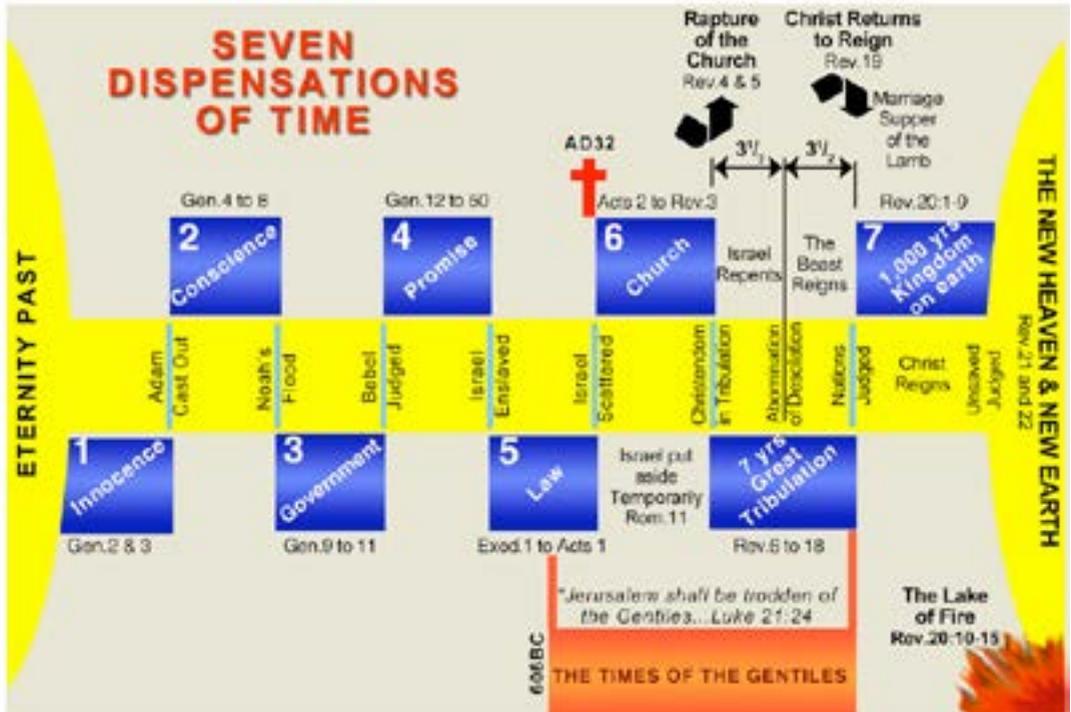


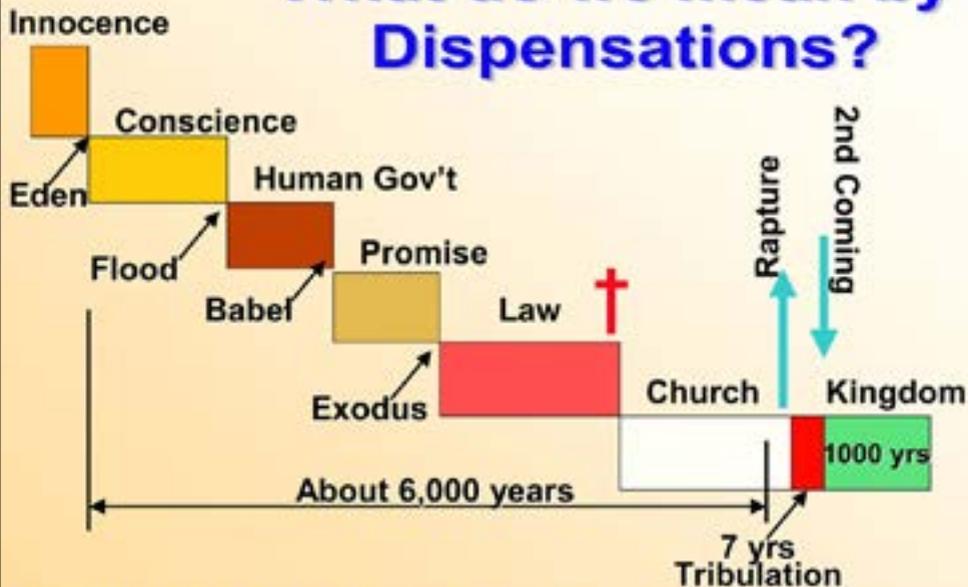
THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

“Rightly dividing the Word of Truth”

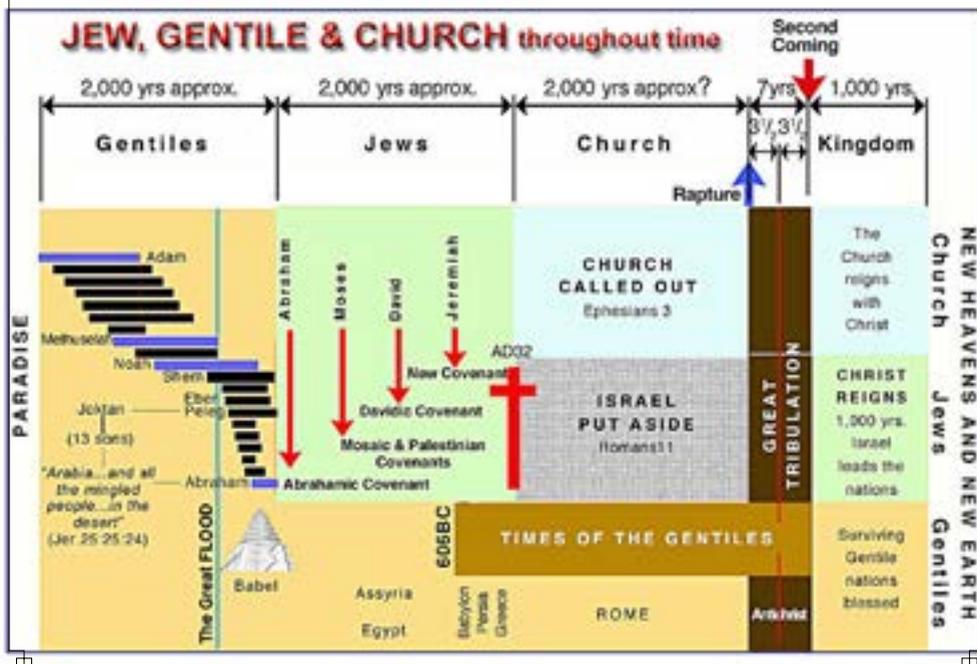
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What do we mean by Dispensations?



SEVEN ADMINISTRATIONS



WHAT IS DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH?

To have a full understanding of the Bible one must understand the dispensations of time so that we can *“rightly divide the Word of Truth”*. Paul told Timothy:

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH”
(2 Timothy 2:15).

There are major divisions in the Bible and if we ignore them we will confuse the message.

There are three classes of people in the Bible: **the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church**. What is written to the Church does NOT apply to Israel or the Gentiles; what is written to the Jews does NOT apply to the Church.

These three divisions will never cease in time or eternity and they continue into the New Heaven and New Earth where the Church will dwell in the New Jerusalem, Israel will surround the city and the saved Gentiles nations will dwell in the New earth.

From the beginning there were no divisions but when men became idolatrous and polytheistic, after the Flood, God chose a faithful man through whom He would communicate and preserve His Truth in the earth; That man was Abram; his seed were the children of Israel.

At that stage there were only **two classes** of people on earth; the Jews and the Gentiles.

When the Jews rejected their promised Messiah the nation was put aside and **partially blinded** to truth until the day when they turn back to the Lord. In the meanwhile, God established the Church which is comprised of Jews and Gentiles who place their trust in Jesus Christ in this age. The Church is a unique body, indwelt by the Holy Spirit in which there is no distinction between Jew or Gentile as Paul wrote:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28).

Since the day of Pentecost there have been three classes of people: the **Jew, Gentile, and the Church**. If we fail to recognize this fact we will be confused in our understanding of the Scripture.

In line with these three divisions there are seven periods of time in the history of mankind when circumstances changed and God administered His will differently. There was a development in the progress of the human race from Adam to the end of time and with each change in conditions God revealed Himself in a different manner.

In the Garden of Eden there was no sin until Eve was seduced by Satan. Administration of the world before the fall could not be the same as it was after the fall. There was no need of salvation in Eden for there was no sin but once sin entered God's administration changed: sacrifices were needed. Other changes came as the years unfolded and so God's administration varied to meet the needs of mankind and it is **these changes in administration that we call, Dispensations**. There are clearly seven Dispensations revealed in the Bible from the creation of man to the future eternal state. They are:

- 1) The Dispensation of Innocence - No distinction
- 2) The Dispensation of Conscience - No distinction
- 3) The Dispensation of Human Government - No distinction
- 4) The Dispensation of Promise - Jew and Gentile
- 5) The Dispensation of Law - Jew and Gentile
- 6) The Dispensation of the Church - Jew, Gentile and the Church
- 7) The Dispensation of the Kingdom - Jew, Gentile and Church

From the beginning God made man in His own image and likeness intending to dwell with man in an earth that was created, not only by Himself but for Himself. Adam enjoyed sweet unbroken fellowship with his Maker.

Angels were the "ministers" (servants) of God but man was a special creation. When the earth was created Lucifer, a special chief angel, was given dominion over the nations that would be born but he was lifted up in pride and tried to exalt himself above the throne of God. One third of the angels of heaven joined in the rebellion and followed him.

We know this because when the Devil tempted the Lord in the wilderness he offered Jesus power over all the kingdoms of the world for he said, "*That is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it*" (Luke 4:6).

Satan's design from the beginning was to rule creation and mankind as "*the god of this world*" and so he deceived Eve and has ever since sought to bring men under his control. The proud heart of Satan craves worship and so there is a conflict. Jesus said that the Father seeks worshippers and "*they that worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). In contrast; the Devil is a liar and the father of lies.

The history of the world has been the story of the conflict between God and Satan for possession of the hearts of men and every tactic of Satan has met an appropriate response from God in order to maintain the Truth in the earth and bring men back to God.

When Adam sinned, God's response was to promise to send His Son in the fulness of time to break Satan's power over men and ultimately to wrest the kingdoms of this world from Satan's control. Only when the Son of God delivers up the kingdom again to the Father will there be a New Heaven and New Earth wherein dwells righteousness and then "*the tabernacle of God be with men and he will dwell with them*" (Rev.21:3). The Paradise that was lost in Eden will again be restored:

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1Cor.15:24-26).

Death came when Adam sinned and "*the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*" (1Cor.15:26). Paradise will be regained after all of God's enemies are judged and the kingdom reclaimed for God by the Lord Jesus.

The seven dispensations of time trace God's plan to deliver men from Satan's kingdom and to bring them into the Kingdom of God. In every kind of administration man proves to be a failure and it is confirmed that we can only be redeemed by the grace and mercy of God appropriated by faith.

1 - THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

Little is recorded about life in Eden. Our first parents were naked and were not ashamed; they could eat of every tree except the tree of *"the knowledge of good and evil"*; God walked with Adam from time to time and Adam was responsible to *"dress" (care)* and *"keep"* the garden; dominion over all the animals was given to Adam.

