

The Five Ages of Time!

by

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God began “time” as we know it when He first created the “angels” and the “heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-15). The concept of “time” will cease to be when God destroys all that now exists throughout creation along with all trace of sin and rebellion that occurred against Him (2 Pet. 3:10-12). This will happen after the "Great White Throne Judgment" of all those people who opposed the “will” of God in whatever “age” they lived (Rev. 20:11-15). Then God will create a new “heaven” and a new “earth” and “time” as we now know it will forever cease to be (Isa. 64:4; 65:17; 66:22; 1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-5, 9-22:5).

An "age" is a definite period of time during which those people who live are “tested” by God as to their obedience to some specific revelation of His “will” for them. In other words, an “age” is a distinguishable time period in the outworking of God's purpose (Mt. 24:3; Heb. 9:26)! These periods of time are also known as “economies” or “dispensations.” The English word “age” is translated from the Greek noun "aion" which has various connotations, e.g. "a period of time, an age, perpetuity of time, eternity or forever." The word "dispensation" comes from the Greek word "oikonomia," which comes from a verb meaning "to administer," or "to manage"(Lk.16:1-2).

In the Holy Bible there are five "ages" that are distinguishable and can be easily recognized. They each have a clear and definite “beginning” and a clear and explicit “ending.” No matter the "age" lived in, every human being is wholly and naturally responsible to God for what they think, say and do. Though salvation is always by God's grace, through faith alone, the purpose of each “age” is to place mankind under a specific rule of conduct for that particular period of time. The response, by mankind, to the revelation of the “will” of God is revealed by what is done in “obedience” or what is not done in “disobedience.”

The title of each "age" refers to mankind's state of existence during that particular time period. The biblical account of the five "ages," as to when they begin, when they end, and the duration of each are as follows:

1. The “Age of Innocence” began with the creation of Adam (Gen. 2:7) and ended when he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6). Its duration was probably 40 years and 40 days.
2. The “Age of Beginnings” began immediately after Adam ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6) and ended when the Israelites agreed to keep the “Mosaic Covenant” [the Law] (Ex. 19:5-8; 20:1-31:18; Dt. 5:27-28; 29:1-15). Its duration was about 2,500 years.
3. “The Age of Law” began when the Israelites agreed to keep the “Mosaic Covenant” [the Law]

(Ex. 19:5-8; 20:1-31:18; Dt. 5:27-28; 29:1-15). This “age” ended when the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the “Mosaic Covenant” [the Law], and gave up His spirit while on the cross at Calvary (Mt. 5:17-18; Jn. 19:30; Heb. 9:11-28). Its duration was about 1,500 years.

4. The “Age of Grace” began when the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the “Mosaic Covenant” [the Law], then gave up His spirit, while on the cross at Calvary (Mt. 5:17-18; Jn. 19:30; Heb. 9:11-28). This “age” will end with the “Second Coming” of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth (Zech. 12:8-14:21; Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21). Its duration will be 1,987 years.

5. The “Age of Messiah's Kingdom,” or the “Age of the Millennial Kingdom,” will begin with the “Second Coming” of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth (Zech. 12:8-14:21; Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21). Those people who live through the seven years [2520 days] of tribulation preceding His “Second Coming” to earth will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ and His saints during the first seventy-five days of the “Age of Messiah’s Kingdom” to determine who will enter into it and who will not (Ezek. 20:33-44; Dan. 7:22; 12:11-12; Mal. 3:2-5; 4:1-2; Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:4). Its duration will be for 1,000 years! After the “Age of Messiah’s Kingdom” ends, Satan will be released from the “abyss” where he had been bound (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-9).

