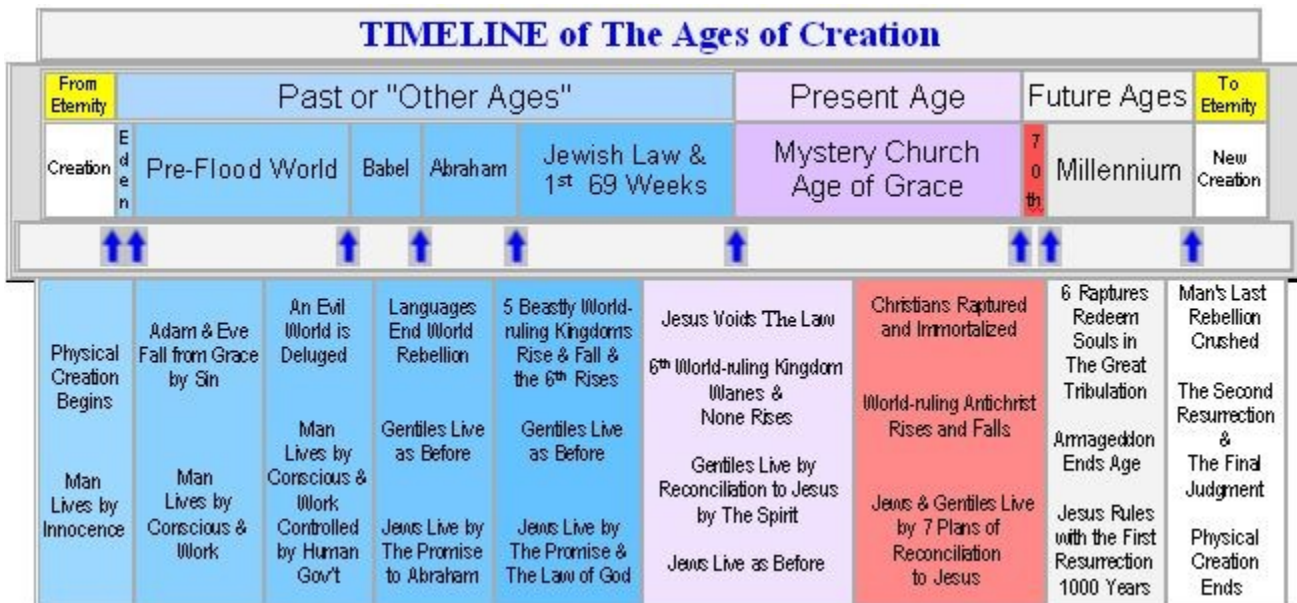


SECTION 2 The Presently Revealed Mystery Church Age of Grace



An **understanding** that is central to this **study** involves the dramatic and unexpected changes in the way God deals with man. One of these changes is the newest **dispensation of God** beginning from the time of Jesus on. This change dramatically alters how we view unfulfilled or future **prophecy** in the Old Testament, which in turn helps us better understand New Testament **prophecy** too. Several changes have already occurred since 'Creation' that I've outlined in the **TIMELINE of The Ages of Creation** above. Popularly, there are seven dispensations or **ages** altogether, but really these several plans overlap quite a bit. And two plans that were ongoing, one for Gentiles and one for Jews, were interrupted by the latest one, The Church Age of Grace, and will be completed after it. The Church Age of Grace starts sixth. And the two interrupted plans will be completed in The Great Tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel's **prophecy**. And there is still one more to start after these three known as The Millennium. I hope to eventually explore the **other ages** of the past more closely in **The Ages of Creation study**. It will more thoroughly cover the above timeline as a whole. But for this **study** an **understanding** of the present and future ages will suffice because they're the only ones directly involved in end times **prophecy**. The following precepts establish the reality of this surprise present 'age' or **dispensation of the grace of God**.

The Apostle Paul proclaims the newly revealed Church Age of Grace to save Gentiles through faith in Jesus. This plan is purposely hidden by God since Creation until it is revealed by the Church's apostles and prophets after the coming of The Spirit at Pentecost.

