

Bible Prophecy

You Are Here ↓

God's Plan for the Ages

- When studying the Bible, we find that there are different eras (sometimes called *dispensations*) and key events which affect the way God reveals Himself to mankind.
- A very simple division is found in our Bibles – Old and New Testaments
- For example, Charles Ryrie in his book *Dispensationalism* lists the following seven dispensations:
 - Innocency – from Creation to the Fall of Man
 - Conscience – from the Fall to the Flood
 - Civil Government – from the Flood to Abraham
 - Promise, or Patriarchal Rule – from Abraham to Moses
 - Mosaic Law – from Moses to the Cross
 - Grace – from the Cross to the Return of Christ
 - Millennium – the Millennial Kingdom of Christ
- However you may see the plan of God unfolding, it is obvious that there are many things from our present perspective that have already passed or have yet to happen.

Our Current Age

- Sometimes called the *Church Age* or *Age of Grace*
- There are only hints of it in the Old Testament.
 - Daniel 9:24-27 – the division between the 69th and 70th weeks
 - Joel 2:28 (see Acts 2:16) – the coming of the Spirit upon all men.
 - Micah 5:3 – a period that God “gives up” or neglects Israel.
 - Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, and others hint that the truth of God reaches the Gentiles.
- Paul shows this “mystery” of our age is revealed by God – Colossians 1:24-27
- This age bridges the gap between Israel's rejection of Jesus their Messiah to their reception of Him at His Second Coming.
- The purpose of this time is the propagation of the Gospel to all the world – Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 15:14
 - “It would seem, then, that God, in this present age, is pursuing a program through which His infinite grace shall be perfectly displayed throughout all eternity” – J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 134

Today and Prophecy

- The Character of the Church Age
 - Countering the spread of the Gospel is a growing apostasy – II Timothy 3:1-9
 - Some see reflections of this age in the Parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13.
- There are some that see the Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3 as prophetic, showing a succession of seven eras in the Church Age.
 - Note - I personally do not hold this view but have no problem with those that do.
 - From *Willmington's Guide to the Bible*:
 - Ephesus – 30-300 – Apostolic Church
 - Smyrna – 100-313 – Martyr Church
 - Pergamos – 314-590 – Compromising Church
 - Thyatira – 590-1517 – Roman Catholic Church
 - Sardis – 1517-1700 – Reformation Church
 - Philadelphia – 1700-1900 – Revival Church
 - Laodicea – 1900-Rapture – Worldly Church
- As for any great events, the next appears to be the Rapture, which we will look at next week.