Benefits of Understanding Israel's Program

Even though we live in the dispensation of grace, there's God-designed value for us to understand Israel's program.

A 3-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

These three conference sessions by Keith Blades look at three major benefits God has designed members of the body of Christ to get from studying Israel's program, even though we live in the dispensation of grace. The first, from Romans 15:4, is learning that God is a God of patience and consolation as He deals with His people. The second, from Romans 15:8, is understanding the Lord functioning as a minister of the circumcision, confirming the promises made unto the fathers. The third is the capacity to appreciate the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the two programs come together.

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Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
L1	The God of Patience and Consolation — Romans 15:4–5; Exodus 3, 15–19; Hosea 13–14: Learning God's Jehovahness
L2	Confirming the Promises Made unto the Fathers — Romans 15:8: John the Baptist, Leviticus 26, Daniel 9, and the Two Temptations
L3	Appreciating the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times — The Sermon on the Mount and Isaiah 61; Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1

Lesson Summaries

L1

The God of Patience and Consolation *Romans 15:4–5; Exodus 3, 15–19; Hosea 13–14: Learning God's Jehovahness*

God-Designed Value in Israel's Program

- In this dispensation of grace Israel's program is not in effect; we are not spiritual Israelites but members of the new creation, the church, the body of Christ
- The portion of God's word dealing with us today is Romans through Philemon, yet a member of the body of Christ cannot afford to be ignorant of

Israel's scriptures; God wants us knowledgeable about Israel's program

Written for Our Learning (Romans 15:4)

- The things "written aforetime" are the things that pertain to Israel's program; they are written "for our learning" — not for our obedience, because they pertain to God's program and dealings with the nation Israel
- Keith selected three benefits for the morning sessions: patience and comfort (Romans 15:4); the Lord functioning as a minister of the circumcision (Romans 15:8); and the dispensation of the fulness of times

The God of Patience and Consolation (Romans 14–15)

- Paul is talking about God being a God of patience and a God of comfort and consolation; we are to be patient, comforting and consoling one toward another
- The context deals with weaker brothers, beginning at Romans 14:1; a weaker brother is not a sinning or disobedient brother — he just hasn't learned as much yet
- Paul gives two reasons: the example of Christ Himself (verse 3) and the example of God's dealings with Israel (verse 4)
- God deals with His people's edification, whether in Israel's program or with us today, in a patient, comforting, consoling manner

Israel's Education: God's Jehovahness

- God's program with Israel pertains to the repossession of the earth from the dominion Satan usurped when Adam fell; five particular trials for Israel's education are described from Exodus 15 through 18
- Israel's education is vested in understanding God's Jehovahness, a term Keith coins; its two issues are timelessness and the blank check concept: "I'll be whatever you need me to be to deliver you from your predicaments"
- From the wilderness of Shur to Mount Sinai God puts Israel in predicaments; they're in a predicament they can't rectify, and God rectifies the problem by His Jehovahness

Marah and the Manna

- At Marah God made Israel a statute and an ordinance — a sample of law keeping before the law was offered — testing whether they could perform on their own to His satisfaction, to prove to them they can't do it
- With the manna the Lord gave one simple command, and Israel violated it; He was educating them in their inability to be dealt with on the base of their performance

Sinai, Hosea, and What We Learn

- It was God's Jehovahness and grace that got Israel to Sinai; had they learned the lessons they could have refused the law contract, but they chose it and had to learn those lessons the hard way
- Hosea 14 is a prophetic passage about the end of God's program with Israel: Israel will confess they have learned the lesson — words they should have said at Mount Sinai
- Throughout Israel's weakness in the faith God was patient, comforting and consoling; He is that way with us, who started out weak in the faith, and expects us to use that in the dispensation of grace

L2

Confirming the Promises Made unto the Fathers *Romans 15:8: John the Baptist, Leviticus 26, Daniel 9, and the Two Temptations*

A Minister of the Circumcision (Romans 15:8)

- Paul describes the Lord as a minister of the circumcision in the past tense, because that is what He was in time past; the dispensation of Gentile grace was not in effect when He was on this earth
- Everything the Lord does, says and teaches — every miracle, every sign — is to fulfill what Paul says in verse 8: "to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers"
- Saying of the gospel accounts "That's not for me today" is a far cry from understanding them; everything the Lord says and does was already given in predictive form in Genesis through Malachi

Why John Preached in the Wilderness

- John the Baptist is the forerunner of the Messiah, fulfilling Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3; but why a voice crying in the wilderness and not in Jerusalem? Even where John preached has a foundation in Genesis through Malachi
- In Hosea 2:14 God says He will "speak comfortably unto her" in the wilderness; after a 400-year period of silence, that time begins with John's ministry — the gospel of the kingdom, the comforting news that the long-awaited kingdom is at hand
- Matthew takes the time to tell how John is dressed; understand God's program with Israel and there isn't a word in Matthew–John that isn't there for a reason — even the detail that John can't have anything to do with a grape. Keith leaves the issue about the Lord's seamless garment for the class to deal with on their own

