless thee, and **make thy name great**; and **thou shalt be a blessing**: And **I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee**: and **in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed**. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old **when he departed out of Haran**. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, **Unto thy seed will I give this land**: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. Genesis 12:1-7

And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for **because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son**: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And **in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed**; because thou hast obeyed my voice. Genesis 22:15-18

Abraham (Israel) failed this covenant immediately when he delayed his journey to stay at Haran, as we saw in the previous verses. This failure

was compounded when he went into Egypt to escape a famine.

And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south. And **there was a famine** in the land: and **Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there**; for the famine was grievous in the land. **Genesis 12:8-10**

God told Abraham to go into and settle the Promised Land, not flee to Egypt at the first sign of difficulty. Israel's association with Egypt would ultimately result in bondage. Israel's final testing under this covenant came when they resisted God's attempt to draw them back into the Promised Land. They continually murmured at every hardship and wished to go back to Egypt.³² The following is one example:

And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of **the children of Israel murmured** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, **Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt**, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for **ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger**. **Exodus 16:1-3**

Law (The Mosaic Covenant)

Law (Rule by Old Testament Law) – The fifth dispensation lasted from the Egyptian captivity to Jesus Christ. The dispensation of Law meant government by the Mosaic covenant. This covenant was given to Israel in order to reveal and teach them about sin and death. The Mosaic Law:³³

1. Revealed the **holiness of a personal God**;

2. Instructed the people in **God's discipline**;

3. Reminded them through its priests and sacrifices of **God's salvation**;

4. And, acted as a teacher **to lead them ultimately to Christ**.

The Mosaic Covenant is summarized in Exodus 19 as follows:

Now therefore, if ye will **obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant**, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me **a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation**. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and **laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him**. And all the people answered together, and said, **All that the LORD hath spoken we will do**. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. **Exodus 19:5-8**

The Law contained three requirements:³⁴

1. **Commandments** revealing the **righteousness of God and God's will in certain moral issues** (Exo 20:1-26);

2. **Judgments** expressing **social (civil life) requirements** (Exo 21:1-24:11);

3. And, **ordinances directing the religious life of Israel** (Exo 24:1-31:18).

All of these regulations (more than 600) were the foundation for Israel's moral relationship with God. This dispensation of Law took another step beyond the Noahic human government by creating a theocracy in which prophets, priests, and later kings governed Israel.³⁵

No one was ever saved by keeping the Law, it was simply God's moral guideline for Israel. Paul taught in Galatians that this dispensation of Law ended with the bloody death of Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, for the sins of all men.³⁶

Wherefore **the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith**. But **after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster**. For ye are all the children

of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians
3:24-26

The entire Old Testament pointed to this moment of which Paul spoke – from the moment of Adam's sin, God's clothing of Adam and Eve in the first sacrifice, the first prophecy of the promised seed, through the sacrificial laws of the temple, prophecies of the Messiah, and finally to the sacrifice on the cross and the New Covenant that would extend God's grace to the Gentiles.³⁷

The Law did not bring holiness to Israel. Many generations of Israelites forgot God's Law entirely. Severe judgments were inflicted on Israel through their disobedience, whereby they were led into captivity by Assyrians and Babylonians. When the Jewish leaders rejected Christ, Israel was scattered all over the world after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70AD.³⁸

The Law was intended for Israel alone. It was not intended for the other nations, but through Israel salvation would come to all people.³⁹

The Law did not promise new birth, but provided a way to identify sin and departure from God, and proved that without divine grace mankind could not be saved or restored to and reconciled with God. This reinforced the need of a Savior, and the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ providing salvation by grace through His death.⁴⁰

Grace (The New Covenant)

Grace (Salvation for all based on Christ's works) – We are living in the sixth dispensation under the New Covenant of grace that will extend from Jesus to His Second Coming. Many years ago, the prophet Jeremiah foretold of a New Covenant of grace that God would make with His people whereby all could be saved, Jews and Gentiles alike.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: **Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake**, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;**

and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Jeremiah 31:31-34

Under this covenant:⁴¹

1. God calls **all people** and nations, Jews and Gentiles, to **form the Bride of Christ.**
2. It is a better covenant because it **depends solely on the sufficiency of Christ's atonement for the sins of mankind.**

For the law was given by Moses, but **grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.** John 1:17

We see this in Christ's New Covenant of redemption.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, **This is my body which is given for you:** this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.** Luke 22:17-20

The Mosaic Law was a system of regulations, but the New Covenant of grace is not a merit system depending on good works, but of God's grace (unmerited favor) imparted to the believer, even if they don't deserve it.⁴²

By the New Covenant of His blood (redemption), God saves us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy **he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;** Titus 3:5

This is why the “new birth” is essential for salvation. Jesus spoke of this to Nicodemus.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.** John 3:1-7