Acts 2

Ephesians 3:1-9

The age or **dispensation of the grace of God** [Eph 3:2](#) is also commonly called The Age of Grace or The Church Age. Before the arrival of The Spirit at Pentecost the Apostle Paul tells us that this plan was a secret or **mystery** [Eph 3:3-4](#)...

...which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God [Eph 3:9](#).

It was also a secret...

...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 [Eph 3:5](#).

And in **other ages**, or in past ages starting with The Age of Innocence in the Garden of Eden, God has dealt with man in a number of changing ways to bring us back to Himself. But at this point we are interested in only two questions. What is this present age? And what age directly precedes The Great Tribulation which begins when the Antichrist is **revealed**? The answer to both of these questions is The Church Age of Grace. One way this can be seen is by showing that The Rapture of the Church immediately precedes The Mystery of Iniquity, which we will do in the next section. Before that we should more clearly identify the conditions that exist in this present age.

The events that mark the beginning of this present Age of Grace involve The First Coming of Jesus including His birth, His earthly ministry, His death and resurrection, His ascension to Heaven, and the descending to Earth of The Holy Spirit at the event in Jerusalem we now know as **Pentecost** recorded in [Acts 2](#). The coming of The Spirit is the final marker of the beginning of this present age **now revealed ...by the Spirit**, and the **mystery** The Spirit **revealed** when He came has been out now for nearly 2000 years. We are now living in The Age of Grace for **Gentiles** [Ephesians 3:6, 8](#). This age is mainly the Gentiles' chance to escape the **wrath of God** and just **everlasting punishment** for **sin** by **reconciliation** to God through **faith** in Jesus' **sacrifice** for us all. Jews may also receive this **gospel of grace** now and be saved as Gentiles are, but Gentiles who survive The Age of Grace, and Jews whether they survive it or not, also have other options for **salvation** in future **ages**. There are what could be called several different 'plans of salvation' that will be completed in the coming **great tribulation**—the 70th week of Daniel's **prophecy**—and in the following Millennial Age, which are all topics of later sections.

Jesus personally 'commissions' the Apostles to go into **all the world** with the gospel message before He leaves, and He 'commissions' one more apostle just after He leaves. Jesus ministers salvation to the Jews while He is here, and the Disciples **receive** The Spirit **before** Jesus goes. But God sends The Spirit to reveal this Age of Grace and to begin 'full operations' **after** Jesus leaves.

Matthew 3:11
John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-8,13; 20:19-22
Luke 3:16; 24:49
Acts 1:4-5, 8-11; 2; 9:3-6

The Spirit, sent by The Father and Jesus, cannot **come** until Jesus leaves. This is evidently The Father's orders. Jesus says,

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you [John 16:7](#).

So when Jesus ascends into Heaven, having kept the secret from the Gentiles of the **dispensation of the grace of God**, The Spirit can then come and **reveal** it. But Jesus did **reveal** His offer of salvation to the Jews first, specifically to his Jewish disciples who become the Apostles. They **receive** their **salvation** along with **the Holy Ghost** in the evening of the day after Jesus' resurrection ([John 20:19-22](#)). About 40 days later, as Jesus is about to finally ascend into Heaven, He 'commissions' His disciples to **be witnesses** to Him **unto the uttermost part of the earth**, but that they should first **wait** and **that they should not depart from Jerusalem** until they **receive power** of **the Holy Ghost**. Luke records,

[Jesus] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence... [And] ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth [Act 1:4-5, 8](#).

What the Disciples had previously **heard of** Jesus is that they are to wait **...in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued** [meaning to be 'filled' or "clothed"] **with power from on high [Luke 24:49](#)**. So we see that first the Disciples **receive** The **Holy Ghost** from Jesus just after His resurrection, but then about 50 days later, or about 10 days after Jesus ascends into Heaven ([Act 1:9-11](#)), The Spirit appears at **Pentecost** and the Disciples are **baptized** with The Holy Spirit. And this is obviously when the Apostles **receive power** of The Holy Spirit. The Disciples also much earlier **heard of** Jesus that this would be the time that Jesus says,

...he [God The Father] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire [Matthew 3:11](#), [Luke 3:16](#).