Leviticus 26: Five Courses of Punishment

- Leviticus 26 is the most important Old Testament passage for understanding God's dealings with Israel; from verse 14 to the end, God gives Israel their history in outline form before they ever enter the land
- The curses come in five courses, progressing throughout Israel's history to the day of His wrath; Leviticus 26 outlines the entire Bible with the exception of Romans through Philemon
- The 5th and final course, described from verse 27, began with the Assyrian-Babylonian captivity: the Assyrians took the northern tribes captive, the Chaldeans — the Babylonians — the southern tribes

The 5th Course and Daniel 9

- The 5th course has five installments; Jeremiah was given the time schedule for the 1st, 70 years, and Daniel for the remaining four, 490 years — 560 years for the package; the 5th installment is the day of the Lord's wrath
- When Daniel 9 opens, Daniel has gone through the 1st installment, 70 years of Babylonian captivity; the 2nd has just begun, with the Medo-Persian Empire in power
- Daniel applies Leviticus 26:40 to himself in advance, confessing nationally — not denying his own sin — Israel's national sinfulness throughout their history and his own complicity within that nation

John's Baptism: A Generation of Vipers

- With John the Baptist's ministry Leviticus 26:40 begins to get underway; those confessing their sins at his baptism are confessing their national sins as a rebellious nation against God
- "Repent ye" means change your mind about yourselves and look at yourself

as God does — a generation of vipers; John's message was the counsel of God against Israel, and in Luke 7:30 "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves"

Tempted Twice

- The Messiah has to be tested twice by the adversary — that is why Matthew and Luke both record the temptation: Matthew as the son of David, Luke as the son of man
- The first man Adam and David both failed at the adversary's hand; per Leviticus 25 a redeemer has to prove himself capable of functioning as the kinsman redeemer

L3

Appreciating the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times *The Sermon on the Mount and Isaiah 61; Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1*

Good News to the Remnant (Matthew 5; Isaiah 61)

- One example of the Lord confirming promises made unto the fathers: the Sermon on the Mount, a message to the remnant of Israel who had already believed the gospel of the kingdom; the dispensation of grace is not in view
- In the Beatitudes the Lord is directly fulfilling a promise made about Him in the prophets, particularly Isaiah 61: when the kingdom gets established their situation will change — they ought to start rejoicing now
- Those who mourn are mourning because their leaders are in apostasy and the nation is going down at their hands; every category of people in the Beatitudes is dealt with because the prophets promised He would say something good to them

Even His Words Were Prophesied

- Even the term for a member of the remnant was prophesied: the Lord calls them disciples because His Father said in Isaiah 8 they would be His disciples; "Bind up the testimony" is the gospel of the kingdom
- He preached good news to the remnant and pronounced woes against the rebellious element — Israel's religious leaders, against whom Isaiah 5 pronounces a series of woes; the leadership had cast away the law

The Law Made Honorable Again

- He gives the remnant the law pure and honorable again, without the corruption and vanity of Israel's religious system — that is what He does in the Sermon on the Mount
- He tells them how they heard a commandment from their religious leaders and exposes the corruption placed on it; Isaiah 42:21 — "he will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable" — means the law in Israel was not magnified or honorable
- For the first time in their lives these people understood the law; He is the one that gave it in the first place — He wrote it

The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

- We don't live now in the dispensation of the fulness of times but in the dispensation of Gentile grace; fulness of times means the times have been fulfilled, and times are still left on Israel's program
- It is not brought in until God has completely formed the body of Christ and raptured it, and has resumed and fulfilled His program with Israel on earth and the full mandate of the Davidic Covenant is accomplished

Gathered Together in One

- All the governmental authorities God originally created in the heavenly places and on the earth are to be gathered together in one and put under the one imperial headship of the Lord Jesus Christ
- The "things" in heaven and on earth are governmental positions — principalities, powers, mights, dominions; men occupy them on earth, angelic beings in the heavenly places
- Paul lists three particular things he wants us to know: "the hope of his calling", "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints", and "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe"

Colossians 1 and Two Agencies

- Firstborn is a title of inheritance; Christ has the legal right to the position because He created everything in the first place — visible positions on earth, invisible ones in the heavenly places
- It will be done through two agencies God has created. First agency: redeemed Israel, to reconcile all the governmental authorities of the earth, with His kingdom established on this earth vested in them
- In the mystery revealed to Paul, God has put Israel's program on hold and is forming now, out of Jew and Gentile on the same level, one new man, to reconcile the heavenly places; He will fill those positions with the members of the body of Christ

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Time Past vs. the Dispensation of Grace

In time past God's program was not with us Gentiles; God has temporarily suspended His program and dealings with the nation Israel. The dispensation of Gentile grace was not in effect when the Lord Jesus Christ was on this earth; it wasn't brought in until the Lord returned unexpectedly from heaven and raised up the Apostle Paul as the brand-new apostle.

