

**THE CHURCH AGE OR  
THE AGE OF GRACE  
Lesson 8**

**Introduction:** The dispensation in which we now live is considered what I call the Dispensation of Grace. It reaches from the Day of Pentecost until the Rapture of the Church.

The dispensation is characterized by God's dealing with the bride of Christ, the Church. As in all other dispensations, God is putting man to the test to prove his \_\_\_\_\_ to please God. In this dispensation all man must do is \_\_\_\_\_ in the grace of God.

Man's failure to do so will result in \_\_\_\_\_ taking place in the tribulation period.

We are going to give you a brief description of the characteristics of this dispensation in which we find ourselves.

- A. God's purposes in this dispensation belong strictly to the \_\_\_\_\_ and not Israel.
- B. This dispensation is described as an "evil age." Gal. 1:4; Phil. 2:15
- C. This dispensation will end with the return of Christ for the Church.
- D. It is a parenthetical (pause) dispensation in which Israel has been set aside as a nation.
- E. Christ operates as the High Priest of the Church interceding on our behalf to the Father.
- F. The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with individual members within the Church.
- G. God's sole purpose in this dispensation is to save sinners, both Jew and Gentile. The Church is at the center of God's purposes for this dispensation and this will be the focus of this lesson.

**I. THE MEANING OF THE CHURCH**

**A. The Definition of the Church**

1. We see this in the name of the dispensation. "Ecclesia" is a Greek word meaning a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. God's purpose for this dispensation is clearly seen in Acts 15:14.
3. Over \_\_\_\_\_ times the word "ecclesia" appears in the New Testament and it refers to the Church in a twofold way or reference.
  - a. The local congregation of baptized believers united in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. All of the saints from the apostles to the complete bride at Christ's coming- the \_\_\_\_\_ church.
4. The church is not an extension of the Jewish economy.

Much misunderstanding has been advocated through the misapplication of scriptures. That is true in both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ realms

**B. The Differences Of The Church** — (As related to Israel) — Notes by Dr. David Hubbard

**1. The Origin of the Church**

- a. Israel - Began with Abraham - Gen. 12:1,2 - Israel increased by natural generation — Ex. 1:7.
- b. Church — Began at Pentecost — Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:1-4 — The Church increases by supernatural conversions. Acts 2:47; I Peter 1:23.

**2. The Nature of the Church**

- a. Israel was God's earthly people and constituted a \_\_\_\_\_ state which governed and made war.
- b. The Church is God's heavenly people and has no political work or governmental authority. It is \_\_\_\_\_ in character. John 17:16; Phil. 3:20; II Cor. 10:4,5

**3. The Blessings of the Church**

- a. Israel has a promised posterity here on earth. Turn to Deuteronomy 28:1-13:
- b. The Church is promised tribulation on earth, but also the \_\_\_\_\_ of spiritual blessings. James 2:5-6

**4. The Guide of the Church's Conduct**

- a. Israel was under the Law of Moses and guided by the Ten Commandments. Exodus 19:7-8 and Joshua 1:8.
- b. The Church is not under the law and is led by the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. See Acts 15:10-24. Galatians 5:16-18.

**5. The Worship of the Church**

- a. Israel's worship was \_\_\_\_\_ according to Hebrews 10:11 where it says: *“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.”* God was confined to the Holy of Holies and Israel could only worship him there. See Deuteronomy 12:11.
- b. The Church's worship is \_\_\_\_\_ and God is present wherever we gather in his name. John 4:21. Hebrews 13:15.  
*15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

**6. The Ministry of the Church**

- a. Israel was to witness the nature of God. Zech.8:22-23. He is one. Isa. 43:12 — The purpose of this was to bring the nations to God.

b. The Church is a witness of the work of God through salvation. Acts 5:29-32. The purpose is to bring Christ to all the world. Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8.

#### 7. The Future of the Church

a. The people of Israel were subjects of the king waiting for the rule of Christ. Luke 1:32. They are awaiting the \_\_\_\_\_ appearing of Christ after the Tribulation Period. Matt. 24:29-31.

b. The Church is the Bride of the King of Kings and we will reign with Christ. Eph. 5:25.

The Church awaits the \_\_\_\_\_ coming of Christ before the Tribulation Period. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

## **II. THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH—**

Turn to Ephesians 3:3-6.

The word "mystery" is used in the Bible to refer to things in the plan of God that were not revealed previously. The Church is a "mystery" in three ways.

A. The Church as a Building — Christ the Cornerstone — The Church and Her Foundation---I Peter. 2:4. In these verses, we see the relationship of Christ and the Church as Foundation and Building. Christ alone constructs and builds the Church. He alone places \_\_\_\_\_ into the wall of the Building. Eph. 4:16.

This relationship illustrates the stability of our salvation. We are built upon a solid foundation. Matthew 7:24-25. Our foundation will withstand the waters of judgment and circumstance.

B. The Church as a Body — Christ the Head — The Church and Her Fruitfulness

1. The Head — Everybody must have a head to survive and \_\_\_\_\_ is the Head of the Church. Eph. 1:22. The word "head" speaks of Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ in the church as the "supreme, chief, prominent" authority.

2. The Body — The Church makes up the body of Christ.

Eph. 1:23 — "*Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*"

The Church is in a position of complete \_\_\_\_\_ to the headship of Christ for he is "the Saviour of the body." Eph. 5:23.

3. One Unit —

The Body and the Head form one body that cannot be separated without the death of both. Ephesians 4:11-16.

## **C. The Church as a Bride —**

Christ the Bridegroom — The Church and Her Future

1. In Ephesians 5, Paul describes the right kind of relationship that should be between the husband and wife.

It is interesting to note that in verse 32 he states "I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

2. Ephesians 5:5:24-30 gives us three facts concerning the relationship of the Bride and Bridegroom..

a. Christ loved the Church and Gave himself for It — vs. 25

“Love” of course is the word for divine love-“agape.” It is in the aorist tense which points back to a \_\_\_\_\_ in the past- a specific reference to Calvary.

b. The Church is in subjection to Christ — vs. 24

“subject”--hupotasso (hoop-ot-as'-so) present tense speaking of an ongoing to linear action.

c. Christ protects and cares for the Church — vs. Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 5:25-30

*25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

A husband will protect his wife at all costs, that is if he loves her, even if it means his own life.

*26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*  
The washing is not water baptism. It is the \_\_\_\_\_ washing that comes as we spend time in the word of God.

*27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

What is this glorious church he speaks about?

1- One that is perfect in knowledge and holiness.

2- One that shines with \_\_\_\_\_.

3- One that will be fully conformed to Christ. 1 John 3:2.

*28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

*29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:* both words are present tense words- continual action

“Nourish” ektrepho (ek-tref'-o); to rear up to maturity, i.e. (genitive case) to cherish or train.

“Cherisheth” thalpo (thal'-po); probably akin to thallo (to warm); to brood, i.e. (figuratively) to foster.

*30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

The idea here is, that there is a close and intimate union between the Christian and the Saviour--a union so intimate that they may be spoken of as *one*.