

ENDGAME

A Study On Revelation (Week #46)

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God's _____ Plan

- Is your Bible divided?
 - How so?
 - ▶ Into Old and New Testaments
 - If you recognize and agree with this division, then you agree that God has different segments in His Plan.
 - In each segment God reveals a different strategy, a different course, by which He is advancing His overall plan.
- In the segment we refer to as the Old Testament, what was God's strategy?
 - He worked through his chosen nation, establishing Himself through the covenant of Law.
- In the segment we refer to as the New Testament, what was God's strategy?
 - He was establishing His covenant of grace, revealing His strategy of inclusion of the Gentiles.
 - You can see these different segments referenced throughout Scripture.

Identify the segment referenced in each of these passages.

Romans 5:14 Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. (NLT)

Segment: _____ to _____

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. (NLT)

Segment: _____ to _____

Luke 21:24 They will be killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world. And Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the period of the Gentiles comes to an end. (NLT)

Segment: The times of the _____

Hebrews 1:1 Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. **2** And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. (NLT)

Segment #1: In the _____(when God spoke by the prophets)

Segment #2: In these _____(when he spoke by his Son)

- These segments are commonly referenced by the word era or age.
 - World: κόσμος; (Greek - kosmos [kos'-mos]); order, the world; the world, universe; worldly affairs; the inhabitants of the world; adornment, the scheme of material things. Often it refers to the organized system under the dominion of Satan.
 - World: οἰκουμένη; (Greek - oikoumené [oy-kou-men'-ay]); the inhabited earth; (properly: the land that is being inhabited, the land in a state of habitation), the inhabited world, that is, the Roman world, for all outside it was regarded as of no account.
 - World: αἰών; (Greek - aión [ahee-ohn']); a space of time, an age; an age, a cycle (of time), especially of the present age as contrasted with the future age, and of one of a series of ages stretching to infinity.
 - ▶ It also is frequently used to mean the sum total of all the ages; eternity; forever and ever.
 - ▶ And then it is used to mean a particular time period. Thus, we have past ages, this present age, and ages to come. We see in Scripture references to a present age for Israel and a future age for Israel; a present age for the Church and a future age for the Church.
 - ▶ The important thing here is that the "present age" for Israel isn't the same as the "present age" for the Church.
 - ▶ You have to look at the scope of the passage of Scripture and to whom the passage is addressed.
 - ▶ There's been a lot of confusion from taking something that was present age for Israel and applying it to the present age for the Church, and vice-versa.

This _____ Age

- Revelation was transcribed by John
- It was sent by John to the Church
 - Specifically seven representative churches of Asia Minor
 - At the heart, this is a letter from Jesus Christ to His Bride
- The purpose and plan of Revelation is clearly delineated from the start.
 - Revelation 1:18
 - ▶ What you have seen
 - ▶ What is are now
 - ▶ What will take place

Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One." (NLT)

Revelation 1:18 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. (NASB)

- Central to understanding the prophecy of Revelation is understanding God's overall plan, and what He has revealed about His plan to this point.
- To understand that, we need to explain some things about the way God works, and how He reveals things to us.
- These different periods are referred to as ages, or aions.

God's _____: Ages past, present, future

- We also said that much confusion has resulted from confusing the ages for Israel with the ages for the Church.
- In the New Testament, this present age, or this world, refers to that period of time in which the speaker or writer then lived.
 - To those that want to give a special mystical or spiritual" meaning to everything this isn't always so obvious.
- In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, this present age when applied to Israel referred to the period of time in which Israel was anticipating the coming of the Messiah to fulfill all her covenant promises (regarding the land).
 - The coming age was the age to inaugurated by the coming of the Messiah.
- As applied to the Church, this present age refers to the period from the rejection of the Messiah by Israel to the coming reception of the Messiah by Israel at His Second Coming.
 - Understand this: Israel has rejected the Messiah, but the Messiah has not rejected Israel. Israel has been set aside, as God works through the Church.

- The Preceding Ages
 - Christ anticipated
 - The Holy Spirit came to certain men to empower them for a given task
 - Revelation was incomplete
 - Israel was the particular object of God's dealing
- This Present Age
 - Christ has come, died, been resurrected, in position at the right hand of the Father
 - The Holy Spirit has taken up His residence with every believer
 - Revelation completed, because Christ came to reveal the Father
 - The Church is the particular object of God's dealing
- The preceding age, the Old Testament age, where the purposes of God for Israel are stated in the covenants, ends without those promises being realized.
- God instead introduces a new program, a new age, a new covenant, that doesn't replace his original covenant program, but interrupts it.
 - Jesus states, I haven't come to abolish but to fulfill.