We do not know how long Adam was in Eden before he sinned nor are we told when Satan sinned. At the end of the six days of creation God saw that all He had made was very good but, in the context, this could be limited to the material world that had just been made. However, we know from Job 38:7 that *"all the sons of God (angels) shouted for joy"* when the foundations of the earth were secured. If this included Lucifer then he had not sinned when God created the heaven and earth (Gen.1:1).

Satan was one of three chief angels that are named: Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer. Michael is the guardian angel of Israel (Dan.12:1), Gabriel stands in the presence of God (Luke 1:19) and communicates messages while Lucifer was given custody of all the nations (Luke 4:6). Lucifer had a special connection with earth and that custody may have been given after man had been created which would place the fall of Satan after the creation of man. The temptation of Eve was therefore the first move to lead the earth in rebellion against God; he already had one third of the angels and the human race was added to his followers.

When Adam sinned he was expelled from Eden and *"a cherubim with a flaming sword which turned every way"* was placed at the entry to the Garden to prevent Adam partaking of the tree of life in his fallen condition. The conflict between Satan and God had begun: the kingdom that God intended should serve Him, had fallen into the hands of an evil angel: Satan.

The serpent was cursed for deceiving Eve and God's plan to recover the Kingdom was announced: the seed of the woman (Christ) would bruise the serpent's head while the serpent would bruise His heel. This happened in the fulness of time at Calvary when the virgin-born Son of God, the seed of the woman, *"through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil"* (Heb.2:14). Then, because Christ rose from the dead, the power of death was broken and by the end of

time all will have been raised, either to life or to damnation.

The consequence of sin was death, or separation from God. Physical death followed and Adam and Eve were banished from Eden but not before a



loving God had provided coats of skins of slain animals to cover the nakedness of the guilty pair. The way back into fellowship with God through the death of a substitute was thus made clear. When Adam's sons, Cain and Abel, approached God, only a sacrifice of a sin offering would suffice; when Cain refused he was sent "out from the presence of the Lord" (Gen.4:16).

Four Rivers in Eden

*"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the **first is Pison**: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the **second river is Gihon**: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the **third river is Hiddekel**: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the **fourth river is Euphrates**" (Gen.2:10-14).*

It is easy to identify one river, Hiddekel, as the Tigris River and another was the Euphrates River but the other two are not so easily identified. The land of Havilah was Arabia and suggests Pison has ceased to exist since the Flood. Gihon must be the Nile which, prior to the Flood was linked to the Garden of Eden. In Moses' day it compassed the "whole land of Ethiopia" and therefore could be no other than the Nile prior to the Flood.

The Flood was a global event which no doubt changed many geographic features when the "fountains of the deep" broke up and

when great shifts in the earth's crust took place to receive the waters back after the Flood. Many of today's deserts may well have been inland seas for centuries after the Flood as the waters receded. The ice caps in Antarctica and Greenland are no doubt a relic of the Biblical Flood. The ice caps are thousands of meters deep and rise to more than 5,000 meters above the present sea level. The ice could not be formed from snowfall for Antarctica is the driest continent on earth with only one inch of annual precipitation as snow.

There is evidence that prior to the Flood the polar regions had a moderate climate protected by a canopy of cloud. Mammoths grazed there and trees grew. Coal deposits which are buried trees are found in Antarctica.

What can we learn from the Age of Innocence?

- 1) God is the Creator and cares for His creation. Man is made in the image of God and is superior to all animals (Gen.1:26-27).
- 2) God desires to fellowship with man (Gen.3:8).
- 3) Man did not evolve but was created a highly intelligent creature. Adam named all the animals. He had language which was most likely Hebrew, and could speak and write because he recorded the generations of Adam (Gen.5:1).
- 4) God intended that man and woman should live in a marriage relationship and not just a relationship. It is not good for man to be alone (Gen.2:18). Marriage would protect men from fornication (1Cor.7:2).
- 5) God operated on Adam after putting him into "a deep sleep" and took a rib from his chest so operations and anaesthetics are Scriptural (Gen.2:21). God was the first surgeon.
- 6) The woman is to desire her husband (alone) and he is to rule over her (Gen.3:16). The man is the head of the woman (1Cor.11:3).
- 7) God meant that man should be industrious and responsible to care for the Garden- "to dress (care for) and keep" it (Gen.2:15).
- 8) Man knows what is good and evil because God's law is written in our hearts (Gen.3:7) - "which shew the work of the law **written in their hearts**" (Rom.2:15).

9) Man had a **free will** to exercise even when he was perfect. Man can choose good or evil; God or Satan (Gen.2:16-17). Men blame others for their sin (Gen.3:12-13).

10) Men are to *"till the ground"* and grow crops. (Gen.3:23).

11) Satan is the enemy of God and our enemy is seeking to turn us against God (Gen.3:1-5).

12) Satan is a liar and deceiver. He would have us think that God does not love us and deprives us of blessing (Gen.3:1-5).

13) There will always be conflict between Satan and mankind but one of Eve's seed would one day triumph over Satan. The *"seed of the woman"* would be the virgin-born Son of man (Gen.3:15).

14) Satan's doom is already determined and Christ will triumph over him through dying (Gen.3:15).

15) Fellowship with God is broken by sin (Gen.3:8-11).

16) Sin brings shame and fear of God (Gen.3:7).

17) Sin separates from God and brings judgment (Gen.4:23-24)

18) Sin brings death (Gen.2:17). After death our bodies return to dust from which it was made (Gen.3:19).

19) By the sacrifice of a substitute our shame can be covered and our sin pardoned (Gen.3:22). Christ is our substitute and sacrifice.

20) God has mighty angels who execute judgment (Gen.3:24; Matt.25:31).

2 - THE AGE OF CONSCIENCE

The Age of Innocence started in perfection and ended in failure and the Age of Conscience followed. Adam and Eve now had the “*knowledge of good and evil*” and the Bible states:

*“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of **the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness**, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;”* (Rom.2:14-15).

In the heart of every son of Adam is **the knowledge of right and wrong** and each person is reminded of it every time they sin unless their conscience is “*seared as with a hot iron*” (1Tim.4:2). The law of God is written in the human heart and even without the written law of God, **men know when they sin**. God speaks to all men and enlightens them:

“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).

God also speaks through creation:

*“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world **are clearly seen, being understood** by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are **without excuse**”* (Rom.1:20).

The massive effort of evolutionists to deny the Creator is Satan’s work to shut out the testimony of God in creation. Any honest person who considers the vast diversity in life forms on earth and the intricate design of every large and small creature together with the vastness of space and the harmony of the heavenly bodies, can only come to one conclusion: **the Lord God made them all**. David said,

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works” (Ps.139:14).

Fallen Angels Mingle with Men

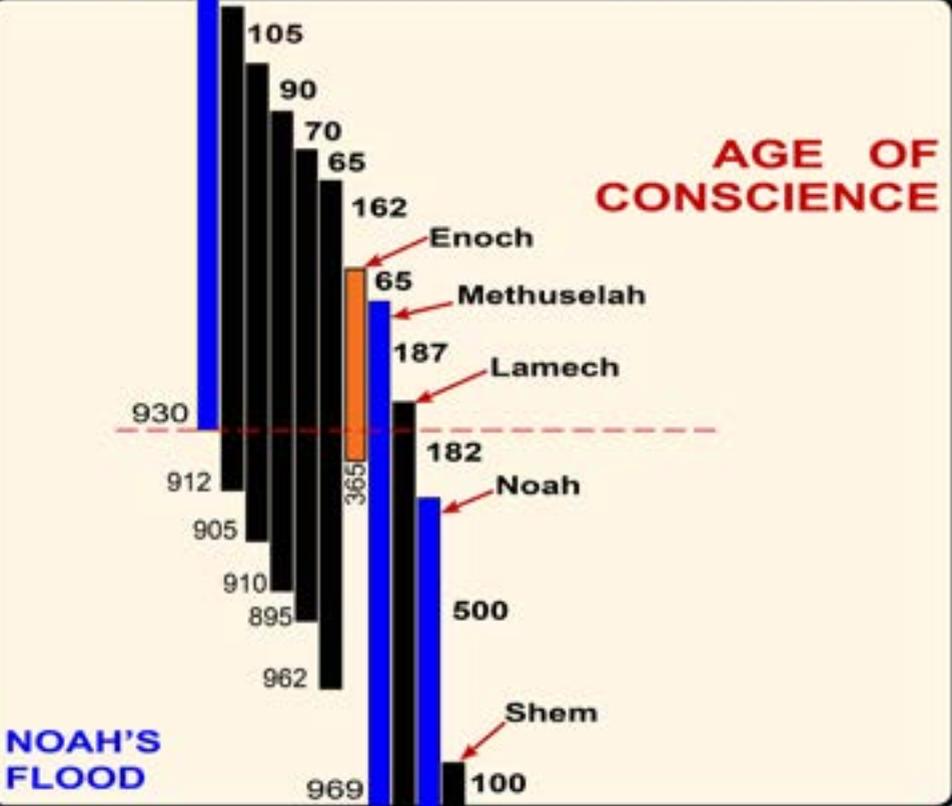
In the Age of Conscience Satan **introduced fallen angels into the human race** and demon possession became common. “*The sons of God (angels) ... took them wives of all that they chose*” (Gen.6:2). Some have suggested that demons possessed men and that by manipulating the genes they produced giants. However, that

GARDEN OF EDEN

6 Days of Creation

AGE OF INNOCENCE

Adam
130



AGE OF CONSCIENCE

NOAH'S FLOOD

Peleg - "in his days was the earth divided" Gen.10:25.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

AGE OF GOVERNMENT

Note:
Abram was born the year Noah died and was 150 when Shem died

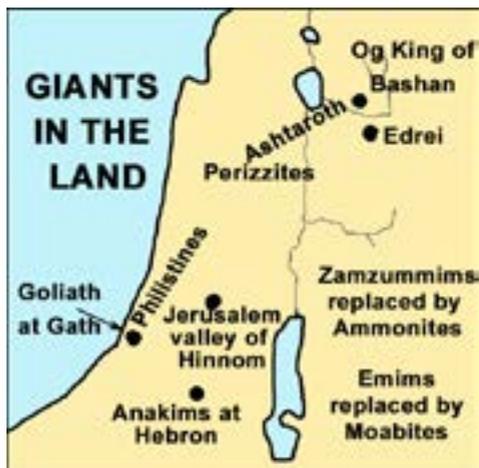
430 YEARS OF SOJOURN
from Abram's 75th yr
Israel 215 yrs in Egypt
(4 Generations) Gen.15:16

THE EXODUS

AGE OF PROMISE

Jacob
Moses

would only produce tall men and it is not sinful to be tall. It was more likely an attempt to destroy true humanity and produce a **hybrid race or demigod race** thus frustrating the purpose of God to provide redemption for mankind by the “seed of the woman” who was the “man Christ Jesus”. If Christ was not **truly man as well as God** “manifest in flesh”, He could not be our Saviour.



“Hereby know ye the Spirit of

*God: Every spirit that confesseth that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** is not of God: and this is that **spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1John 4:2-3).*

Jude indicated that those angels which “kept not their first estate, but left their habitation” (Jude 1:6) were consigned to chains of darkness till the last days but there is nothing to say that it **only happened at the time of the Flood**. They evidently continued this activity after the Flood because many giants are recorded down to the time of David (1000BC) in the land of Canaan. These were not just tall men for they were judged by God. The Zamzummims were **destroyed by the Lord** before the Ammonites (Deut.2:21).

