



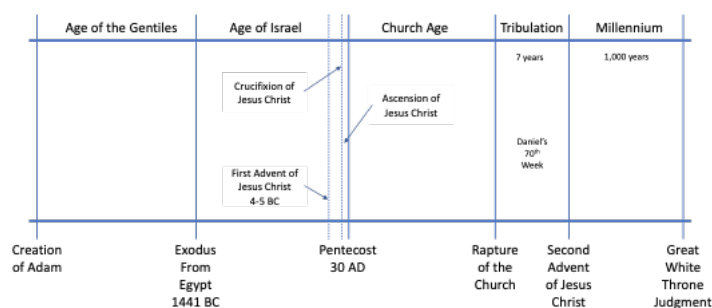
## The Church Age

The Church Age began on the Day of Pentecost and will end at the Rapture of the Church. It is composed of two periods of time – the Pre-Canon Period and the Post-Canon Period. The Pre-Canon Period of the Church Age was from 30 AD to 96 AD. It was the time of temporary spiritual gifts and the time when the New Testament was being written.

The Post-Canon Period of the Church Age is from 96 AD to the Rapture of the Church. It is the era of permanent spiritual gifts and the time when the completed written Canon of New Testament Scripture is available and is being disseminated throughout the world.

The dispensation of the Church Age was inserted into the Age of the Jews to form the Body of Christ that is made up of all Church Age believers. The Body of Christ is being formed through the Baptism of the Spirit whereby all believers are placed into union with Jesus Christ at salvation.

**The Dispensations of Human History**



The Church Age brought a new *modus operandi*. The Church Age is a very special age, a unique age, the age of mystery doctrine, an age of great grace provision and assets not existing in Old Testament times. It provides a supernatural grace means of the spiritual life. All of that has been provided under the power and filling of the Holy Spirit enabling you to identify and utilize your spiritual gift to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual gifts came into operation in the Church Age. In the Age of the Gentiles and the Age of the Jews, there were no spiritual gifts. There were talents and abilities such as David being a king, a singer and musician, a great military man and great leader. He used all of that for the glory of God, but the only spiritual gift given and mentioned in Old Testament times is the gift of prophecy. Some men had both the gift and the office, but in the Church Age you have every Christian receiving a spiritual gift.

Covenant theologians think the Church is in the Old Testament and is known as reformed theology. The Church is not in the Old Testament. Never. The Church is confined to the Church Age which began at the Day of Pentecost in 30 AD. It will terminate at the Rapture of the Church. 1 Thess. 4:13-17.

*"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall*



*always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, NASB)*

### **The Intercalation of the Church Age Dispensation**

There are passages in the Old Testament where doctrine of the Intercalation of the Church Age could have been mentioned, but were not. Examples are Daniel 9:26-27 and Isaiah 61:1-2 between “year of the Lord” (First Advent) and “day of vengeance” (Second Advent).

*“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” (Daniel 9:26-27, NASB)*

*“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,” (Isaiah 61:1-2, NASB)*

### **No Distinctions Between Jew and Gentile in the Church Age**

The dispensation of the Church or the Church Age is also known as the “times of the Gentiles” in Luke 21:24. The Church Age is also the emphasis of Ephesians 3:1-5 and Colossians 1:25-27. In Colossians 1:25-27, “this church” refers to the Church Age and “past ages” is referring to the previous dispensations - the Age of the Gentiles and the Age of the Jews.

*“and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 21:24, NASB)*

*“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;” (Ephesians 3:1-5, NASB)*

*“Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:25-27, NASB)*

The dispensation of the Church Age is taught in the New Testament epistles. Eph. 1:8-10.

*“which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him” (Ephesians 1:8-10, NASB)*

The “mystery of His will” is the mystery Bible doctrines that are now in writing in the New Testament and are the very thinking of Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 2:16.



*“For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16, NASB)*

This is the dispensation of the “fullness of the times” because at the end of this dispensation, the entire Body of Christ will be resurrected and will meet our Lord in the air at the Rapture of the Church. No other dispensation has ever provided the grace resources now available to every Church Age believer. Eph. 3:2-3; Eph. 3:8-9.

*“if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.” (Ephesians 3:2-3, NASB)*

*“To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;” (Ephesians 3:8-9, NASB)*

One of the results of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the removal of all distinctions between the Jew and Gentile as all have become one in Jesus Christ at salvation. In Galatians 3:26-28, “clothed yourselves with Christ” means you were baptized by the Holy Spirit into union with Christ. The result is removal of any distinction between Jew and Gentile. All believers, regardless of race, sex, or social status have equal privilege and opportunity to fulfill the plan of God for their lives.

*“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26-28, NASB)*

### **Unique Characteristics of the Church Age**

The Church Age is called a mystery. Mystery is a body of doctrine that was never revealed to the Old Testament writers. This would only have confused the writers and hearers of the Old Testament. For every believer in the Jewish Age to be a priest and to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, to be baptized by the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit, to be in union with Christ, would have been something. Moses longed to see such a day. Eph. 3:1-6; Col. 1:25-26; Rom. 16:25-26.

*“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,” (Ephesians 3:1-6, NASB)*

*“Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,” (Colossians 1:25-26, NASB)*

*“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;” (Romans 16:25-26, NASB)*



The basis of unity in the Church Age is every believer's positional sanctification, positional truth, or union with Jesus Christ. In Old Testament times, no one was in union with Christ. No one. In the Church Age, all believers are made new creatures in Christ. This is a permanent personal relationship. 2 Cor. 5:17.