This Present Age Centers on The _____

- Acts records a big meeting, the Jerusalem Council, that was called specifically to address the meaning and purpose of this new program. There James makes this declaration:

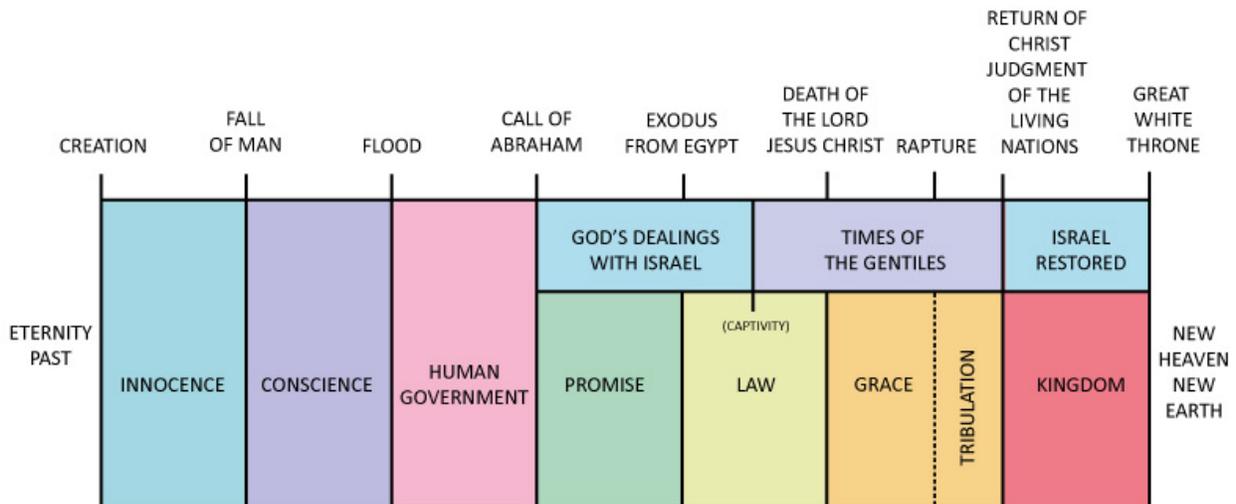
Acts 15:14 Peter [Simeon] has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself. (NLT)

- Taking from the Gentiles a people for himself is a description of the present-age strategy.
 - This people God is taking for himself is the Church.
 - ▶ It's the Body of which He is the Head. (Eph 1:22-23)
 - ▶ It's the Bride of which He is the Bridegroom (Eph 5:25-27, 32)
 - ▶ It's the Branch of which He is the Supporting Vine (John 15:1)
 - ▶ It's the collection of Ministering Priests of which He is the High Priest (1 Pet 2:5-9)
 - ▶ It's the New Creation of which He is the First Fruits (1 Cor 15:45)
 - WHY? What's the reason for this? It's not because of Israel's rejection.
 - ▶ This isn't a case of poor, pitiful God, wanting to go to the prom, but standing rejected at the door, scuffing his feet, then trying to find a date at the last minute. He didn't look at us and say, Oh, okay. I guess you'll do."
 - ▶ The Gentiles were just what was available? Left over? NO!
 - ▶ Because that's who He is. That's His character. He is love.

Ephesians 1:4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. **5** God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. (NLT)

Ephesians 2:7 So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. (NLT)

- Why the Church? To display the infinity of His Grace.
 - The Purpose of the Present Age is _____
 - ▶ Christ came to reveal the Father. But men had already seen the many aspects of the Father.
 - ▶ They had seen his glory, His majesty, His wisdom, His power...but man had yet to see His grace.
 - ▶ That is what is happening during this present age. God is displaying His Grace.
 - The _____?
 - (1) Innocence (Genesis 1:1–3:7)
 - (2) Conscience (Genesis 3:8–8:22)
 - (3) Human Government (Genesis 9:1–11:32)
 - (4) Promise (Genesis 12:1–Exodus 19:25)
 - (5) Law (Exodus 20:1–Acts 2:4)
 - (6) Grace (Acts 2:4–Revelation 20:3)
 - (7) Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:4–6)
 - (8) This will be followed by the Dispensation of Judgment / Eternity?



- The Peculiarity of the Present Age is _____
 - One of the best words to describe This Present Age, the period from the rejection of the Messiah by Israel until the reception of the Messiah by Israel at the Second Coming, is mystery.

Colossians 1:25 God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. **26** This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people. **27** For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory. (NLT)

- ▶ When we think of a mystery, we think of something that is mysterious, unknown, needing to be figured out.
- ▶ But when we see that word in the New Testament it relates to a divine purpose of God, which He has always known, but which He had kept hidden.

Revelation 10:4 When the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write. But I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Keep secret [seal up] what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down." (NLT)

Ephesians 3:9 I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. (NLT)

- In the New Testament, in every instance where we read of a mystery or mysteries it is always a truth concerning and revealed in this present age, something supplementing the revelation of the Old Testament.
 - ▶ A New Testament mystery is a truth that has been "hid in God", but is now revealed. (Christ came to fulfill...)
 - ▶ The sum total of all the mysteries in the New Testament represents that entire body of added truth found in the New Testament which is unrevealed in the Old Testament.