This was Satan’s attempt to pollute the human blood stream and make the promise of the “seed of the woman” impossible.

Special mention is made in Scripture of the destruction of various giants and it is significant that David and his men were used to finally eradicate them. Christ is in the line of David and will finally sit on David’s throne for ever.

The offspring of these “sons of God” (fallen angels) were demigods that historically became the gods worshipped by the nations. The ancient world: Babylon, Greece, Rome, Egypt, all worshipped many “gods” and we call this polytheism. Paul warned:

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and

worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col.2:18).

God’s answer to this invasion of humanity by fallen angels was to banish the angels that *“kept not their first estate”* (Jude 1:6; 2Pet.2:4) to the bottomless pit in chains of darkness reserved unto the day of judgment. They will be released in the Tribulation and finally cast into the lake of fire which is *“prepared for the Devil and his angels”* (Matt.25:41).

God Warned the Antediluvians

Not only did men have the testimony of conscience and creation but there were **preachers of righteousness**; Enoch and Noah were such preachers:

“Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 1:14-15).

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2Pet.2:5).

It has been suggested that Jude was quoting the Book of Enoch which contains the verse in ch.2 of that book. In fact it is an isolated verse that stands alone in chapter 2. We should note that the Book of Enoch is not an inspired writing, nobody knows who wrote it or when it was written. It has 105 chapters and makes extraordinary statements such as the claim that giants at the time of the Flood were 300 cubits tall and ate everything including men.

The statement in Jude 1:14-15 is certainly not quoted from the spurious Book of Enoch but from other records which are no longer available. The writer of the Book of Enoch may have got his version from Jude or the same source that Jude used.

In addition to preachers who warned of coming judgment, God’s Holy Spirit strove with the hearts of men. God said:

“My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen.6:3).

Peter tells us that it was Christ who, by His Spirit, preached *“being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by **the Spirit: BY WHICH** also he went and preached unto the spirits (now) in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing”* (1Peter 3:18-20).

Jesus did not go into the torment section of *hades* to preach to the spirits of lost men or angels. He preached **in the days of Noah** by His Holy Spirit and the spirits of those who were disobedient **then** are **now** in prison in the torments of *hades*. When Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:31 state that Christ’s soul was not left in *hades* (Heb.*sheol*) it was in **the paradise section of *hades*** where Old Testament saints were waiting for Christ to complete the work of redemption, NOT the place of torment.

The world was exceedingly wicked in Noah’s day but God in love was longsuffering and waited 120 years, warning men of future judgment.

Thus we see that, in the Age of Conscience God **not only** spoke to men through their conscience, but He spoke through creation, through the testimony of the Godly line of Seth, and by the strivings of the Holy Spirit so that nobody could say they did not have the opportunity to be saved. The fact that Satan had his demigod giants to bully the people was no excuse.

Noah must have employed many to build the enormous ark and they were willing to accept payment for service yet still refused to repent just as unsaved workers in Churches today remain unsaved. There are ministers, social workers, church members, musicians and youth workers who spend years in church activities yet they have never come to repentance and faith in Christ.

After Noah entered the ark and God shut the door, the Flood came and they were all swept away. Likewise, when God takes all true believers into heaven at the Rapture of the Church those who have rejected Christ will be left to experience the judgment of God in the Great Tribulation.

Methuselah was the son of Enoch who was a prophet to whom God gave warnings of future judgment. Some authorities say the name Methuselah means, “the man of a spear” but other ancient authorities say it means, “when he dies, it shall come”. If this is

the true meaning of the name then it undoubtedly is a prophecy by Enoch that the Flood would not come until Methuselah died.

It seems consistent with the fact that Enoch was a prophet and elsewhere prophets named their children to express a prophetic message, eg. Isaiah and Hosea. Also Methuselah lived longer than any other man (969 years) which was testimony to the long suffering and patience of God for both Methuselah and his son Lamech, the father of Noah, died just before the Flood came.

A Materialistic Cultured Society

Several characteristics of the line of Cain are mentioned which, in themselves are not evil and can be a blessing, nevertheless they indicate a high level of intelligence and knowledge associated with a materialistic lifestyle.

Metalurgy and animal husbandry are mentioned in Gen.4:20,22. Musical instruments, both stringed and wind, are first mentioned (Gen.4:21) among the ungodly line of Cain. It was in the Greek polytheistic religions that drama was used in ungodly rites: Hollywood is the modern equivalent.

Much later, Orpheus, a Greek who lived near Olympus before the 6th century BC was considered a prophet or wizard who enchanted animals, plants and rocks with his singing and music. He was supposed to be the **son of the god Apollo** (the god of music) who gave him a golden lyre. He claimed to have power over hades by his music but when his wife died of a snake bite he said he went to the underworld to bring her back but she did not return. The arts became a large part of pagan worship.

The Godly use of music glorifies God and was a large part of worship at the Temple. David's psalms are with us today but pagan music enchants and silences the conscience. It provides an emotional fix for those who wish to escape the convicting voice of the Spirit of God.

Polygamy

Polygamy began with Lamech who took **two wives** (Gen.4:19,23). There were two men named Lamech before the Flood; one was from the line of Cain's and the other from Seth's line. It was Lamech

from Cain's line who took two wives. Jesus said:

*"God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they both shall be **ONE FLESH**: so then they are no more two, but **ONE FLESH**"* (Mark 10:6-8).

Adam said of Eve:

*"This is now bone of my bones, and **flesh of my flesh**: she shall be called Woman"* (Gen.2:23).

God always intended that marriage should be between one man and one woman for life. Under the Law of Moses divorce was permitted in the case of unfaithfulness because the unfaithful partner had ceased to be "*one flesh*" with the wife or husband. Paul said,

"What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh" (1Cor. 6:16).

Marriage is sacred because it reflects the relationship between God the Father and Israel, and between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. The Church is not only the Bride of Christ but it is also the Body of Christ. When we are saved we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (1Cor.12:13) and we become "one" with Christ never to be separated in time and eternity.

Persistent Sin Hardens the Heart

The Age of Conscience concluded with **mens' consciences silenced by sin**. Men no longer heard the voice of their conscience for "*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*" (Gen.6:5).

"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov.23:7).

"When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

Temptation begins in the **thoughts**; in the imaginations of the heart. Jesus said that once we sin in thought we are already guilty (Matt.5:27-28). Vain (proud) imaginations darken the soul:

*"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but **became vain in their imaginations**, and their foolish heart was **darkened**"* (Rom.1:21).

The Gospel gives us victory over every proud imagination:

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor.10:4-5).

The Earth was Filled with Violence

The Age of Conscience began with violence when Cain slew Abel and it ended with a world filled with murder and violence. The giants produced by the union of fallen angels and women were *“mighty men (tyrants) which were of old men of renown (fame)”* (Gen.6:4).

The Hebrew suggests these were “powerful, warriors, or tyrants” who were still famous when Moses wrote the Pentateuch. They would not have been famous among God’s people but with the heathen who perpetuated their memory by worshipping them as gods. They were in fact demigods, part men and part angel.

The Epic of Gilgamesh written before Abram was born states that Gilgamesh was two thirds a god because his mother was a god and he was one third a man. His homosexual partner was made by a god according to the Epic. The gods of Greece, Egypt and Rome may be traced back to Babylon in the days after the Flood.

Not only was there violence resulting in murder but when the Scripture states that the sons of God *“took them wives of all that they chose”* it could well have been a **forceful “taking”** of the daughters of men and this is borne out by the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in which Gilgamesh is called “the Wild Ox” and we read:

“There is no withstanding the aura or power of the Wild Ox. Neither the father’s son nor the wife of the noble, neither the mother’s daughter nor the warrior’s bride was safe” p.4 *“there is no withstanding the desire of the Wild Ox”* p.5.

So much were the elders of the city of Erech concerned about this problem that they approached the “gods” to ask that they make another gaint who might restrain Gilgamesh and so one of the gods made Enkidu from dust and divine spittle and he became the homosexual partner of Gilgamesh thus diverting his attention from the women and boys of Erech. These myths may well have had a factual basis just as Gilgamesh’s story of the Flood has preserved many of the facts of the Deluge.

A Population Explosion

“and it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth...” (Gen.6:1).

From Adam’s creation to the Flood was a period of 1,656 years and longevity was great so we would expect there to be a large population within a few generations. In Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 2 there is a footnote that states Adam had 33 sons and 23 daughters. He states that Lamech, in the line of Cain, had 77 children to his two wives.

With such a high birthrate, and greater longevity, the population of the world could have been running into many millions within ten generations. Even if just 40% were women and each had only 20 children there would have been a population explosion in the tenth generation greater than present world population. In this regard the days of Noah are like the present generation which is now growing at the rate of about one billion each eleven years.

Typology of the Days of Noah

The Age of Conscience is a type or foreshadow of events in the last days. While Satan has tremendous power among the nations God is still in control and Satan can only go as far as God permits.

In the providence of God the sequence of events permitted by God in the days of Noah foreshadow events in the days preceding the second advent of Christ. Jesus said:

“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26-27).

Demonic activity was rife in Noah’s day and Paul indicated it will abound in the last days when *“some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared as with a hot iron” (1Tim.4:1-2).*

This departure from the Scriptures is evident in all major sections of Christendom as the Charismatic doctrines of tongues, exorcism, healings and miracles are embraced. Biblical tongues were Gentile languages given to the early Church as a sign to Israel but today’s tongues-gibberish experience and associated prophesyings are *“another spirit” (2Cor.11:4)* that has seduced many.

3 - THE AGE OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

The Age of Conscience had begun with God's mercy extended to Adam and the promise of a Redeemer who would ultimately triumph over our great Adversary, the Devil. However like all dispensations it ended in failure and Divine judgment.

The Age of Human Government began after the Flood with God's promise that He would never again destroy the earth with a Flood. The rainbow was designated as a perpetual sign or token to remind mankind of God's covenant of mercy.

Society at this time became organized into cities with a king ruling each city. We see this in Genesis chapter 14 where we read of four kings from Babylonia invading Canaan and fighting with five city kings from Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar.

Naturally, it was expected that those in authority would administer righteous judgment in the fear of God but the sad fact is that within a couple of hundred years men had again succumbed to Satanic delusion and Kings led the people into idolatry and superstition. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah they became so wicked they were destroyed by God.

Noah's ark had come to rest on Mount Ararat at the headwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and civilization spread out along the rivers. The area between the rivers became known as the Cradle of Civilization and we find the line of Ham under Nimrod's leadership building cities in the plain of Shinar. It would seem that the line of Shem, led by Asshur, moved out and built their own civilization at Nineveh on the Tigris River about 450 km to the north of Babylon (Gen.10:11,22).

One only has to read the Epic of Gilgamesh and the laws of Hammurabi to see how far from God civilization had drifted in the 450 years after the Flood and to realize that a new dispensation was required to preserve Truth in the earth.

The Canaanites became so wicked that, about 1400 B.C., Joshua was commanded to destroy them. God gave them 400 years to repent (Gen.15:16) but in Joshua's day they were a depraved idolatrous race sacrificing their children to heathen gods.

The line of Ham migrated to the land of Canaan and down into Egypt and Africa. Ethiopia in those early days was all of Africa south of Egypt and they were the descendants of Cush. The inhabitants of Egypt and the Middle East today are largely Arab races who replaced the descendants of Ham in the 7th and 8th centuries after Christ, at the time of the Islamic invasions.