*"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17, NASB)*

Every believer is indwelt by the deity of Jesus Christ. In Old Testament times, no one was indwelt by Christ. Not Moses, Abraham, Elijah, or Jeremiah. The indwelling of Jesus Christ is the basis of fellowship, but only when the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. Rev. 3:20; John 14:20.

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me." (Revelation 3:20, NASB)*

*"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." (John 14:20, NASB)*

Every believer is indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. Some were empowered or endued in the Old Testament, but not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 6:19-20.

*"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NASB)*

The Church Age brought a unique priesthood of every believer. Because we are all priests we have a right to "Do homage to the Son." This means to worship Him. Giving is one of the sacrifices of the priesthood in Hebrews 13. Worship also includes listening to Bible teaching, prayer, giving as an expression of worship, observing the Lord's Table, and praise. 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 2:9; Psalms 2:12.

*"you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5, NASB)*

*"But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" (1 Peter 2:9, NASB)*

*"Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!" (Psalms 2:12, NASB)*

Every believer is an ambassador for Jesus Christ and acts as our Lord's representative while still living on earth. This doesn't mean that every believer is an elder, but is a full-time representative of Jesus Christ. It makes your life full of meaning, purpose and definition. 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:20.

*"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20, NASB)*

*"for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." (Ephesians 6:20, NASB)*

We have our complete instructions in writing. The Canon of Scripture is completed, therefore no instructions come through dreams, through visions, through direct conversation with the Lord, or through a classroom taught by an angel. 1 Cor. 13:10.

*"but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." (1 Corinthians 13:10, NASB)*



We have a supernatural way of life with a supernatural means of execution, not a change of personality or a stereotyped personality. 2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Cor. 12:9.

*"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17, NASB)*

*"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Corinthians 12:9, NASB)*

The filling or controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit is needed every time you get out of fellowship and is assured through the correct use of 1 John 1:9 and Ephesians 5:18.

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NASB)*

*"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18, NASB)*

Only once in all of human history has God created equality and that is in the Church Age through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Equality originates with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit when we are placed into union with Christ. That is the only moment of equality. That's why we have no right to feel superior to anyone. Spiritual freedom means that immediately after salvation, believers begin to develop at different rates due to their volition. Some believers grow spiritually and some do not.

All Church Age believers are elected to equal privilege because they have been placed into union with Jesus Christ and are thus members of a royal priesthood. They are elected to equal opportunity through spiritual freedom and provision of grace resources that provide all they will ever need to grow spiritually. In eternity past, the foreknowledge of God knew that some would exercise their free will to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. This is called Predestination. Having accepted the saving work of Jesus Christ for our sins, we have equal privilege because we are in union with Christ and, therefore, members of the royal family of God. See category on [Predestination](#).

All Church Age believers have equal opportunity in their spiritual lives when filled with the Holy Spirit to fulfill the plan of God for their lives. All Church Age believers have exactly the same status in the royal family of God. We have our unique royal commissions as members of a royal priesthood and are royal ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

All Church Age believers have availability to the unique mystery Bible doctrines of the Church Age that comprise the New Testament of the Bible. Every member of the Trinity indwells every believer. This is unique in human history. We have the unique availability of divine power through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Never before in history has divine omnipotence been available for use to every believer.

This is the first dispensation where no prophecies are to be fulfilled. However, there are two prophecies related to the start and end of the Church Age. These are the Baptism of the Spirit that began the Church Age and the Rapture of the Church that will end the Church Age.

The Church Age is the dispensation whereby believers positive to Bible doctrine can have an invisible impact due to blessing by association. Believers as well as unbelievers can have some impact to their city, state, and nation by adhering to the laws of divine establishment, but only maturing believers can have the invisible impact because they are advancing in the plan of God for their lives and thus are being blessed by God. Those around such believers are blessed by God simply due to their association with





such believers.

### **Terms Related to the Church Age**

The “last Adam” in 1 Corinthians 15:45-47. A “new creature” in 2 Corinthians 5:17. The “body” referring to the Body of Christ composed of all Church Age believers in 1 Corinthians 12:12. The “head of the body” in Colossians 1:18 referring to Jesus Christ.

*"So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven." (1 Corinthians 15:45-47, NASB)*

*"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17, NASB)*

*"For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:12, NASB)*

*"He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything." (Colossians 1:18, NASB)*

The “Shepherd” and the “sheep” in 1 Peter 5:4, Hebrews 13:20, John 10:26-27. In John 10:16, “other sheep” refer to the Church Age.

*"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:4, NASB)*

*"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord," (Hebrews 13:20, NASB)*

*"But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;" (John 10:26-27, NASB)*

*"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd." (John 10:16, NASB)*

The vine and the branches in John 15:4-5. You must understand vines and how they are constructed.

*"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5, NASB)*

The chief cornerstone, and stones of the building. Architectural terms. Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-5.

*"having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone," (Ephesians 2:20, NASB)*

*"And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5, NASB)*

The High Priest and Royal Priesthood which were confined to two areas. 1 Peter 2; Heb. 7; Heb. 10.

The future analogy is the Bridegroom and the Bride. This is after believers get their resurrection bodies at the Rapture of the Church. Eph. 5:25-27. Fulfillment is found in Revelation 19:6-8.

*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He*



*might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." (Ephesians 5:25-27, NASB)*

*"Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." (Revelation 19:6-8, NASB)*