Old Testament is the New Testament _____.

New Testament is the Old Testament _____.

- What has now been revealed was not known before.
- The implication is this: The church is not the fulfillment of all prophesy, only a previously unseen parenthesis in God's overall plan.

- Some people, especially those that think we are already entering the millennial age, or that there won't be a true millennium, think that the Church is the culmination of all prophesy.
- They think that we are the end to what God will do. But that's not how Scripture sees it. The Church wasn't even on the radar in the Old Testament.
- The _____ of the Present Age
 - There is a plan for the Present Age as Jesus tells it, but in order to do that, we need to explain a couple of things first.
 - ▶ We're going to end up in Matthew 13, but let's get the background.

What's the _____?

- When we talk about the Kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God, which are used interchangeably, what are we talking about? What is the Kingdom?
- Seven Meanings for Kingdom in Scripture
 - (1) Gentile kingdoms: earthly, non-spiritual kingdoms. Rome, Persia, Babylon...
 - (2) Kingdoms of Israel and Judah: composed of the 12 tribes
 - (3) Kingdom of Satan: the evil empire
 - (4) God's universal kingdom: this includes the people of God from all ages, both those that entered under law and those that entered under grace.
 - (5) God's spiritual kingdom: you might argue that this is the same as God's universal kingdom, but the difference here is that this includes those from all ages who have experienced a new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit. The new birth is the prerequisite to entering this kingdom.
 - ▶ Scriptures which refer to this kingdom are Matthew 6:33; 19:16, 23, 24; John 3:3-5; Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5.
 - ▶ subpoint
 - (6) Millennial Davidic kingdom: the literal, earthly kingdom over which Christ will rule in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.
 - ▶ The subject of Old Testament prophecy (many times)
 - ▶ Proclaimed as being at hand" at Christ's First Coming (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:5-7)
 - ▶ Rejected by Israel and therefore postponed (Matt 23:37-39)
 - ▶ Will be announced again to Israel during the Great Tribulation
 - ▶ Will be received by Israel and set up at Christ's Second Coming
 - (7) The mystery form of the kingdom
 - ▶ It has always been God's purpose to establish His Kingdom. That is no mystery.
 - ▶ This was His revealed purpose from before the foundation of the world.

- ▶ It goes back to the first sin in heaven, when God's sovereignty was challenged. God's purpose has been to manifest and establish His divine authority once and for all.
- Former Reigns
 - The Reign of _____
 - ▶ God gave dominion to Adam that he might manifest the authority of God. God intended that man's conscience would bear evidence of the responsibility to the authority of God, but man failed.
 - The Reign of _____
 - ▶ Judges. Government was ordained so men would recognize government as a manifestation of God's authority, but man rejected it, too.
 - ▶ Kings. The same thing happened even when God established a theocracy, in which God was recognized as sovereign. The nation chosen to carry this out rebelled.
 - The Reign of _____
 - ▶ Out of this, God revealed that it was His purpose to establish His authority through the seed of David. But even when Christ came, man rejected him.
 - ▶ Sinful man has consistently rejected the manifestation of the authority of God.
 - ▶ All of this is not a mystery. It was known. It was revealed. What was unknown was that there would be this time of the Church, this age of Grace, this Mystery now revealed.
 - ▶ It's this mystery form of the kingdom that we'll see depicted in Matthew 13.

Matthew's _____ of Jesus

- He is the Son of David (at least 10 times). He is Israel's Messiah. He is the King.
- Summary of Matthew 1-12.
 - Chapters 1-2
 - ▶ Legal right to the Throne
 - Chapter 3
 - ▶ Dedication of the King
 - Chapter 4
 - ▶ Moral right of the King
 - Chapter 5-7
 - ▶ Judicial right of the King
 - Chapter 8-10
 - ▶ Prophetical right of the King (through his ministry to Israel)
 - Chapter 11-12
 - ▶ Opposition to the King

- Chapter 11:1-9
 - ▶ Christ shows He and His forerunner have been rejected.
- Chapter 11:20-24
 - ▶ Rejection will result in judgment.
- Chapter 11:28-30
 - ▶ Because of that rejection, a new invitation is given, an invitation to all
- Chapter 12
 - ▶ The opposition comes to a climax
- Chapter 12:23
 - ▶ The people are debating the person of Christ
- Chapter 12:24
 - ▶ The leaders examine the evidence the Holy Spirit has presented and decide his credentials are the credentials of hell.
- Chapter 12:31
 - ▶ Christ warns the nation that they are making a mistake.
- Chapter 12:46-50
 - ▶ Jesus indicates that he is setting aside all natural relationships and establishing a new relationship, based on faith.
- So, what happens, now that the kingdom is rejected and the king is going to be absent? Will the kingdom be abandoned? No.

Homework:

- Read Matthew 13
- Read Revelation Chapters 10 and 11
 - Who are the Two Witnesses?
 - Justify your answer with Scripture(s).
 - Why were the Seven Thunders not recorded?