Written for Our Learning, Not for Our Obedience

The things written aforetime pertain to God's program and dealings with the nation Israel, so they are not written for our obedience. Our doctrine, and the promises and instructions God wants us to follow today, come from Paul's epistles — Romans through Philemon.

Not Our Program vs. Educated in Israel's Program

God wants us to understand Israel's program not only in the dispensational sense that it is not our program today, but to be educated in it. It is a real asset in dealing with people about the right division of God's word if you can not only say Matthew, Mark, Luke and John aren't our program today, but show them why.

The Gospel of the Kingdom vs. the Gospel of the Grace of God

The gospel in the gospel accounts is not the gospel of the grace of God; it is the gospel of the kingdom — the comforting news that the long-awaited kingdom is at hand. In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord is dealing with people who have already believed the gospel of the kingdom; the dispensation of grace is not in view at that time.

The Law Contract vs. God's Jehovahness and Grace

Israel got to Mount Sinai because of what God did, not what they did; it was God's Jehovahness and grace that got them there. The law contract is the if-then performance proposition; Israel chose the law contract and refused God's Jehovahness and grace, and from that time on, under that law contract, Israel has to learn it the hard way. In Hosea 13 God cites all He will be for Israel; they couldn't earn any of those things by their performance — He'll be it all by His Jehovahness.

The Dispensation of Gentile Grace vs. the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

We don't live now in the dispensation of the fulness of times; we live in the dispensation of Gentile grace. The times are not yet fulfilled: seven years remain for the 5th and final installment of the 5th course under Leviticus 26, then a 1,000-year kingdom. In that dispensation the two programs come together, so you need to understand both God's purpose with the body of Christ and His program with Israel.

Redeemed Israel and the Earth; the New Creation and the Heavenly Places

Redeemed Israel is created for reconciling the governmental authorities of the earth, with His kingdom on earth vested in them; the new creation, for reconciling the heavenly places. Your glorified body is a heavenly one, unlike the glorified body of an Israelite on this earth. Heaven and earth will remain two distinct realms but be dovetailed together, working together to God's glory; without Israel's part you can only understand half of the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Key Scripture References

Exodus 3:13–14	God gives Himself a name and shortens it to "I AM"; the issue is God's Jehovahness
Exodus 15:22–27	Marah: a statute and an ordinance, the if-then performance proposition; at Elim the lesson sinks in
Exodus 16:26–28	No manna on the sabbath day: Israel broke the one simple command
Exodus 19:1–8	At Sinai Israel chose the law contract; had they learned from the trials they should have refused it
Leviticus 25	A redeemer must prove himself capable of functioning as the kinsman redeemer
Leviticus 26:14 ff.	Israel's history in outline before they enter the land: five courses of curses

Leviticus 26:27–35	The 5th and final course, beginning with the Assyrian-Babylonian captivity
Leviticus 26:40–42	God confronts Israel with their national iniquities and looks for a confession
II Chronicles 36	The captivity took place so the land could enjoy her sabbaths
Isaiah 5:18–24	Woes against Israel's religious leaders, who had cast away the law
Isaiah 8:16	Why the Lord calls them disciples; "Bind up the testimony" is the gospel of the kingdom
Isaiah 40:1–3	The voice in the wilderness; John begins to proclaim the comforting news to Israel
Isaiah 42:21	He will magnify the law and make it honorable — it was not magnified in Israel
Isaiah 61:1–3	The Beatitudes can be picked out of these opening three verses
Daniel 9:1–13, 24	Daniel confesses his nation's sins, applying Leviticus 26:40 in advance; the remaining installments, 490 years
Hosea 2:13–14	God will speak comfortably to her in the wilderness; the time when God speaks comfortably to Israel begins with John the Baptist's ministry
Hosea 13:9; 14:1–2	Israel destroyed itself under the law, but God will be its help; the words Israel should have said at Sinai
Matthew 3:1–6	John preaching in the wilderness of Judaea; his dress; the people confessing their national sins
Matthew 4; Luke 4	Two temptation accounts: as the son of David, and as the son of man
Matthew 5–7	The Sermon on the Mount: a message to the remnant of Israel; the law given pure and honorable again
Luke 7:29–30	"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves"
Romans 15:3–5	In the context of weaker brothers: the example of Christ and of God's dealings with Israel; the God of patience and consolation
Romans 15:8	The Lord a minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers
Ephesians 1:8–10	The mystery of His will: the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the times are fulfilled
Ephesians 1:15–19	Three particular things Paul wants us to know
Colossians 1:15–16, 18	Firstborn a title of inheritance; He created everything in the first place, with governmental positions in view; in all governmental positions the preeminence