This is the time when the Apostles are ready to begin their work on the 'commission' Jesus gives them. To oversimplify, it appears that still today you need only **believe** to **receive**, but back then if not still, to **preach** with **power** you need to be **baptized** with **fire**. This of course leads to that whole

Baptist/Pentecostal debate that I hope to eventually fuss with sooner or later, but no longer here. Our focus now is in **understanding** that at **Pentecost** The Holy Spirit is in full operation including the **promises** also earlier given by Jesus that The Spirit will **reprove** [or “convict”] **the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment** [John 16:8](#), will be **the Comforter** [14:16,26](#); [15:26](#); [16:7](#), will **teach you all things** [14:26](#), **will guide you into all truth** [16:13](#), will **bring all things to your remembrance...**[that Jesus] **said** [14:26](#), will **testify of** [Jesus] [15:26](#), and **will shew you things to come** [16:13](#), etc. And by these ministries of The Holy Spirit we can and will come to **understand** what Peter calls the **more sure word of prophecy**. And we should be especially encouraged that Jesus specifically promises that The Spirit ‘will show you things to come’, because this is the operation of The Spirit we’ll rely on the most in this **study**.

It’s also after Jesus leaves that He ‘commissions’ Paul the Apostle by a visitation ([Acts 9:3-6](#)). He becomes known as the Apostle to the Gentiles because of his extensive work starting **churches** among them.

Jesus declares His ministry to the Jews finished and that the time for His crucifixion has come at the point when Gentiles begin to seek after him.

[John 12:20-33](#)
[Acts 10](#)

There is more strong evidence that Jesus did not and would not **reveal** the mystery Age of Grace to the Gentiles, but intended to leave this job to the **holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit**. This is seen in His seemingly strange reaction when **Greeks**—or Gentiles—start to seek after Him. His response when this happens is that He says His time to be crucified has come. The story goes like this...

And there were certain Greeks [or Gentiles] **among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified** [John 12:20-23](#).

Now some argue that the Jews were also **Greeks** back then and that if they **came up to worship at the feast** then these **Greeks** referred to here must be Jews. This is wrong for two reasons. One is that this overlooks the fact that **wise men from the east**, who were not likely Jews, came to **worship** Jesus after He was born. And other ‘wise men’ such as **Cornelius**, plainly a Gentile, **made enquiry to Peter** just after Jesus is gone ([Acts 10](#)) showing that there must have been other Gentiles like **Cornelius** seeking after Jesus which provoked Jesus to end His ministry to the Jews. The Gentile **Cornelius** is described as a...

...devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway[s] [Act 10:1-2](#).

And he must have been this way both before and throughout Jesus' ministry too. And Jesus would have likely attracted his attention. And in the story of **Cornelius** we **learn** from **Peter** that **Cornelius** and **his kinsmen and near friends** cannot be the only Gentiles at this time that had been trying to get to Jesus. From this encounter with Cornelius and his clan Peter recognizes that there are and always have been God-fearing Gentiles...

...in every nation...that feareth him, and worketh righteousness... [and are] [accepted with him Acts 10:35](#).

Peter comes to the **revelation** at Cornelius' house that all these **accepted** Gentiles have all along been coming from **every nation** to worship God in Jerusalem at the feasts, as Peter must have seen them doing so all his life. And they are obviously the same ones who come to 'bother' Jesus signaling that it is time for Him to be crucified.

The second reason that these **Greeks** must be only Gentiles is more obvious. It's that Jesus had no reason to turn away Jews. How is it that Jesus knows that, **The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified?** What makes sense is that He knows the **hour** is come when **accepted** Gentiles start to seek after Him. And since we now **know** that He was not allowed by the Father to respond to Gentiles, their seeking after him must mark the end of His ministry. And this is easily enough **understood** after the fact when the purpose of the secret Age of Grace is finally **revealed** by the **holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit** after Jesus is gone. Jesus' ministry was only to the Jews, and He makes this clear by going to **the cross** instead of to those **accepted** Gentile **Greeks**. At this point, He is ready to die for the sins of the World to finish setting up The Age of Grace so that the ministry of the Gospel can continue to be **revealed** to the Jews and begin to be **revealed** to the Gentiles **by the Spirit**.