New Laws

New measures were immediately put in place to deal with the problem of violence and murder which had characterized the world in the Age of Conscience. In the Age of Conscience men were responsible to their conscience to do that which was right but now in the Age of Human Government men were made responsible to ensure that those guilty of violating the law of God, written in the hearts of men, should be restrained by force of law administered by those in government.

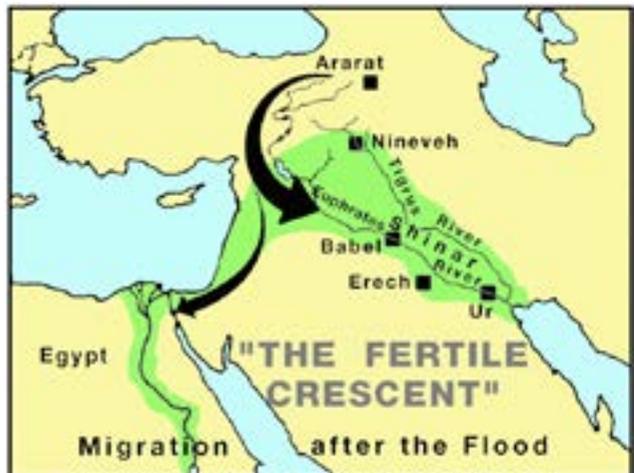
Whereas God had said He would judge any man who dared to slay the murderer Cain, now it was decreed that

“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man“ (Gen.9:6).

In addition, any animal that shed human blood was to be put to death by men. Human life was thus shown to be sacred because man was made in the image of God.

A New Diet

This was a radical change of administration: a new dispensation. In addition, men were given the flesh of all animals, birds, and fish to eat. In the Age of Conscience men were given **every herb of the field** to eat but in the Age





of Conscience God had said:

*“Thou shalt eat **the herb of the field**; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground” (Gen.3:18-19).*

The only occasion when animals could be killed before the Flood was when offering a sacrifice but after the Flood God said,

*“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” (Gen.9:2-4).***

A New Environment

Noah’s three sons were about 100 years old at the time of the Flood. Noah was 600 years old and it soon became apparent that Noah’s sons had different moral values. When Noah became intoxicated and was uncovered in his tent, Ham, the youngest son, told his brothers. It is apparent that he had no respect for his father and

made no attempt to cover his shame. Subsequent history would indicate that Ham may have had a moral problem. Japheth (the elder) and Shem discreetly covered their father and when Noah awoke he cursed Canaan the son of Ham.

It may well have been that environmental conditions on earth so radically changed after the Flood that fermentation was accelerated and Noah was not aware of the danger of drinking fermented grape juice. We know that life expectancy immediately halved and after a few generations reduced to a quarter of the age of those living before the Flood. By the time of Moses, men were living little more than 100 years. See the chart on page 11.

When Canaan was cursed, Japheth and Shem were blessed by Noah and the descendants of Canaan were to serve the descendants of Japheth and Shem (Gen.9:24-27).

As already mentioned, many geographic features changed at the time of the Flood. The ice caps in Greenland and Antarctica were formed at the time of the Flood. Their height and depth running into thousands of meters could not be deposited by snow for Antarctica is the driest continent on earth with less than one inch of annual precipitation. The polar regions enjoyed a moderate climate prior to the Flood and animals grazed there. Mammoths were suddenly frozen with the dandelions they were eating still in their mouths. Islands of mammoth bones have been found off the coast of Russia and evidence has been found of vegetation that once covered the landscape in the frozen regions.

Mountains were thrust up as the earth's crust convulsed and the Indian continent was pushed north creating the highest mountains in the Himalayas. The height of **Mount Ararat is 5,137 meters** and the highest mountain of ice in Antarctica, **Mount Vinson, is 5,168 meters above sea level.**

A New Religion - The Tower of Babel

At this time all men spoke one language and they had settled in the plain of Shinar. One of Ham's descendants, Nimrod, commenced to build the Tower of Babel and certain cities in that region. He is called a "*mighty hunter before the Lord*" (Gen.10:9) and in view of his evil character it is possible he was a giant and the product of fallen angels intermingling with humankind as they did before the Flood. He began to build a number of cities and the Tower of Babel "*whose*

top was *unto heaven*" (Gen.11:4); for the worship of the heavenly bodies i.e. sun, moon, and stars.

One of Nimrod's cities was Erech and we know from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Laws of Hammurabi* that polytheism was practiced. Gilgamesh and Hammurabi were kings of Erech and Babylon about 2150 and 1750 BC respectively.



The evidence of many giants in the land of Canaan after the Flood would indicate that fallen angels were still seeking to corrupt the human bloodstream.

The Epic (poem) of Gilgamesh, claims to be written when Noah was an old man, probably 300 years after the flood; 50 years before Abram was born. It tells the story of King Gilgamesh of the city of Erech which was built by Nimrod. In the Epic, Gilgamesh is described as a giant twice the height of a normal man who was two thirds a god and one third a man. He was a tyrant who took anybody's wife, son, or daughter for sexual gratification. It states that nobody's wife was safe and the elders asked the gods to produce another giant to control him. Enkidu was made from "divine spittle" and dust and he fought Gilgamesh but Gilgamesh prevailed and Enkidu became Gilgamesh's homosexual partner.

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* describes Gilgamesh as **twice the size of a man; two thirds a son of the "gods", and one third man.** His male partner, Enkidu, was a giant and made by one of the "gods" also. While the story has many mythical aspects it agrees with the Biblical account of the Flood which is narrated by Noah in the Epic. It certainly confirms that polytheism was generally practised at that time.

New Languages

God judged the people who were building the Tower of Babel by confusing their language and construction of the tower ceased. Prior to this the whole world spoke one language; probably Hebrew, because the Godly line of Shem would not have been involved with the construction of the pagan Tower of Babel and their language would therefore not have been changed.

4 - THE AGE OF PROMISE

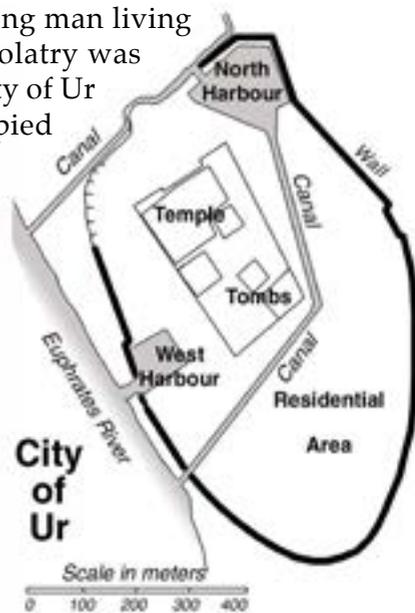
About 2100 BC Abram was a young man living in Ur of the Chaldees where idolatry was rife. Excavations at the site of the city of Ur show that much of the city was occupied by a Temple.

Jewish tradition recorded in the *Talmud* states that Abram's father Terah, was the chief officer of King Nimrod and that when Abram was born the magicians interpreted the stars to mean that Abram would one day destroy the nation and so Nimrod ordered that he be killed. Abram and his mother were hidden in a cave where they lived for years till Abram had grown up. When Abram returned to his father he found that Terah had 12 idols, one for each month, as well as many smaller ones, and Abram took an iron bar and smashed them. Finally he fled to Noah and Shem.

The *Talmud* states that when Terah secretly visited his son, Noah and Shem convinced him to abandon his idolatry and go with Abram to the land of Canaan.

Many of the details of the story in the *Talmud* are fanciful and appear to be borrowed from other historical records to make a good story. Scripture states that Terah worshipped idols in Ur (Josh.24:2) and that God had told Abram to leave his country **and kindred** and go to a land that God would show him (Gen.12:1). With this command were promises that God would make of him "a great nation" and that "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen.12:2-3).

The Bible states that Terah took Abram from Ur, north-west along the Euphrates, till they came to Haran, which was a commercial city about 100 km south of the Euphrates on the Belikh River. It was a centre of worship of the "moon god". Whether Terah was still worshipping the moon at this stage we do not know.



The name Terah is a Chaldean name meaning “delay” and the stay at Haran delayed Abraham from obeying the Lord’s command. The name Haran according to the *Hebrew Lexicon* by Gesenius means “a place dried up” or “parched with the sun”. Perhaps we can learn a lesson here that when we delay obeying the Lord we dwell in a barren place.

When Terah died, Abram was 75 years of age and he immediately took his nephew Lot and they journeyed to the land of Canaan in obedience to the Divine command.

Abram’s faith was tested and he passed through the land of Canaan which was in drought until he came to Egypt where Pharaoh took Sarah and would have made her one of his harem had the Lord not intervened. Abram returned to Bethel which means “house of God” where he had earlier built an altar to the Lord (Gen.13:1-4).

While at Hebron there was strife between Abram’s herdmen and Lot’s herdmen, for they both had large flocks. When they separated Lot chose the well watered plains of Jordan where the evil cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were located.

God tested Abram’s faith by telling him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering and when Abraham obeyed, believing God would raise him from the dead, God provided a ram to be sacrificed in the place of Isaac 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”* (Gen.22:16-18).

The promises made to Abraham were later confirmed to Isaac (Gen.26:1-4) and Jacob (Gen.27:28; 28:10-15; 35:9-12).

The Age of Promise is the Age of the Patriarchs, the Fathers of the nation of Israel, and the covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) were passed to Jacob’s sons before he died (Gen.48&49). This was the beginning of a new Dispensation in which God would administer His will through the seed of Abram

who would later become a great nation. It was necessary to separate Abram from his idolatrous family and nation in order to preserve Truth in the earth.

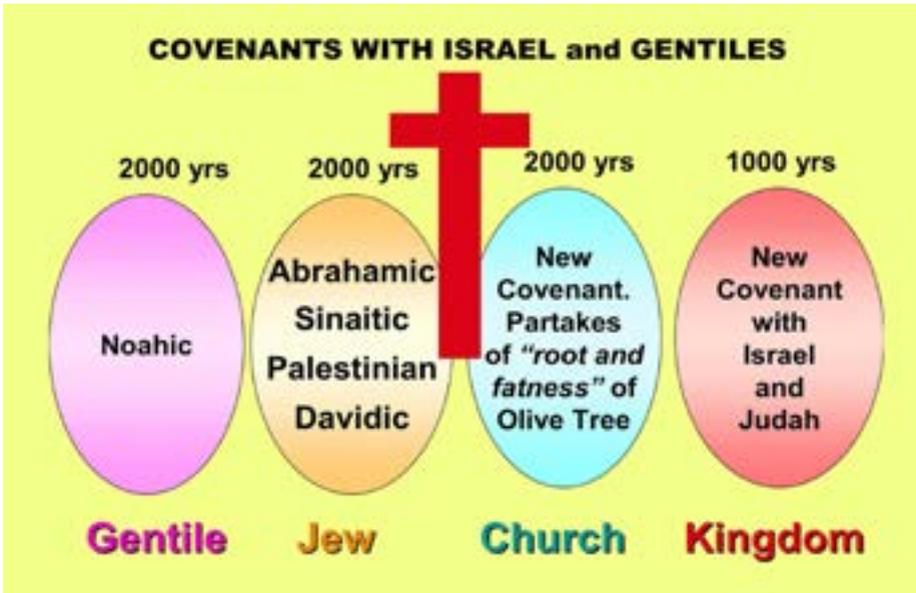
This was clearly a new administration or dispensation by God. The nations had been given the opportunity to administer God's will but had dismally failed. Now we find God making a **covenant with Abraham** which defined the land that God would give him (Gen.13:15; 15:18-21). This land would be "*an everlasting possession*" (Gen.17:7-8) which would be passed on to Abraham's descendants through Isaac (Gen. 17:19-22).

