

The End Times
The Church Age
Matt 25.1-13

[As you look at The End Times Chart that has been provided for you. Notice that after Calvary there is that block of time called the Church Age. The Church Age is the period of time that runs from the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ all the way to the Rapture of the Church. The Church Age is the period of time we live in and has covered the nearly 2000 years since our Lord finished the work of redeeming all of mankind from the penalty for their sins.]

[There is a second chart provided for you today titled “The Church Age Chart.” It illustrates the passages in the Word of God that help us to understand what our Lord has revealed about this time period we live in and what we can expect in it. This morning I will preach a general survey of The Church Age. This evening I will preach on the Seven Churches, and next Sunday I will preach on the Kingdom Parables. Clearly these few sermons cannot fully examine what the Word of God teaches about the Church Age. From the charts I have provided you can surmise that many hours of study can be spent examining The Church Age in the Word of God. Each of us should study the Word of God with diligence and determination.]

[The Church Age is referred to by a few different titles, all of which denote different aspects of this time period.]

- [The Church Age – The Church is first mentioned in the Word of God when our Lord Jesus Christ said,]

*[Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church;** and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.]*

[The Church and The Church Age were a mystery in the Old Testament, but are the reality of the world we live in today. The Church Age is marked by the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ which is called the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12.27), the Bride of Christ (Rev 19.5-10; 21.2; 22.17).]

[The Church of Christ consists of born again believers who love and seek to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.]

- **[The Dispensation of Grace** – A dispensation is a time period in history and this Church Age is also known as The Dispensation of Grace. This period of time is marked by the grace of God. The grace of God is the unmerited gift of God given to all mankind. For all who will accept the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on Calvary’s Cross God gives them His Grace, which is the free gift of eternal salvation. There is nothing you can do to earn your salvation; all you can do is receive God’s benevolent and graceful gift through our Lord Jesus Christ.]

[Now, our Lord Jesus Christ taught much about the Church Age. The Word of God has much to say about the Church Age. Our Lord did not leave us wondering about what to expect as we live out our Christian lives in this corrupt and sinful world. **Our study this morning will be a general survey of these times we live in.** This study will be augmented by our study tonight of the Seven Churches of Revelation, and our study next Sunday Morning of The Kingdom Parables. You need to know as much as you can know about what our Lord said this Church Age would be like, so you will be able to recognize the things you see unfolding all around you.]

Our Lord said The Church Age would be,

A. A Time Of Redemption [- The Old Hymn proclaims,]

*[Redeemed how I love to proclaim it, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child and forever I am.]*

Eph 2.8-9

[Redemption is the resounding theme of the Church Age. Redemption is the result of God free Grace and the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary’s Cross.]

[There are three important things for us to understand about The Church Age and our redemption or salvation.]

1. The Amazing Grace of God (Eph 2.8-9; John 3.16-18; Rom 10.13)

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

John 3.16

[Salvation is a free gift. Its work was fully completed by our Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing you can do to earn it. The cost of your salvation was paid in full by our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's Cross. All you can do is hear the Gospel message, acknowledge that it is true, and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ as your only hope for true redemption.]

[John 3:16-18 ¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* ¹⁷ ***For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.***

¹⁸ *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.]*

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- A. A Time of Redemption
1. The Amazing Grace of God

[Without any doubt God wants all people to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ physically arose from the grave, and to call out to Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. Yet, God reveals that not all people will be saved. There will be many who will refuse the Lord Jesus Christ and His Salvation, and because of their rebellion they will condemn themselves to the eternal judgment of God.]

[But for all who wish to be saved, the Amazing Grace of God is extended to them, all they have to do is receive the gift of salvation into their hearts and lives and they will be saved.]

***[Romans 10:13* For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord **shall be saved.**]**

[Are you saved? Will you receive God's gift of Salvation today?]

2. **[The Illuminated Word of God (John 14.26; 1 Cor 2.9-10,14; 6.19;) –**
The remarkable indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ said,]

John 14.26

***[John 14:26* But the Comforter, **which is the Holy Ghost,** whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.]**

1 Cor 2.9

[Not everyone in our world has fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God. To be sure the Word of God teaches that the Holy Spirit convicts the whole world of their sin seeking to bring them to salvation. But for Christians the Holy Spirit becomes their teacher and their guide throughout their Christian life.]

[It is the Holy Spirit that will illuminate the Word of God with deep spiritual truth and help the diligent, student of the Word of God to know the deep things of God (2 Tim 2.15; 1 Cor 2.9-16). The Word of God reveals,]

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A. A Time of Redemption

1. The Amazing Grace of God
2. The Illuminated Word of God

*[1 Corinthians 2:9-10⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.¹⁰ **But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.**]*

[There are many things about God this world cannot know, but Christian illuminated by the Holy spirit of God know them, even the deep things of God, because of the Holy Spirit's teaching. The passage goes on to say,]

*[1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man **receiveth not** the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, **because they are spiritually discerned.**]*

1 Cor 6.19

[A Natural man is a lost man, one that is not born again. This is the atheist, the paganist, the rebellious, and even the Christian Church member who professes to be saved, but has never really been redeemed. Lost men know nothing of God because they do not have the Holy Spirit or His illumination.]

