main story of the Bible. Beginning with the prophecy of Genesis 3:15,

His plan has been developed and revealed over the course of many centuries. God has ruled and blessed His people through three dispensations. 1) The Patriarchal age or dispensation is named for the father of the family or tribe. Under this system, the patriarch was prophet, priest, and ruler. He directed the social and religious affairs of the family. 2) The Mosaical dispensation resulted from a promise made to Abraham in Gen. 12:2-3. The Law of Moses guided the people of God religiously and politically during this dispensation. One pur­pose of the Mosaical dis­pen­sa­tion was to keep Abraham’s descen­dants a sep­a­rate and dis­tinct race until Christ, the promised seed, should come. 3) The Christian dispensation extends from Pen­te­cost of Acts 2 to the Lord’s final com­ing. This period is the time in which we must hear Christ as He speaks to us through His New Tes­ta­ment. This is the time in which every­thing we do in reli­gious mat­ters must be autho­rized by the New Tes­ta­ment (Col. 3:17). Dur­ing this time, Chris­tians serve as “a holy priest­hood, to offer up spir­i­tual sac­ri­fices, accept­able to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5).

**Leaders and rulers of God’s people**

During the three great dispensations of the Bible, God’s people have had various types of rulers and leaders. In the beginning, God led His children directly. After the time of Joshua, many people engaged in idol worship due to the lack of strong authority. God appointed judges to guide His people. The judges were often prophets and warriors. When God’s people desired to have a king, Saul was chosen to lead the Israelites. David followed Saul as king, and many other

kings ruled Israel until it was conquered by foreign powers. During

the New Testament age, the people of God are citizens of a spiritual kingdom under the authority of Jesus Christ (the King of kings). The

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B. God created the universe (including earth) as a demonstration for the angels.

1. They can watch the consequences of sin in lives of humans.
2. They can rejoice when a sinner repents.
3. These observations will prove to angels that sin always has bad consequences.
4. Therefore, sin will not arise in heaven again, even though angels continue to make free will choices.
5. The angels now in heaven are the “elect angels.”

**God’s Solution For Sin On Earth**

A. Prepare a sacrifice for the sins of free-will creatures.

1. Send Christ in human form.
2. Make the blood of Christ cover the sins of all penitent believers.

B. Make known the nature and consequences of sin.

1. Prepare and distribute the Bible.
2. Put the Great Commission into effect.

C. Prepare an eternal home for those who make the free choice to obey God.

1. Angels learn the consequences of human sin.
2. This object lesson keeps sin out of heaven.
3. The redeemed saints will have a heavenly home free from sin forever.

D. Prepare a place of eternal separation for those who make the free choice to disobey God.

1. The Lake of Fire is reserved for the Devil and his angels.
2. There they are eternally separated from God and the redeemed.

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