We call this covenant the **Abrahamic Covenant** and was the first of a series of covenants God made with Abraham's descendants. In the next dispensation, the Age of Law God gave the **Sinaitic Covenant**, the **Eternal Priesthood Covenant**, the **Palestinian Covenant** and the **Davidic Covenant** all of which were built on the Abrahamic Covenant. Jeremiah and other prophets indicated that God will make a **New Covenant** with Israel in the Last Days when the entire nation will be saved and blessed in the millennial Kingdom.

These covenants are eternal and never can be cancelled; they foreshadow times when Abraham's seed would turn away from God and be punished but God's purpose is that through the nation of Israel, all nations will be blessed in His Kingdom.

"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 neighbor, 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.*

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD" (Jer.31:31-37).

The Age of Promise began with faithful Abram obeying the Lord and leaving the idolatrous city of Ur for a land which was promised but was never possessed by either him, Isaac or Jacob. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob believed God's promises as Paul said:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb.11:13).

In the days of Jacob his evil sons sold Joseph into Egypt when Joseph was 17 years old but, when he was 30 years old, God exalted him to be the prime minister of Egypt. When there was a 7-year dearth Joseph's brothers came to Egypt for grain and in the 2nd year of the dearth Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and they were finally reconciled. Jacob moved down to Egypt and while Joseph was Prime Minister they were blessed in the land but when Joseph died the next Pharaoh persecuted the children of Israel.

The duration of the stay of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt was four generations (215 years) and during that time they turned to idolatry and came under the chastening hand of God. When the Egyptians afflicted the people, they cried out to the Lord and He sent Moses to deliver them.

The Age of Promise began with blessing and ended with bondage in the land of Egypt: a new administration was required and that brings us to the Age of Law.

Lessons to Learn

The Age of Promise has many spiritual lessons for us today. Like Abraham's day we live in a time of great apostasy and idolatry. Christendom has departed from the truth of the Word of God and has denied the great fundamentals of the faith once delivered to the saints.

The world has been brought into the Church with its rock music and contemporary choruses. Noise levels have in many places reached the pain threshold and we hear of Christians taking ear plugs to Church which they wear until the sermon.

Liberal theology is taught in Theological Colleges where creation is denied, the verbal inspiration and infallibility of Scripture is rejected and the premillennial return of Christ is ridiculed.

Mysticism and “traditional meditation” is being practiced with candles in dimly lit rooms to produce an atmosphere akin to Romish places of worship.

Signs and wonders are sought with self acclaimed “prophets” getting “a word from the lord” or interpreting devilish tongues gibberish which is often given equal authority with the Bible.

Whenever a believer makes a stand against these errors he or she is ostracized and rejected. Christendom is fast becoming like Mystery Babylon that will be judged in the Tribulation. It will become *“the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird”* (Rev.18:2).

When Abram found himself in such a situation the Lord told him to get out of the religious apostasy and to walk by faith with God wherever God would lead him. The old fashioned doctrine of Biblical separation is clearly stated in Scripture. To the Corinthians Paul wrote:

“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and the table of devils” (1Cor.10:21).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2Cor.6:14-18).

For Abram it was a lonely path. He took his idolatrous father as far as Haran and could go no further until he died. From Haran Abram sojourned as a stranger in the land of promise and when strife arose between Abram’s herdmen and Lot’s herdmen he lost his nephew who preferred the lush plains of Jordan and the fellowship of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. He later witnessed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and was no doubt saddened to see Lot in a pitiful state living in a cave with two daughters.

Abraham walked alone with God trusting in the promises of God and, though he never possessed the promised land, by faith he saw the fulfilment of God’s promises afar off.

Today many Christians have chosen the same path and have left the larger churches to meet with small companies of believers in “house churches” or small congregations where they honour God holding forth the Word of life and encouraging each other in the pilgrim pathway.

Abram had to overcome the attraction of family ties and of his own kindred to walk a path he had never trod before. He left worldly friends behind but was called the “friend of God”.

*“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of **Abraham my friend**” (Isa. 41:8).*

Some Christians have never learned the lesson that Abraham learned: Its better to be a friend of God than a friend of the world. We can never be a blessing to the world while we are a part of it.

5 - THE AGE OF LAW

The Age of Promise concluded in failure as the children of Israel moved from the promised land to the land of Egypt in the 2nd year of a great seven-year famine which God sent on the nations. This seven-year dearth (famine) must have been extraordinary for Scripture states that it was *“in all lands...and all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands”* (Gen.41:54,57).

This famine followed seven years of abundance and was a necessary part of God’s plan to bring history to the next Dispensation: the Age of Law.

There are three reasons why God sent such a **global dearth in the days of Joseph**:

1) God sent the dearth so that His servant Joseph would be exalted to the throne of Egypt. Joseph had been sold as a slave into Egypt by his evil brothers and was languishing in prison but had remained faithful to God. God cares for His servants.

2) God would use the dearth to afflict Joseph’s brethren and bring them to bow in repentance before him. They had sold him for 20 pieces of silver to be a slave in Egypt but God had exalted him. Joseph was a prophetic ‘type’ of the Lord Jesus and it needed a global dearth to complete the message. In the last days God will use the Great Tribulation (*“the time of Jacob’s trouble”* Jer.30:7) to bring Israel to bow before the Lord Jesus Christ who they sold for 30 pieces of silver. They will then acknowledge Him as their Lord, Saviour, and King.

3) Prophecy must be fulfilled. The dreams of Joseph that his brethren would one day bow before him must be fulfilled.

In the second year of the dearth, when Jacob heard that Joseph was alive, he immediately decided to go to him and God confirmed that it was in His plan for the children of Israel. We read:

*“And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for **I will there make of thee a great nation**: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again”* (Gen.46:2-4).

The “sojourning” of the patriarchs lasted 430 years from the time Abram left Haran until the children of Israel left Egypt. They stayed in Egypt for **four generations** which lasted 215 years and multiplied to such an extent that the Egyptians became afraid of them. When Pharaoh tried to kill all baby boys the mid-wives refused to carry out his wishes. He then ordered all the Egyptians to dispose of the baby boys but the more he afflicted the children of Israel, the more they multiplied. How long this order lasted we do not know but we know it applied in the days of the Pharaoh reigning when Moses was born. The decree may have been rescinded when Pharaoh decided he needed a lot of male slaves to build his treasure cities: Pithom and Rameses.

When Moses was a baby his mother placed him in a basket and launched him in the Nile where the Princess found him and adopted him as her son. Forty years later Moses fled from Egypt to the land of Midian but by that time God had trained His man for the task of leading Israel to freedom. After another forty years he returned to lead Israel back to the land of Canaan.

The affliction of the children of Israel in Egypt was sent by God for three reasons:

- 1) The children of Israel had turned to idolatry and were worshipping the gods of Egypt. God would bring them to repentance.
- 2) To preserve them as a people and prevent them from integrating with the Egyptians. God has isolated the Jews through the centuries by bringing persecution upon them and thus He preserved them as a people while living in foreign countries. We know that the children of Israel had begun to integrate because there was a “mixed multitude” that came with them from Egypt (Exod.12:38).
- 3) To fulfil the promise made to Abraham:
*“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their’s, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them **four hundred years**; And also **that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge**; and afterward shall they come out with great substance”* (Gen.15:13-14).

Egypt had controlled the land of Canaan and the affliction of Abraham’s seed began when Pharaoh took Sarah away from Abraham; it continued for 430 years until the Exodus. There were

only 30 years when they were not afflicted while Joseph ruled in Egypt.

At the end of the 430 years the children of Israel cried unto the Lord and God had His man, Moses, ready to lead them out and bring them into the land promised to Abraham.

When Pharaoh refused to release the children of Israel God judged Egypt, as He had told Abraham He would (Gen.15:14). The angel of the Lord slew the firstborn in every house where the blood of the passover lamb was not applied to the doorposts and He drowned Pharaoh and the entire Egyptian army in the Red Sea. This meant that Egyptian control over the land of Canaan was broken and the way was prepared for the conquest of Canaan.

The *Tel-el-Armarna Tablets* were a large number of clay plates found at Tel-el-Armarna in Egypt which proved to be the foreign affairs department of the Pharaoh reigning at the time Israel entered Canaan. They contained letters from the kings of cities in Canaan begging for soldiers to resist the Habiru (Hebrews) who were entering the land but Pharaoh was unable to send any help because Egypt had not recovered from the desolation experienced 40 years before when her entire army was drowned in the Red Sea.

The path taken by Israel as they came out of Egypt was chosen by God in order to destroy the Egyptian army. At first Israel was heading north to Succoth to take the short road along the coast into Canaan but God told Moses to turn south, He continued south, still in Egypt, until Israel was trapped with the west coast of the Red Sea on their left and mountains in a wilderness area before and on his right. Pharaoh thought that Israel was trapped but God put the pillar of cloud and fire between them and led them into the Red Sea where Pharaoh and his army were drowned. The sea was wide enough and deep enough to take 600 chariots!

So complete was the destruction of the Egyptian army that "*there remained not so much as one of them*" (Exod.14:28) and Egypt was left without its king!

The Age of Law begins with the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt into the wilderness of Sinai where God gave them His laws, the priesthood, and the Tabernacle. **A new Dispensation began.**

No longer were the children of Israel slaves to the Egyptians but they were a nation in their own right on the way to the land that God had given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as an everlasting possession.

*“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass **at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the SELFSAME DAY** it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt” (Exod.12:40-41).*

God’s timing is always perfect and it was exactly 430 years to the very day from the day Abram left Haran!

At first the Age of Law was administered from the Tabernacle and later from the Temple at Jerusalem. A priestly system was established and an entire annual program of feast days, sacrifices and offerings was instituted. Each tribe was allocated responsibilities and when they entered the land of Canaan each family and tribe was given its own portion of land.

God made a covenant with the nation at Mount Sinai in which He promised blessing if Israel obeyed His law. Later God established an everlasting priestly covenant with Phinehas which created a line of priests to serve in the Tabernacle and Temple.



From its beginning the nation had no king for the Lord was their king (1Sam.12:12) but in the days of Samuel they wanted a king to fight their battles for them; they wanted to be like other nations. God gave them Saul and he failed so God chose David, “*a man after God’s own heart*”. God established an everlasting covenant with him and promised that there would never cease to be a man of his line available to sit on David’s throne (Jer.33:21).