[Because of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's Cross you, as born again Christians, have something that people who sought after God for ages before this Church Age wish they could have, **a personal and real relationship with Almighty God through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit of God.**]

[The New Testament states,]

*[1 Corinthians 6:19 What? **know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you,** which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?]*

[The Holy Spirit in you seeks to teach you the deep things of God. Are you teachable? Are you listening to Him? Are you responding to Him?]

[Far too many Christians know the theology of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. They know that the Word of God says that the Holy Spirit is in them. But they are too proud to actually be taught by the Holy Spirit of God. They are far too busy to actually slow down, perhaps stop, and be taught by the Holy Spirit of God.]

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[Are you listening to the Holy Spirit of God?]

[Can you be taught by the Holy Spirit of God?]

[Does the Word of God come alive in you because of the Holy Spirit of God?]

Matt 24.14

3. **[The Extended Reach of the Gospel (Matt 24.14; Mark 6.15) – Another important aspect of the Church Age, which ought to help us understand what we ought to be doing in this Church Age is the goal of the worldwide reach of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.]**

[Our Lord said,]

[Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.]

[What is this gospel message? It is the death, burial, and physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of all people (1 Cor 15.1-4). This good news, which is what gospel means, is to be preached in the entire World.]

[How does this message get to all the world?]

*[Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**]*

[By the people of the Church of Christ preaching the gospel of Christ to every creature worldwide.]

[How precious and remarkable is the gospel of Christ to you? How precious and wonderful is your salvation to you?]

[I love to sing that Old Hymn, Glory I'm Saved,]

1. [Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!
Now ransomed from sin and a new work begun,
Sing praise to the Father and praise to the Son,
Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!]

- [Refrain:
Glory, I'm saved! Glory, I'm saved!
My sins are all pardoned, my guilt is all gone!
Glory, I'm saved! Glory, I'm saved!
I'm saved by the blood of the Crucified One!]

2. [Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!
The angels rejoicing because it is done;
A child of the Father, joint-heir with the Son,
Saved by the blood of the Crucified One!]

[It seems to me, if you are really that thrilled about your salvation and redemption, then you ought to be letting people know about it. As a matter of my opinion, you just won't be able to keep quiet about it.]

[Our purpose during this Church Age is to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian are you proclaiming.]

1 Thess 2.1

B. A Time Of Rebellion (1 Thess 2.1-3; 2 Tim 3.1-5) [– Folks, without any doubt the Word of God warns us of great difficulties that will be faced by the

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people of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and we see these difficulties all around us today.]

*[2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 ¹ Now we beseech you, brethren, **by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,** ² That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ **Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,** and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;]*

2 Tim 3.1

[My Christian brothers and sisters in Christ, there will be deceivers and there will be a falling away from Christ as the end of the Church Age draws nigh. We are seeing this falling away today in many different forms.]

[The Word of God also says,]

*[2 Timothy 3:1-5 ¹ This know also, that **in the last days perilous times shall come.** ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.]*

[Folks, perilous times are dangerous times and we are warned to beware of these trying and deceiving times.]

[The Church age will see,]

1. [Many False Christ's and Teachers (Mark 13.22; Matt 24.24)]

Rom 1.28

[Our Lord Said,]

*[Mark 13:22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, **and shall shew signs and wonders,** to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.]*

[Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and

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B. A Time of Rebellion

- 1.

shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.]

[Listen, there are many false teachers who would confuse you and lead you away from the Word of God. These will be incredibly convincing.]

2. [Reprobate Minds and Hardened Hearts (Rom 1.28-32)]

*[Romans 1:28-32 ²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over to a reprobate mind,** to do those things which are not convenient;]*

[Now listen to this list,]

[²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, ³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: ³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.]

[Sounds like our world today. Sounds like our culture today.]

3. [Severe Persecution and martyrdom (2 Tim 3.12) – The Word of God says,]

[2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.]

[Folks, don't make the mistake of thinking that living for our Lord Jesus Christ will be easy. It's a hard life to live, but worth every moment and trial.]

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1. The Amazing Grace of God
2. The Illuminated Word of God
3. The Extended Reach of the Gospel

B. A Time of Rebellion – The Church Age will see,

1. Many false Christ's and teachers

C. A Time Of Resilience (Rev 2.10) – The Word of God says,

*[Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**]*

[We need to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ under all circumstances.]

[There will be sacrifices to make! I wonder what real sacrifices we have made for our Lord Jesus Christ.]

[There will be suffering to endure! I wonder how many of us here in America have really suffered for our faith. The greatest measure of our suffering is trying to make the decision about whether to attend Church or not.]

[Folks, we are called by our Lord to be,]

1. [The Overcomers]

*[Revelation 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **He that overcometh** . . .]*

*[Revelation 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh** . . .]*

*[Revelation 2:25-26²⁵ But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.²⁶ And **he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, . . .**]*

[I wonder how many of us are really overcoming?]

2. [The Faithful Stewards – Our Lord Jesus Christ talked often about the Faithful Stewards. We need to be faithful stewards.]

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B. A Time of Rebellion – The Church Age will see,

1. Many false Christ's and teachers
2. Reprobate Hearts and Minds
3. Severe Persecution

C. A Time Of Resilience