Under the New Covenant born again believers are filled (indwelt) with the Holy Spirit. This is different than the previous ages where the Holy Spirit indwelt individuals for specific purposes. We are knit together by the Spirit into the “Body of Christ,” the Church. Under this covenant Christ will come and take us to where He is at the time of the Rapture of the Church, prior to His Second Coming, and, according to the view of pre-tribulationists, before the Tribulation.⁴³

Millennium (The Davidic Covenant)

Millennium (Direct rule by Jesus Christ)

– This seventh and final dispensation extends from the Second Coming to the end of the millennium. It is also called the “Dispensation of the Fullness of Times,” referring to the future millennial kingdom when David’s Son will rule.⁴⁴ Paul says it all in the following:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all

spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as **he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,** according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of **his grace,** wherein **he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;** Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, **according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ,** both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also **we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:** That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. Ephesians 1:1-12

In the dispensation of the millennium:⁴⁵

- 1. Christ will take control of the kingdom** and put an end to all anarchy and misrule (Isa 11:3, 4);
- 2. Men will be rewarded** and given rest (2 Th 1:6, 7);
- 3. The curse** on the creation will be **lifted** (Rom 8:19, 20; Isa 11:6-8);
- 4. All Israel will be saved** (Rom 11:26);
- 5. Israel’s blindness will be cured** (Rom 11:25; 2 Co 3:14-17);
- 6. Israel will be restored to the land** (Eze 39:25-29);
- 7. The times of the Gentiles will cease** (Luk 21:24).

The Davidic Covenant offers these promises (2 Sam 7:13):⁴⁶

- 1. To establish David’s throne;**
- 2. To guarantee authority to rule** over His people;

3. To establish His kingdom;
4. To recognize David's reign in perpetuity.

When Christ returns he will wipe out all unsaved adults, resurrect the righteous who have not been previously resurrected (Old Testament saints), and rule as King of kings on the throne of David in Jerusalem.⁴⁷

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to **the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob**; and **he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem**. And **he shall judge among the nations**, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. **Isaiah 2:3-4**

Even though Satan has been bound during this dispensation, this covenant will eventually fail because of the inherent wickedness of humanity. This will show the inherent wickedness of man does not depend on the prompting of Satan. Man will rebel even when under the righteous rule of Jesus Christ. At the end of the Millennium Satan will again be loosed and will lead the final rebellion.⁴⁸

And **when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison**, And **shall go out to deceive the nations** which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, **to gather them together to battle**: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and **fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them**. And **the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever**. **Revelation 20:7-10**

Dominion – The Scroll and the Lamb

In the original creation, one of the duties of man was to have dominion. This requirement that man have dominion is missing in God's instructions to Noah after the Flood. Before the Flood God gave Adam the following instructions.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and **over all the earth**, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.... And God blessed them, and God said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. **Genesis 1:26, 28**

After God gave Adam these instructions Adam fell, thus changing mankind's condition. After the Flood we see that God modified those instructions by not including dominion.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth....** And you, **be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein**. **Genesis 9:1, 7**

Man was originally to have "dominion" implying ownership, control, and authority over the earth as God's representative. God though would remain sovereign. In Luke chapter 4 Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness and was offered all the kingdoms of the world, saying that they had been delivered up to him. Jesus did not rebuke Satan's claim to that dominion over the earth.

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him **all the kingdoms of the world** in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, **All this power will I give thee**, and the glory of them: **for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it**. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written,

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Luke 4:5-8

Revelation chapter 5 speaks of the reclaiming of man's lost inheritance or dominion⁴⁹.

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne **a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.** Revelation 5:1

Bullinger believed that this sealed book is the same that was sealed in Daniel chapter 12. In other words the prophecies of Revelation continue and expand the Book of Daniel.⁵⁰ Daniel spoke of nations (Dan 2:37-45; 7:15-28), the Antichrist and his demise (Dan 7:11), One that would receive dominion and a kingdom from the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:13, 14), the coming and "cutting off" of Israel's Messiah (Dan 9:25, 26), and the Tribulation (Dan 9:27). Daniel speaks of the dominion of the Antichrist (the Beast) being taken away and given to the saints of God.