JAPHETH

Gen 10:2-5
Gomer & Magog
 (Ukraine).
Magog, Meshech & Tubal
 (Russia).
Ashkenaz
 (Germany).
Madai (Medes/
 Central Asia).
Togarmah
 (Eastern Turkey)
Javan (Greece)
Kittim (Italy)
Tarshish (Britain)

Predominately
 European
 and Slavic
 nations.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

HAM

Gen 10:6-20
Cush (Ethiopia)
Mizraim (Egypt)
Phet & Ludim
 (Africa)
Shebe & Dedan
 (Arabia)
Asshur (Assyria)
Canaan
 (Canaanites)
Cashtim & Caph torim
 (Philistines)

EGYPTIAN EMPIRE
 ASSYRIAN EMPIRE
 606 BC
 BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
 536 BC
 PERSIAN EMPIRE
 445 BC
 332 BC
 GRECIAN EMPIRE
 63 BC
 ROMAN EMPIRE

SHEM thro' Abram

40 years
 Wilderness
Joshua
 15
JUDGES
Saul
David
Solomon

Judah
 Samaria

721 BC
 70 years
 516 BC Temple
 City Rebuilt
 SAMARITANS

AGE OF LAW

THE PROPHETS



When the nation of Israel fell into sin and idolatry God sent Nebuchadnezzar (606-586BC) to carry them to Babylon and the throne of David was broken down (Ezek.21:25-27). It will remain so until Christ, the Son of David, returns to sit on David's throne (Acts 15:14-18; Amos 9:11).

After 70 years of captivity in Babylon Zerubbabel led some of the Jews back under the decree of Cyrus the Persian King, and he rebuilt the **Temple** completing it in 516BC. Then in 445BC Nehemiah led more of the Jews back under a decree from Artaxerxes allowing the Jews to rebuild the **city** of Jerusalem.

By the year 400BC the nation had lapsed into apathy and the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees sprung up to continue worship at the Temple in a formal way. Traditions and rituals replaced the Law and genuine obedience from the heart.

In the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments the nation experienced great suffering at the hands of the Seleucid Kings from Syria and the Ptolomies in Egypt. Daniel foretold the events of this period in Daniel ch.11:1-35 and ch.8:1-25. The worst period was the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes 171 to 163BC.

The Romans occupied Palestine in 63B.C. and Herod the Great was made king in 37B.C. Herod died about 1B.C., and his sons ruled after him.

John the Baptist was the last of the Jewish prophets in the Age of Law (Matt.11:13) and Jesus was born about 4B.C. Jesus said:

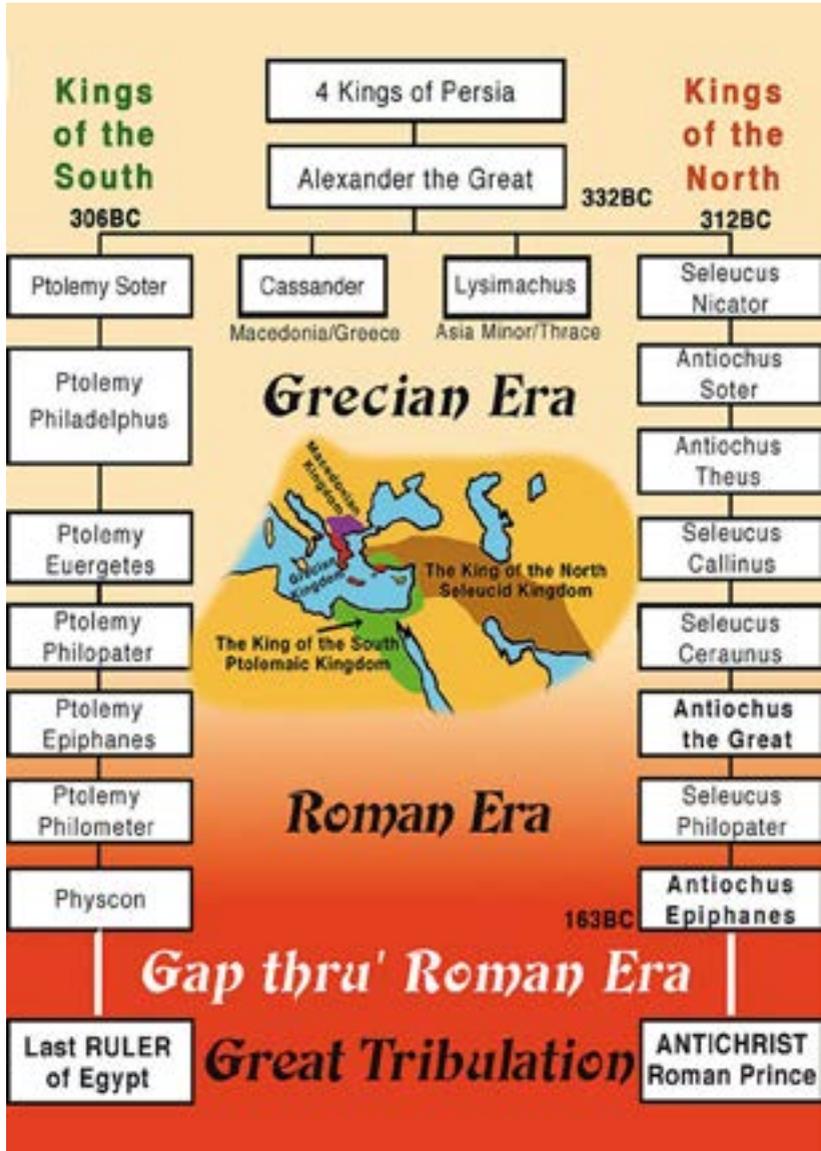
"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16:16).

John announced the coming of Messiah as the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. He baptized Jesus in Jordan but his ministry was cut short when Herod had him executed.

Jesus' virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and faithful preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, fill the pages of the Gospel records. He was despised and rejected by His own people and finally crucified in A.D.32 at the Passover feast of the Jews.

The death burial and resurrection of Christ brought the Age of Law to a close and when He rose from the dead all the Old Testament saints who had died were raised (Matt.27:52-53). When Jesus

ascended He “*led captivity captive*” (Eph.4:8-10) taking Paradise into heaven. Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came on the disciples and the Church was established; each disciple was baptized with the Holy Spirit and became a member of the body of Christ. Another Dispensation had passed and the Dispensation of the Church began.



Lessons to Learn

It should be remembered that the Gospels record the testimony of Jesus under the Age of Law. The three synoptic Gospels were written by A.D.65 and John's Gospel was written about A.D.90. In A.D.70 Jerusalem was burned and the Temple destroyed. The Jews were scattered throughout the nations as Jesus foretold (Luke 21:24).

The ministries of the Lord Jesus and His disciples before Pentecost were to Israel in the Age of Law. The Church did not exist at that time. Jesus told His disciples:

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt.10:5-6).

The primary meaning of all the parables is therefore applicable to Israel and not the Church. If we remember this it will help us to rightly divide the Word of Truth. The reason for much erroneous teaching today is that people apply Scriptures to the Church which were given to Israel under the Dispensation of Law.

There is a difference between the Synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel. The synoptic Gospels were written while the Temple and its services were still operating. John's Gospel was written 20 years after the Temple ceased to exist and the Jewish nation was scattered. The Apostle John in his Gospel, Epistles and Revelation, was writing to Gentile believers who were not familiar with Jewish Temple customs and practices. He adopts Roman time instead of Jewish time and uses the word "*world*" 81 times. The Synoptic Gospels each uses the word "*world*" an average of only 11 times.

Israel was God's earthly people and will inherit an earthly kingdom but the Church is a heavenly people "*blessed with all spiritual blessings in **heavenly places** in Christ*" (Eph.1:3).

*"For our conversation (citizenship) is **in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body"* (Phil.3:20-21).

The Church is "*neither Jew nor Greek*" but "*all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal.3:28). It is no wonder the Reformed Theologians can't differentiate between the Rapture and the Revelation of Christ;

they don't know the difference between Israel and the Church: They think that Israel was the Church in the Old Testament and the Church is Israel in the New Testament. They therefore strenuously oppose dispensational teaching which is obvious to anybody who takes the Bible literally.

In normal secular life no sensible person would interpret correspondence the way Amillennialists interpret the Bible. The basic rule for understanding any literature is:

“If the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense.”

It is only mystics and astrologers like Nostradamus who speak in cryptic language requiring a wild imagination to interpret. The rule applied by Amillennialists when they interpret the prophetic Scriptures is:

“When the the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, don't believe it, otherwise you will have to change your views, so seek some mystical sense that fits what you want to believe.”

Imagine where we would be if doctors or engineers read their text books according to that rule! The literal interpretation of Scripture can lead us to no other conclusion than that there have been different dispensations of time in which different people are addressed. Understanding the Dispensations is the greatest safeguard against error.

6 - THE CHURCH AGE

When Israel rejected the Lord Jesus Christ they fulfilled prophecies given hundreds of years beforehand:

i) Isaiah described Messiah's rejection and death in chapters 52 and 53 of his prophecy; He stated that Messiah would be "*wounded for our transgressions*" (Isa.53:5).

ii) Zechariah foretold that Christ's hands would be wounded and that His own people would pierce His body (Zech.10:10; 11:6).

iii) David prophesied that Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced (Ps. 22:16).

iv) Daniel prophesied that "Messiah the Prince" would be "cut off" (Dan.9:26).

These and many more prophecies should have been understood by the Jews but they were blind to the truth that Jesus of Nazareth was Messiah. Isaiah prophesied 700 years before Christ came that this **blindness would come upon Israel** (Isa.6:9-13; 29:10) and his prophecy was quoted by Jesus (Matt.13:14-15; John12:40) and by Paul (Acts 28:26-27).

When David foretold the crucifixion of Messiah he prayed that Israel's eyes would be "*darkened that they see not*" (Ps.69:23). This blindness however was not permanent for although the Apostle Paul quoted David's psalm and applied it to Israel in his day (Rom.11:10), he went on to say that "*blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*" (Rom.11:25).

Romans chapter 11 makes it clear that God has plucked off the natural branch of the olive tree (Israel) and has grafted a wild olive branch (the Gentile believers) into their place until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in and after that, "**ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED**" (Rom.11:26).

On the day of Pentecost the Apostles preached **in Gentile languages** signifying that God was turning to the Gentiles because Israel had been blinded. God had said through Isaiah that there would come a day when He would speak to the nation "*with stammering lips and another tongue...yet they would not hear*" (Isa.28:11-12).

The Acts of the Apostles records Israel's rejection of the message of the Gospel preached in Gentile languages. When Paul addressed the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia he said:

"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

In the final chapter of the Book of Acts Paul quoted Isaiah's prophecy and told the Jewish elders at Rome, *"Henceforth I go unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it"* (Acts 28:28).

From these Scriptures it is clear that there is a **break in God's relationship with Israel** beginning at the day of Pentecost and concluding when the *"fulness of the Gentiles be come in"*. **That break in Israel's relationship with God is the Church Age.**

During the Church Age, Israel, as the natural olive branch has been broken off but God says that He is able to *"graft them in again"* (Rom.11:23) *"if they abide not still in unbelief"*.

The interruption in God's dealings with Israel is the time when the Gentile Church is being gathered in and when the Church is complete Israel will repent and again be God's witness on earth. Many scriptures speak of Israel's blessing in the last days.

The Church is a Mystery

The truth of the Church was concealed by God until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote about this mystery in his Epistle to the Romans chapter 16:25-26, in the Epistle to the Ephesians chapter 3:1-10, and in the Epistle to the Colossians 1:18-27.

Paul wrote:

*"that by revelation he (God) made known unto me **the mystery...** which in **other ages** was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is **now revealed** unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; **that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel"** (Eph.3:3-6).*

The *"mystery"* is when Jew and Gentile are made **one body** through the Gospel of Christ.