The “Church Age” is an “age” within the “Age of Grace” just as Israel was a “nation” within the “nation” of Egypt while living there (Ex. 12:40-41; Num. 14:12; Dt. 9:14; 2 Sam. 7:23; 1 Chr. 17:21; Ps. 33:12; Lk. 7:1-5; Jn. 11:48-52). The “Church Age” began on the “Feast of Weeks” [Pentecost] which was fifty-three days after the start of the “Age of Grace” on the “Feast of the Passover,” and fifty days after the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ on the “Feast of First Fruits” (Ex. 12:1-2; Lev. 23:4-11, 15-16; Mt. 28:5-10; Mk. 16:9; Lk. 24:1, 7; Jn. 20:1, 19; Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12:12-14, 20). The “Church Age” will end on the “Feast of Trumpets” with the “Rapture” (Lev. 23:23-25; 1 Cor. 15:20,23, 51-53; 1 Th. 4:13-18; 2 Th. 2:1). The “Age of Grace” will not end until the “Second Coming” of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth on the “Feast of a Day of Atonement” (Lev. 16; 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11; Zech. 12:10; 13:1-14:7, 9; Rom. 11:26-27).

Since the birth of the “Church,” or the “Church Age” began, many people have been deceived by false gospels (Mt. 7:21-23; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1-3; 1 Jn. 4:1). A false gospel is one that teaches “something” must be done in addition to believing in the “sufficiency” of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ [Messiah], for “salvation” (Jn. 19:30; Rom. 4:5; Gal. 2:21; Heb. 9:28). The “something” to do might have been a necessary act of obedience for those living in a prior “age” but would be considered a “work” in our present “Age of Grace,” if done to ensure salvation.

It is important to understand what was required in the “Age of Law,” in contrast to the “Age of Grace,” to avoid confusion and discern correct doctrine. In order to approach God in the “Age of Law” it was necessary to first “repent” [meaning to have a “change of mind” or to have a “change of ways”]. This is why John, the herald for the Messiah, told his Jewish audience to “repent” for the “remission” of sins (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3), and then to “repent” because the “kingdom of heaven” was at hand, in the person of the Messiah (Mt. 3:1-2). Jesus of Nazareth, who was the promised

Messiah, repeated what John said when He told His Jewish audience to “repent” since the “kingdom of heaven” was at hand, in the “Person” of Himself (Mt. 4:17; 9:13; 11:20-21; 12:41; 21:29; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 5:32; 10:13; 11:32). He also said to “repent” for the remission of sins (Lk. 13:3; 15:7, 10). Those who heard John and the Lord Jesus Christ say these things were Jewish people living in the "Age of Law," prior to the crucifixion of their Messiah [the anointed one].

The audience to whom Peter spoke, on the “Feast of Weeks” [Pentecost], consisted of Jewish men and women who were still living under the “Law,” though the “Age of Grace” had begun fifty-three days earlier after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter’s answer to their question of, “what shall we do” was for them to “have a change of mind” [repent], and be “identified” [baptized], in the name of Jesus Christ for the “remission” of their sins [salvation] (Acts 2:14-40). His answer was applicable since they were still living under the “law” of Moses.

In contrast to the “synoptic” [historical] Gospels, of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the word “repent” is NEVER used or recorded in the Gospel of John. The reason for this is that after the Lord Jesus Christ gave up His spirit, while on the cross at Calvary, the "Age of Law" ended and the "Age of Grace" began. This was signified by the tearing of the “veil” in the Temple that separated the “holy place” and the “holy of holies.” It was in the “holy of holies” where the high priest of Israel would beg the LORD for the forgiveness of his own sins and for the sins of all the people of Israel while sprinkling the mercy seat of God with the blood of sacrificed animals. When the high priest was finished with the sacrifice of atonement, he would “symbolically” place the sins of Israel upon the head of a goat who was then released into the wilderness. Thus, the “scapegoat” would then carry those sins of Israel away - never to return. This entire ritual would take place once each year, on the “Feast of a Day of Atonement” (Lev. 16:1-11, 20-22, 29-34)!

The tearing of the “veil” in the Temple (Mt. 27:50-51; Mk. 15:37-38), indicated that it is no longer necessary to have any man intercede as a priest for sin since we have the Lord Jesus Christ as our great high priest in Heaven (Heb. 9:1-15; 10:19-22). Those who now live in the "Age of Grace" must first “trust” [believe] in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith alone and nothing else, for their salvation (Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9). The same as the thief on the cross next to the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary. This man, in addition to being a thief, was probably also guilty of sedition towards Rome and for being a murderer. Thus, he knew he was guilty of his crimes and his penalty was just. This man also knew he needed a Savior. His “trust” [belief] was revealed by his asking to be remembered when the Lord Jesus Christ entered His kingdom (Lk. 23:39-43). The “belief” on the part of this man was the sole “cause” of his salvation and allowed him to be the first man “saved” in the “Age of Grace!” That “repentance” is always to be an “effect” of salvation in the “Age of Grace” is irrefutable. The “cause” of salvation is “belief!”