And they worshipped **the dragon [Satan] which gave power unto the beast [Antichrist]:** and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? Revelation 13:4

Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and **another [Antichrist] shall rise after them;** and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And **he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion,** to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And **the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High,**

whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Daniel 7:23-27

The scroll was the type of book depicted by Revelation 5:1. It was made up of long strips of parchment. Certain documents such as wills required sealing. The wills of both Emperor Vaspasian and Caesar Augustus were each secured with seven seals. A scribe would write on the parchment and after a period of time would stop, roll the parchment to cover what was written, then place a seal of wax at that point, then continue writing, rolling and sealing until he had sealed it seven times. Reading the scroll would require breaking a seal and reading that section while unrolling to the next seal until all seven seals were opened.⁵¹

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, **Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?** And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because **no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.** Revelation 5:2-4

Because "Gabriel" means "strength of God" some believe that the "strong angel" mentioned in verse 2 is none other than Gabriel.⁵²

Hal Lindsey believes that the book, or scroll, represented the forfeiture to Satan of man's original inheritance from God. When a Jewish family was required to forfeit their property due to some financial distress, the property could not permanently be taken away. The family's losses were recorded on a scroll that was sealed seven times with the condition required for recovery of their property written on the outside. When a qualified redeemer could be found capable of meeting the conditions, the property was then required to be returned to the original owner.⁵³

The Jamison, Fausset, and Brown commentary believes that the scroll represented the title deed of man's inheritance, which was usurped by Satan.⁵⁴ Henry Morris and John Phillips, believe it to be the title deed of the earth, to be redeemed by the kinsman redeemer as required by Jewish law. In the case of the original creation, this kinsman redeemer could only be Jesus Christ. No other could be found worthy, and without sin.⁵⁵ Daymond Duck, and Hal Lindsey both agree that it represents a

possession subject to the law for redemption of land. According to Daymond Duck, “When God created all things, [H]e gave earth to man, but Adam sinned and lost it to Satan. However, Adam is still a **joint heir** with Jesus, an adopted child of God. He [Jesus] is a Kinsman Redeemer—one who can buy back the earth and mankind. In Chapter 5 the Church is now in heaven, and we are in that period of time between the Rapture and the Great Tribulation Period. The question before us is, who qualifies to redeem Adam’s lost property?”⁵⁶ Ironside agrees that this scroll represented the “title deed to the world.” He indicates that when the One that sat on the throne asked the question, “‘Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?’ it was just another way of saying, Who is the rightful heir? Who can say, ‘I have title to break those seals, title to claim that world, it belongs to me?’ Who is worthy to take possession of that world and subject it to himself?” Ironside goes on to ask, “Adam, what about you? Wasn’t the world given to you? When God created you and placed you in the garden of Eden, did He not say that all of this was yours? Why do you not come forward and take this title deed and claim your property? Adam says, ‘I forfeited my inheritance because of sin. It was mine, but I sinned it away. The devil cheated me out of it, and I no longer have any title to it.’ Is there any angel who can step up and take the book? No, not an angel among all the serried ranks of Heaven’s hosts can say, ‘I have title to that world.’ Not a man in all God’s universe can say, ‘It is mine.’”⁵⁷

Charles C. Ryrie, in his *Basic Theology*, says, “Clearly the scriptures teach that Satan does have supreme authority over the cosmos. Of course, this is within the sovereign purpose of God and with His permission. Nevertheless, Satan’s usurped authority over the cosmos is supreme. Our Lord recognized this when He called him the ruler of the world (John 12:31; 16: 11) and when He did not dispute Satan’s prerogative in offering Him the kingdoms of the world in the temptation (Matt. 4:8-9). The Apostle John acknowledged the same truth when he wrote that the whole cosmos lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19).” Ryrie further states, “When our Lord returns the cosmos kingdom of Satan will be replaced by the kingdom of Christ who will rule on this earth.... In the meantime God permits the rebellion to continue and the cosmos to flourish. His plan permits evil to run its course, and His long suffering permits many to come to the truth (Rom. 2:4).”⁵⁸

The requirements for opening were specific, probably indicated on the outside of the scroll. The one to open it must be a man, not an angel, since it was man’s lost estate that must be reclaimed. Also since sin was the cause of the loss of man’s estate, no sinner could redeem it. The price required One of perfect holiness with His life being offered as a blood sacrifice, as a substitution for forgiveness of sins. No one around the throne could qualify except Jesus Christ.⁵⁹

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:23

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: **behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.** Revelation 5:5

As in the case of legal documents, only someone with proper authority could have legal access to open the seals and read the message. According to W. A. Criswell:⁶⁰

*If no redeemer could be found to remove the curse, it meant that God’s creation was forever consigned to remain in the hands of Satan.*⁶¹

Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, God’s Lamb, paid the price with His shed blood, and is worthy. The One who was from the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of David, was to be the One worthy to open the scroll. He shall be from the tribe of Judah:

The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and **Judah**, and Issachar, and Zebulun: The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: And the sons of Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid: Gad, and Asher: **these are the sons of Jacob**, which were born to him in Padanaram. **Genesis 35:23-26**

He shall be the Lion of the tribe of Judah:

Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion;

who shall rouse him up? **The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.** Genesis 49:9-10

He shall be from the root of David (Jesse):

And there shall come forth **a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:** Isaiah 11:1

No man is worthy:

As it is written, **There is none righteous, no, not one;.... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;** Romans 3:10, 23

But, One is worthy:

Being justified freely by his **grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins** that are past, through the forbearance of God; **To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.** Romans 3:24-26

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, **stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes**, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. Revelation 5:6

John the Baptist introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.** John 1:29

Jesus was like a lamb led to the slaughter.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: **he is**

brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Isaiah 53:7

Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son (of the promise) to God. God was willing to send His only son as a sacrifice for the sin penalty of us all.