In the Old Testament, during the Age of Law, there were only Jews and Gentiles. When Gentiles were converted they left their

country and people, as Ruth did, and joined themselves to Israel as “*strangers in Israel*”: There were 153,000 in Israel when Solomon reigned (2Chron.2:17) and God’s law made special provisions for converted Gentiles (Exod.12:43-49).

Since the day of Pentecost there have been three groups: the Jew, the Gentile and the Church. Paul wrote that now

*“There is **NEITHER** Jew **NOR** Greek (Gentile)...for ye are **ALL ONE** in Christ Jesus”* (Gal.3:28).

To the Roman Christians Paul wrote that this mystery “*had been kept secret since the world began*” (Rom.16:25). That means that the Church did not exist in the Old Testament and the Old Testament therefore was written to Israel. While spiritual applications can be made for today, it must be interpreted in the context of the nation of Israel.

In addition, there is a terminus point for the Church after which Israel will again turn to the Lord and be blessed. When the “*fulness of the Gentiles be come in*” (Rom.11:25) is a definite **terminus point** when the completed Church will be removed and Israel will take over again. That terminus point is the Rapture of the Church when “*the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*” (1Thess.4:16-17).

Only New Testament, Church Age, believers are “*in Christ*”. To be **in Christ means to be in the body of Christ** which is the Church (Col.1:24).

All the Old Testament saints from Adam to Christ experienced resurrection with the Lord Jesus as indicated in Matt.27:52-53. Many appeared in Jerusalem after Christ rose from the dead.

Jesus indicated the resurrection of Old Testament saints was imminent when He said:

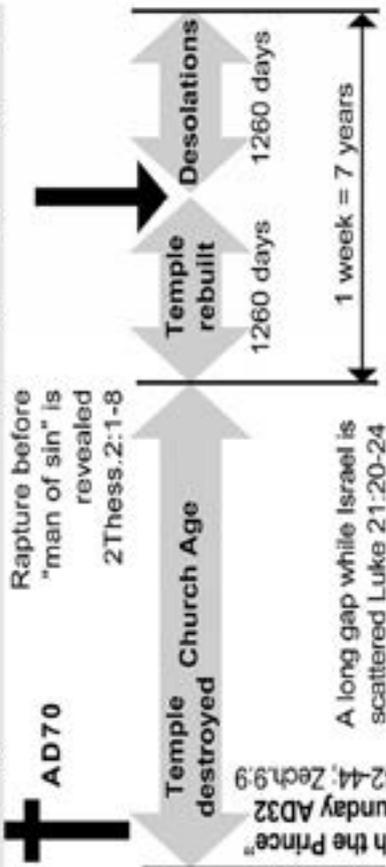
*“The hour is coming, **AND NOW IS**, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live”* (John 5:25).

Jesus went to Paradise when he died on the cross and when He ascended, He took all the saints who had been waiting in Paradise, into heaven (Eph.4:8-10). Paradise is now in heaven (2Cor.12:4).

The Church Age saints will all be resurrected, or changed, when “*the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*” i.e. At the Rapture.

Decree to Restore & Build Jerusalem in 20th year of Artaxerxes - Nisan, 445BC

- 7 events after the 69th week and before the end of the 70th week**
- 1- Messiah cut off - AD32
 - 2- The city and sanctuary destroyed
 - 3- The future Roman prince confirms a 7-year treaty
 - 4- Temple rebuilt & sacrifices recommence
 - 5- Sacrifices cease- idol of desolation set up
 - 6- Desolations until the completion of the week
 - 7- The desolator destroyed



DANIEL 9:24-27
The 70 "weeks" Prophecy

The Church Age is a Pause in Israel's History

This break in Israel's spiritual history is also indicated by Daniel in his 70 "weeks" (70 sevens) prophecy (Dan.9:24-27). The angel Gabriel was sent by God to show Daniel God's plan for Daniel's people and his city, Jerusalem. Seventy "sevens" are determined upon the Jews and Jerusalem beginning from the decree to restore and build Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (445BC). Sixty-nine sevens were complete when Messiah the Prince presented Himself to the nation as her King: This happened on Palm Sunday when Zech.9:9 was fulfilled:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech.9:9).

There remains one more seven of years but three things must happen before it begins:

- 1) Messiah must be "cut off". This happened four days later.
- 2) Jerusalem and the Temple must be destroyed: This happened in AD70.
- 3) A **future prince** from the nation that destroyed Jerusalem must confirm a covenant with Israel for 7 years.

We are still waiting for a "Roman prince" to confirm a 7-year covenant with Israel. Israel became a nation again in 1948 and the final week of Israel's history has yet to run its course but before that begins the Church must be removed for the 70th "week" (7 years) **is Israel's time** of testimony. The Roman prince is Antichrist and he will turn on Israel after the entire nation turns to the Lord in the first half of the 7 years (Ezek.39:22-29).

The Apostles were challenged by Jewish believers in the early Church who insisted that Gentiles should be circumcised to be saved and James gave the decision of the Apostles. We read:

*"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God **at the first did visit the Gentiles**, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this **I will return**, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which*

is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:13-18).

James makes it clear that the throne of David had been set aside for a period of time during which God is calling out Gentiles to be His people. However, after that, Christ will return and re-establish the throne of David and, through Israel, the Gentiles will be greatly blessed in the millennial Kingdom of Christ.

The Church is a Building, a Body, and a Bride

God has always desired to dwell with man. At the beginning of time God walked with Adam in Eden. He walked with Enoch, Noah and Abraham. When Israel came out of Egypt God told Moses:

“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle... And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims” (Exod.25:8-9,22).

In Solomon’s day the Temple was built and the glory of God came into the Temple. It departed from Israel in Ezekiel’s day when Israel turned to idolatry (Ezek.9:3; 10:4,18-19; 11:12-13). It will return after Christ returns and the millennial Temple is built (Ezek.43:1-7).

When the Lord Jesus came His body was a Temple and God dwelt in Him. He was God manifest in flesh. John wrote:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

When the Church was formed at Pentecost it was no earthly Temple. The Apostles built no cathedrals because the Church is a spiritual Temple built upon the Apostles and prophets (Eph.2:19-22). God dwells in the Church which is *“builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph.2:22)*. Paul wrote:

“ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Cor.3:9-11).

It is a serious matter for anyone to defile, with wrong doctrine, the Temple of God yet Christendom has done just that. The true Church today is not the pagan edifice filled with the false doctrines of infant baptism, calvinism, amillennialism, charismatic tongues, liberal theology and theistic evolution but it is the company of born-again believers who worship in Spirit and Truth.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1Cor.3:16-17).

The Church is not bricks and mortar but living stones as Peter wrote:

*“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, **Ye also, as living stones,** are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1Peter 4-5).*

One day the Church will be finished and the last living stone will be laid. Only then will the tabernacle of God be removed and translated to heaven in the Rapture of the Church; relocated to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is the *“general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven”* (Heb.12:23).

The Church is a Body

The New Testament frequently describes the Church as the body of Christ. Each Christian is a member of the body and **Christ is the head** from whom all directions and control should come. Paul warned about men imposing their will and fleshly ideas on the Church:

*“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, **And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered,** and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col.2:18-19).*

Every believer is a member of the Body of Christ from the moment of conversion for we read:

*“For by one Spirit **are we ALL baptized into one body,** whether we be **Jews or Gentiles,** whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many” (1Cor.12:13-14).*

Christendom has placed men as the head of the Church and this has made them puffed up in their fleshly minds. The Holy Spirit ordains godly men (Acts 20:28) to lead local churches but godly elders and pastors will say with Peter that they are not “*lords over God’s heritage*” but “*ensamples to the flock*” (1Peter 5:3). Christ is the Chief Shepherd and **the flock belongs to Him**.

Just as the human body receives direction through the nervous system from the brain so the body of Christ is to be motivated, directed, and stimulated by Christ who is our Head. Each member is answerable to the Head and no man must be allowed to place himself between individual members and the Head. When all members are directed by the Head there is perfect harmony and oneness.

*“And he is **the head of the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things **HE MIGHT HAVE THE PREEMINENCE**. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Col.1:18-19).*

The Body of Christ is universal. There is only one Body of Christ on earth and each local Church is to function as His body in the local situation. However, there is only one place where the entire Body is gathered and that is in heaven where we read of the “*general assembly and church of the firstborn*” (Heb.12:23). The concept of a World Council of Churches or a Papal Church is foreign to Scripture and a denial of the headship of Christ. One only has to watch the way Catholics bow before the Pope, pray to saints, and submit to whatever the Pope decrees to realise that Christendom is not the Body of Christ.

The Church is a Bride

Paul told the Corinthian Christians that they were espoused to one husband that they might be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin (2Cor.12:2).

John the Baptist said that Christ was the bridegroom and he, as an Old Testament saint living in the Age of Law, was a friend of the Bridegroom. Old Testament saints are friends of the Bridegroom. He said:

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because

of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:29-30).

When Christ returns after the Tribulation **the Bride of Christ comes WITH Him** and will have "*made herself ready*" for the marriage supper of the Lamb on earth. In view of this we can only conclude that the Bride of Christ has been taken to heaven **BEFORE** the marriage in heaven sometime **BEFORE** Christ returns.

Jewish weddings required the engagement (espousal) to take place about one year before the marriage was consummated. This was a binding covenant in which the Bride-to-be was called the "wife" of the Bridegroom.

During the espousal period the bridegroom prepared a place for his bride in his father's house and when it was complete his father would send his son to bring his bride to the father's house for the marriage.

The bride did not know when the bridegroom would come and needed to be ready at any time. When the bridegroom came for his bride he was accompanied by his friends and together with the bride's friends would accompany her to the bridegroom's father's house where a marriage ceremony was conducted. The couple would enter the "bridal chamber" alone where the marriage was consummated and after seven days they would appear to the waiting guests for the marriage supper.

The Jewish pattern is replicated in the spiritual realm for Christ and His Church. Those on earth who turn from sin to Christ are espoused to Christ the moment they believe in a binding relationship. When the Father in heaven determines the time for the wedding He will send His Son to get His bride. Christ will come into the air and shout to call her to Himself and the

"dead in Christ will rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1Thess.4:16-17).

At the end of the millennial Kingdom the New Jerusalem, where the Church now dwells in heaven, will descend from God out of heaven to the earth "*as a bride adorned for her husband*" and the tabernacle of God will be with men (Rev.21:2-3,9-10).

In the New heaven and earth the Church will dwell in the New Jerusalem, Israel around the city, and the “*nations of those that are saved*”, will dwell in the New Earth.

The Church a Sign to Israel

In His Olivet Discourse just before Jesus went to the cross, Jesus indicated what would be the sign of the “*end of the age*” which is the great Tribulation. There are three parts to the Tribulation:

- 1) The first half is described from Matt.24:7 to 14;
- 2) The mid-point is described in Matt.24:15-20; and
- 3) The second half is described in Matt.24:21 to 28.

The Tribulation is immediately followed by the return of Christ to the earth to establish His kingdom. Therefore the Great Tribulation must occur in the last days, at the “*end of the age*”, and it must be only a **short period** of time immediately before Christ returns in glory and power to reign over the earth. We read:

“IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven “ (Matt.24:29-30).