As further evidence, that “repentance” is to be an “effect” of “belief” in the “Age of Grace,” the apostle John wrote, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jn. 20:30-31). If it were

necessary for one to "repent," be "baptized," or do anything else in addition to "believing" [trust] in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, then the apostle John would have been "remiss." for not including those "things" to do, while giving his reason for writing his gospel! John is consistent in this regard, considering he used the word "believe" [trust] sixty times in his gospel, and not once referred to the word "repent." The apostle John also did not find it necessary to use the word "repent" in any of his personal letters to the "Church" at large.

There is cause for concern during our present day and age for those who have made "repentance," "baptism," making Jesus "Lord of their life," "speaking in tongues," "joining a church" or something they have done, are doing, or hope to do, as being part of the "cause" for their "salvation." These acts should always be an "effect" of trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and never as part of the "cause." The reason for this is because anyone who is trusting in any kind of "work" to insure their "salvation," is not "saved." A "work" is to be considered as part of a "religious" practice or tradition in this present "Age of Grace." A "religious" practice or tradition is always at variance with the God of the Holy Bible!

Cain was the first "religious" human being. The evidence of this is how he refused to submit to the "will" of God. Thus, his refusal to do the "will" of God and offer the sacrifice he had been instructed to give, as his brother Abel had done. The offering made by Cain was in disobedience to the "will" of God (Gen. 4:1-7; Gal. 6:7). It is the same with all "religious" people today who choose to offer to God what their "religion" might dictate and not what God has said is required of them. Those engaged in any form of "religion" (1 Cor. 10:20), are not doing the "will" of God (Mt. 7:21-23). Thus, they remain "unsaved" or "lost." The sacrifice made by the Lord Jesus Christ, for mankind, with the offering of His shed blood (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22, 28; 10:4) is the only sacrifice that "God the Father" will now accept during this current "Age of Grace."

To appreciate the "Good News" of the New Testament one must first acknowledge the "Bad News" of the Old Testament. The "bad news" is that each and every human being whose father descended from Adam is a sinner, who cannot do anything to save themselves from the penalty of sin against a holy God (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 4:5). The Lord Jesus Christ, however, did not have a human "father." Thus, He was born without sin or the sin nature of Adam (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Lk. 1:26-35; Rom. 5:12; Heb. 9:15, 26). The "good news" is that the "penalty" for all sins, whether past, present or future, has been "paid in full" by the substitutionary sacrifice of the Savior.

The "will" of "God the Father" (Mt. 7:21), for mankind in this present "Age of Grace," is to simply "believe" [trust], by faith alone, that what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, is "sufficient" to save "believers" from the "penalty" they deserve for their sins. They are to trust in nothing else! The "Word of God," the Holy Bible, guarantees the salvation of "believing" Christians! If what the Lord Jesus Christ did, while on the cross of Calvary, is not enough to save sinners from the "penalty" they deserve for their sins against a holy God, then there is no hope of forgiveness or of having "salvation." This is true since there is nothing that a sinner can do, in addition to what the Lord Jesus has done, to "insure" our "salvation" (Isa. 64:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; 1 Jn. 5:13).

The Biblical Road to Salvation

Romans 3:23 - “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:8 - “But God commendeth his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 6:23 - “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

Romans 4:5 - “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Romans 10:13 - “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 - “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God - Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

An Invitation to Believe

Dear Lord Jesus. I believe that you are “God the Son,” the “Messiah,” the “anointed one,” the “Son of God.” I know that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I also know that I cannot be good enough or do enough to justify myself before a holy God. I now trust that the sacrifice you made for me, out of love, while on the cross at Calvary, was sufficient to pay the penalty I deserve for my sins. I thank you for saving my soul. You are my Lord and my Savior. Thank you. Amen!