Three of the Gospel accounts tell the story where Jesus refers to us Gentiles as **dogs** who at best are trying to **eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table**, remember? I think this was Jesus' way of continuing to hide the fact that The Spirit's ministry to the Gentiles must come later. In this case He is simply trying to put us off in order to prolong his time of ministry to Jews, because He knows the time for the Gentiles is coming later. In the story about Cornelius, Peter seems to come to this **revelation**, saying,

I perceive that God is no respecter of persons [Act 10:34](#).

And we will come to **understand** in the remainder of this **study** that God traffics in lots of obfuscation for some very good reasons.

Jesus stops in mid-sentence reading from the Prophet Isaiah showing by The Spirit in hindsight that **the acceptable year of the lord** is The Church Age of Grace. Jesus declares that this time has come and implies that He is the

reason for it. But He also implies and later confirms that **the days of vengeance** is the **great tribulation** and has not yet come.

Isaiah 61:1-2;

Matthew 24:15-21

Luke 4:16-21; 21:20-22

Jesus also gives us a clue that The Age of Grace is hidden in Old Testament **prophecy** before we're able to see it. Jesus makes clear in hindsight with The Spirit's help that The Age of Grace comes with His coming. But Jesus and other Old Testament **prophets** don't hide that the **great tribulation** or the **days of vengeance** are coming. So when Jesus implies that He marks the beginning of **the acceptable year of the Lord**, but stops short of including also the beginning of **the day of vengeance of our God** by stopping in the middle of a sentence in Isaiah's **prophecy**, He makes it possible for us to later **understand** that there will be a hidden period described as the **acceptable year of the Lord** that occurs before the period of **the day of vengeance**. And this is how Jesus shows us that we can look for what are now commonly called 'gaps' in Old Testament **prophecy** where The Age of Grace is hidden. Compare Isaiah's Old Testament Hebrew to Jesus' New Testament Greek in the KJV. Isaiah records,

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God... [Isaiah 61:1-2](#)

But Jesus reads,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord [Luke 4:18-19](#).

And He stops reading exactly before He gets to **the day of vengeance of our God**, and sits down and tells us,

This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears [Luke 4:21](#).

This all implies that The Age of Grace starts for the Jews with Jesus' ministry but that **the day of vengeance** is not yet ready to start. Later, when Jesus finishes ministering to The Jews, and they reject him, generally speaking, He leaves the Earth and sends The Spirit so that **the holy apostles and prophets** can then **reveal** this **acceptable year of the Lord...unto the uttermost part of the earth**. And before he goes He marks these **days of vengeance** to start when the Jews must **flee to the mountains** to be saved [Luke 21:20-22](#), and also says that this will occur at the mid-week

abomination of desolation event—the beginning of the worst time ever ([Mat 24:15-21](#)). Still, some argue that these **days of vengeance** have already taken place. But we'll **prove** they haven't, and that the Jews that have recently returned to Israel will eventually fulfill these **prophecies**. But they cannot be fulfilled until The Age of Grace is concluded.

We would not be able to make sense of end times **prophecy** without the **understanding** of how The Age of Grace is hidden in Old Testament **prophecy**. Indeed, many messes have been made without **understanding** it. And by-the-way, how do you think someone could come to such an **understanding** about this **mystery of God** on their own? Higher education alone will never lead to such **revelations** in The Word of God. But this **revelation** is plainly the work of The Spirit, and I came to it through the **teaching** of top **prophecy** scholars. And this **revelation** is an example of how **wisdom** and **knowledge** are necessarily gained with **precepts** from **here a little and there a little**.

So we're looking for the end of The Age of Grace, which means we're looking for the 3 ½-year period before the mid-tribulation **abomination of desolation** event, known as **the beginning of sorrows**, because this half-week starts with the revealing of the **mystery of iniquity**, or the revealing of the Antichrist, which is a marker of the end of The Age of Grace. With the help of The Spirit, and gifted **teachers** of The Word of God, we will see that the Church must be 'spirited away' at the end of The Age of Grace before the Antichrist can be **revealed** and The Great Tribulation can start. **Proving** this is our next assignment in [SECTION 3](#).