Jesus gave several signs to His Jewish disciples, who were Old Testament saints at this time, and one of these signs was the **sudden, global, disappearance of people**. Jesus couldn't say that this was the Rapture of the Church because the Church did not exist and was still a secret and unrevealed. However, Jesus could say that there would be a sudden global disappearance of people as a sign to Israel that the “*end of the age*” had come.

We know that this is the Rapture because, since that time, Paul has had the truth of the Church revealed to him and in 1 Thess.5:1-9 and 2 Thess.2:1-13 he indicates that the “*Day of the Lord*” (the Tribulation) **cannot come** while the Church is on earth.

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath (of the Day of the Lord), but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess.5:9).

The sudden disappearance of the Christians will be a **clear sign to Israel** that the last 7 years of Israel's history has come after which the nation will be blessed in Christ's millennial Kingdom.

In Luke 17:26-36, Jesus described three signs to Israel that would indicate the end of the age had come and **the Kingdom was about to be established:**

i) World conditions would be *“as it was in the days of Noah”*. The day Noah was removed to safety, the flood came.

ii) World conditions would be *“as it was in the days of Lot”* in Sodom. The day Lot was removed from Sodom, the fire fell.

iii) There would be a sudden global disappearance of individuals: *“one shall be taken and the other left”* from bed, the field, and while grinding at the mill. The Greek word translated *“taken”* mean *“to receive to one’s self”*, and the word *“left”* means, *“to put away”*.

When the disciples asked the Lord, *“Where?”* (would they be taken) Jesus said they would rise like eagles to be gathered to the **living, saving body** (Greek, *soma* and not *ptoma* which is a dead carcass).

Of course the disciples would not have understood the Lord’s answer because they were still in the Dispensation of Law but the three signs were clear: they would know **when the kingdom was about to appear** when the righteous were suddenly removed before the great Tribulation. The Rapture of the Church will be the final sign to Israel that the *“end of the age”* has come.

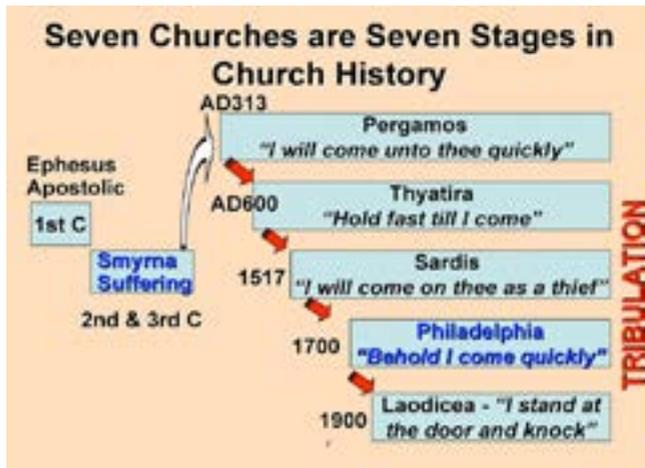
The Church Age will Conclude in Apostasy

Some teach that the kingdom of God will be established on earth through the preaching of the Gospel and point to large numbers attending charismatic churches. Kingdom theology has become popular because it is often accompanied by a *“prosperity gospel”* which teaches that the more you give to TV evangelists the more God will give to you. They tell us that God wants all Christians to be rich and earthly riches are a sign that God is with us. Rolls Royce Cars, holiday homes, and personal jet aircraft are thought to be proof that they are part of a last-days revival before Jesus Christ returns. **Nothing could be further from the truth!**

The Bible teaches differently:

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?” (James 2:5-6).

God promised to bless Israel materially if they obeyed Him because they are **His earthly people** but the Church has no such promises since we are a **heavenly people** and *"here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come"* (Heb.13:14).



The history of Christendom is portrayed in seven letters to seven Church of Asia in Rev. 2 and 3. The Church at **Ephesus** was typical of the Apostolic era; **Smyrna** of the suffering Church in the pagan persecutions up to the Edict of Toleration in AD 313; **Pergamos** was the State church established by Emperor Constantine; **Thyatira** was the Papal church that grasped political power under Gregory the Great in AD 590; **Sardis** represented those who escaped from the clutches of Rome at the time of the Reformation beginning in 1517; **Philadelphia** was the great missionary church beginning with the Moravian Revival in 1700 and the final stage of Christendom before the Rapture is **Laodicea**, a church that makes the Lord sick; He will spew it out of His mouth. This Laodicean church says, *"I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing"*! This is the final stage of ecumenical, and charismatic Christendom that is commercializing Christianity today.

Denominations are asset rich with large property holdings and investments. In Western countries pastors receive regulation salaries and many are making merchandise of the people (2Peter 2:1-3). This is the final stage of the Church age which began with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and ends in apostasy.

In each stage of history there have been genuine and false members of the church. The saved are called *"overcomers"*. These are the *"wheat"* and the unsaved are the *"tares"*. Only the wheat will be

gathered into the heavenly barn at the harvest of the Church; the Rapture. The false professors will be left behind for the Great Tribulation.

When the saved are raptured the last “week” (7 years) of Israel’s prophetic history (Dan.9:27) will run its course during which “*all Israel shall be saved*” (Rom.11:26). This will prepare Israel for her role in **the Kingdom of Christ on earth** which is the seventh and final Dispensation before there is a new heaven and earth and the eternal state.

THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

The climax of the ages is the second Advent of Jesus Christ; It is to this event to which all of history and prophecy is advancing. The first Advent brought the Son of God from the Father in heaven to live on earth as a man, to be rejected by His own people, Israel, and endure the pain and suffering of the cross. However, Jesus endured this *“for the joy that was set before Him”* (Heb.12:2) that, through His death, He would bring many sons to glory. He is now set down at the right hand of the majesty on high *“henceforth expecting until all His enemies be made His footstool”*. **At the second Advent Christ** will take His great power and reign; Satan will be bound 1,000 years; Antichrist and his False Prophet will be cast into the lake of fire and every knee will bow before the Lord.

Many Scriptures describe the amazing sight that men will behold as Christ returns to reign. Paul says He will come *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God”* (2Thess.1:8).

Matthew states He will come *“in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”* (Matt.24:30). Jude says He will come *“with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all...”* (Jude 1:14-15).

John writes in greater detail: *“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; ... And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”* (Rev.19:11-16).

“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev.11:15).

Isaiah wrote: *“Behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many”* (Isa.66:15-16).

At the Rapture of the Church Christ comes FOR His saints but at the second Advent He comes WITH His saints.

THE AGE OF THE KINGDOM

After the Lord returns He will **gather His elect nation, Israel**, from the *“the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”* (Matt.24:31). Then He will gather all the nations that survive the Tribulation to judgment at Jerusalem. World population will be small after the judgments of the Tribulation for Isaiah wrote that *“the earth is burned and few men left”* (Isa.24:6). Jesus said that *“except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved”* (Matt.24:22). Antichrist and the vast armies that he mobilizes against Christ will all be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. Nevertheless all Gentile nations remaining will be brought before the Lord at the *“throne of His glory”* (Matt.25:31-46) and these will be separated as sheep (saved) and goats (unsaved). To the sheep He will say:

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt.25:34).

To the goats He will say:

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire (the lake of fire), prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt.25:41).

Thus the Kingdom of God will begin with only saved people on earth. The sheep are not given resurrection bodies at this time for they are living nations who survived the Tribulation. Zechariah states that

“every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts...” (Zech.14:16).

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

The marriage supper of the Lamb will be held on earth soon after the Lord returns and we read, *“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”* (Rev.19:9). At the last supper before the Lord went to the cross the Saviour said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine again until *“the kingdom of God shall come”* (Luke 22:18). Jesus said:

“Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them” (Luke 12:37).

The Tribulation Martyrs Raised

The martyrs from the 7 years of Tribulation will be raised and in resurrection bodies reign with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev.20:4). Also, the Church-age saints (the Church) will reign with Christ. These are raised at the Rapture **before the Tribulation begins** and the 12 Apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Matt.19:28). Twice Jesus promised the disciples that they would reign over Israel (Luke 22:29-30) and since they are the foundation of the Church (Eph.2:20) they can only reign in resurrection bodies.

Just as the Old Testament saints were raised with Christ and came out of their graves to appear in Jerusalem (Matt.27:52-53), and just as the Lord continued to appear for 40 days after He rose, so in the millennial Kingdom resurrected saints will be appearing like angels to serve the Lord on earth.

Every Jew will be Returned to the Land

Every Jew on earth will be regathered to the land (Ezek.39:28); they will be brought by plane and the ships of Tarshish, Britain, will be the first to bring them with *“their silver and their gold”* (Isa. 60:8-9). The Gentile nations will give great honour to the Jews in recognition of their faithful testimony during the Tribulation. The Jews will be the *“priests of the Lord”* and *“the Ministers of our God”* (Isa.61:6) in Christ’s Kingdom. Zechariah spoke of this:

*“Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall **take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you”** (Zech.8:22-23).*

The land of Israel will be divided among the 12 tribes as indicated in Ezekiel chapter 48. The priests will be located near to the Temple as will be the Prince. David will be their prince for we read: *“my servant David shall be their prince for ever”* (Ezek.37:25).

A Millennial Temple will be Built

Christ will reign from a Temple built to specifications described in Ezekiel chapters 40 to 43 and priestly service will recommence **in memorial** of Christ the Lamb of God who was slain.

The glory of God will reside over the Temple at Jerusalem and its light will lighten the whole city such that Kings will come to witness it (Isa. 60:1-3, 19-20). The throne of God will be in His Temple (Ezek.43:1-7).

“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezek.37:26-28).

The Lord will never again leave His Temple as He did in the days of the first Temple in 586BC.

When Christ returns the Mount of Olives on the east of Jerusalem will split and there will be a great valley from the Temple down to the Dead Sea. Such will be the volume of fresh water flowing from under the Temple that the salt waters of the Dead Sea will be healed and fish will be caught there (Ezek.47:1-12; Joel 3:18; Zech.14:8). The Judean wilderness will become fruitful and all the rivers of Judah will run with water fed from springs. The desert will blossom as a rose (Isa.35:1).

Jews will Preach to the Gentiles

The Jews will be the servants of the Lord and will take the Word of God to all nations:

“Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa.2:3).

All nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord and the Temple will be called *“an house of prayer for all people”* (Isa.56:7).

Creation will be at Peace

Even the animal kingdom will be at peace when Christ reigns:

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and

the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa.11:6-9). See also Isa.65:25.

Israel will be Secure

If, during the 1,000 years of the Kingdom, a new generation should rise up and refuse to serve Israel, that nation will perish *"yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted"* (Isa.60:12).

At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed from the bottomless pit for a season to test the nations and many will be deceived. Again Jerusalem will be surrounded and the Lord will send fire from heaven and destroy them (Rev.20:9).

"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" (Isa.2:4).

However, although the Kingdom will experience great blessing, peace, and prosperity under the reign of Christ administered by His people Israel, a new generation will be born and given the freedom to choose. Many will be deceived and oppose the Lord and His people.

Sadly the Kingdom Dispensation which is so blessed with the presence of Christ visibly seen at Jerusalem, will conclude in rebellion against Christ which shows that no matter how ideal the conditions, the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Apart from a work of grace in the heart man will fail every time. There is no excuse for such failure for provision is made in the death of Christ for every sinner from all time and each one has a free will to choose. That is why the Bible concludes with the words:

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev.22:17).