And he said, **Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.... And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.** And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now **I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me....** And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, **By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed** as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; **And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.**

Genesis 22:2, 10-12, 15-18

In Revelation 5:6 "horns" symbolize power. "Seven" is the number of perfection. "Seven horns means that Jesus had omnipotent, perfect power."⁶² Jesus said:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.** Matthew 28:18

Again in Revelation 5:6, "seven eyes" indicate perfect vision (all seeing). This indicates omniscience or all knowing (all seeing) vision.⁶³ These eyes imply knowledge and intelligence. Jesus is the resurrected all-powerful savior of men. We

see also mentioned the seven virtues of the Holy Spirit being the nature of Jesus.⁶⁴

And **the spirit of the LORD** shall rest upon him, **the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;** Isaiah 11:2

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her **seven pillars;** Proverbs 9:1

According to Jamison, Faucett, and Brown's commentary, the seven pillars of Wisdom are those described by Isaiah in Isaiah 11:2:⁶⁵

1. **The Spirit of the Lord.**
The Spirit of Prophecy.
The Spirit Who works in redemption.
2. **Wisdom.**
The ability to see things as they are.
3. **Understanding.**
The ability to distinguish between good and evil.
4. **Counsel.**
The ability to weigh facts and come up with the right conclusions.
5. **Might.**
Courage and strength to carry out God's will.
6. **Knowledge.**
Personal knowledge of God that comes from fellowship with Him in love.
7. **The Fear of the Lord.**
A reverence that exalts God and that is the beginning of Wisdom.

Proverbs 9:10 reinforces this as follows:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. **Proverbs 9:10**

Jesus, the worthy, took the book:

And he came and **took the book** out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. **Revelation 5:7**

Notice that Daniel recorded the same event mentioning that dominion was given Him:⁶⁶

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, **one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.** Daniel 7:13-14

He Died for Us

Jesus Christ is the only one worthy to redeem us from the curse and regain the lost dominion. If no one was found worthy then we would be lost for eternity. The requirement for our redemption was that the redeemer was to be a near kinsman (read the book of Ruth). In becoming a man, Jesus Christ was a kinsman to us all.

We have seen that Jesus met all the various requirements to redeem us and gain the lost dominion. All we need to do is accept what He has done for us. Confess that we are sinners, ask for forgiveness, and accept Jesus Christ as Lord, and we will be included in the redemption of the Lamb. He died that we might live. His resurrection testifies to the eternal life with Him that awaits us. Jesus Christ is our only hope. Without Him we are lost. Don't delay, we do not know what tomorrow will bring, or if tomorrow will come for us. Just as Christ beckons us through the promptings of the Holy Spirit, "Folly, too, gives her clamorous invitation in the high places, tempting passers by with the sweets of stolen waters, but not letting them know that the issue is death and hell (Prov 9:13-18)."⁶⁷ **AO**

(Endnotes)

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- ⁶¹ W. A. Criswell, EXPOSITORY SERMONS ON REVELATION, as quoted in Lindsey, THERE'S A NEW WORLD COMING, p. 75.
- ⁶² Duck, Richards (Editor), REVELATION: GOD'S WORD FOR THE BIBLICALLY-INEPT, p. 78.
- ⁶³ Duck, Richards (Editor), REVELATION: GOD'S WORD FOR THE BIBLICALLY-INEPT, p. 78.
- ⁶⁴ Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, A COMMENTARY: CRITICAL, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, Notes on *Proverbs 9:1*: "Her seven pillars, in the Hebrew are the pillars, not of her house, but of herself. Seven is the number for perfection. They are the manifold and complete stays whereon Wisdom rests; especially the seven-fold grace of the Holy Spirit, which is in Messiah without measure, and whereby He establishes forever His Church (Isa 11:2-3; Rev 1:4). In so far as He imparts his seven-fold Spirit to the ministers of His Church, in that degree they become 'pillars' (Gal 2:9)."
- ⁶⁵ Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, A COMMENTARY: CRITICAL, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, Vol. II, p. 441.
- ⁶⁶ Morris, THE REVELATION RECORD: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Prophetic Book of the End Times, p. 101.
- ⁶⁷ Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, A COMMENTARY: CRITICAL, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, Notes on *Proverbs 9:1*.

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