

## Ages and Ages: The End of the Grace Age *By C. Elden McNabb*

We have been in the Grace Age for almost two thousand years. During that time, anyone who wanted to be born of the Spirit of God was given a warm welcome by God and His Son. Everyone who accepted the offer of “peace with God” was then free to partake of all the benefits which God has prepared for those who would believe and repent. The Grace Age, from the days of John the Baptist until now (Luke 16:16), is the third in a series of three time divisions of approximately two millennia each. God has given us mortals exactly six thousand years to see what we will do with this wonderful gift of life, and this wonderful place called Earth to live our lives.

**The first division** was a period of about two thousand years from the creation of Adam to the birth of Abraham. We might call it “the world without law,” for during that time, God made almost no demands on His creation. He did give one “Thou shalt.” He said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over ... every living thing that moveth upon the Earth” (Gen. 1:28). He also gave one “thou shalt not.” You know about the fruit (Gen. 2:16-17).

God did not “execute” Cain for murdering his brother, because there was no commandment against murder. In fact, God deliberately let him live so that everyone would see the tremendously ill effect that is brought to bear on the human society when the murderer is not himself killed by the people (Num. 35:17-33). If God had given a large list of punishable deeds neither we, nor the angels in heaven (1 Cor. 4:9) would have been able to comprehend the problems which are caused by sin, which has been caused by Satan in Heaven and Earth since “iniquity was found” in him (Ezekiel 28:15).

You can be sure that it was largely because of Cain’s continued existence that the time came when God had to destroy almost all of mankind in order to save us from the corruption which had developed. It had even corrupted the descendants of Seth, Abel’s replacement, until the eventual fulfillment of the promise of a deliverer (Gen. 3:15) was so threatened that God had to destroy all but a few of even Seth’s descendents. He had to go *almost as far* as to return to the situation of the original creation of only two to “be ye fruitful, and multiply; [and] bring forth abundantly in the earth” (Gen. 9:7).

It would have been easier on God, in a way, if he had simply created some new angels to replace that third of the angels which Satan drew with him. However, it was more important to God that the angels which did not side with Lucifer had about a seven-thousand-year object

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lesson to show them, and to prove to them the magnitude of the evil which Satan's rebellion had spewed out in Heaven and in Earth.

After the flood, God chose Shem and his descendants to bear the responsibility of believing, and keeping the covenant of God alive in the earth. Even as Noah was the tenth generation from Adam, Abraham was the tenth generation from Shem. And for those ten generations, about 418 years, some of Shem's family remained faithful to God in their appointment, until the time of Abraham's departure from his "father's house." "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Idolatry had become commonplace. Even Abraham's immediate family had their idols (Gen. 31:19), and God had to separate a man of faith, with his wife, and start again to produce a pure lineage through which to bring forth the coming Messiah. That time, He reduced the numbers back to two (Abraham and Sarah), and emphasized again the "seed of promise" in the allegory of Isaac.

By contrast, the descendents of Ham had, by the third generation, already forsaken the way of God. Their idolatry had grown and spread among all but a few of the descendants of those who had escaped the flood; once again endangering the fulfillment of the promise. It was about six-hundred-fifteen years after the flood when Jacob took his family into Egypt. By which time the idolatry of the descendants of Ham was deeply rooted in "the land of Ham."

It is easy to see how necessary it was for Abraham to be called out to spend the last one hundred years of his life without a country, and without a people.

**The second division** began with Abraham, and lasted approximately two thousand years to the birth of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Abraham was the youngest of three brothers, and was born about 452 years after the flood. Then, at seventy-five years of age God called him to leave his home and his family, and to go somewhere which the Lord God Almighty would show him after he had made his beginning move. O that we could demonstrate that kind of faith today. If we are to be able to do that, we will surely have to determine in our hearts to believe everything that is written in the Word of God.

During that second two-thousand-year period, the Word of God placed special emphasis on the

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ascendency and demise of the nation of Israel. I know that it seems as if God took a very long time to get us from Adam to Abraham, and to Jesus Christ, and to the redemption of mankind. However there was a lot to be accomplished above and beyond the actual redemption of God's creation. God deemed all of those things which are written about in the Old Testament to be important enough that the redemption of mankind could wait 4,000 years for the beginning of the Grace Age.

We might not be able to comprehend whether that was fair, or necessary, or tragic, or whatever, but God did it, because it had to be done. It was the way of wisdom by which to make adequate preparation for the arrival of the promised seed and the redemption of mankind. However, there was a lot more going on here than the redemption of mankind. Man is here because there was a huge insurrection and disruption in Heaven, probably some eleven thousand years ago or so.

When God cast out Lucifer and those who defected with him, it decimated the body of angels in Heaven, and God is preparing to use the redeemed of mankind to replace those angels which fell. In order to do that, God created a plan by which a broad scope of people could display various degrees of faith, and qualify to be resurrected and to inherit eternal life at some level in the eternal. Those who lived before the Grace Age, though not "born again," will be judged by their conscience, and according to how much they knew about God and His will.

The Apostle Paul said, "The law was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). Apparently there is some kind of regimen which the people in each era are required to measure up to in order to receive eternal life at their time of judgment. There were two different kinds of regimen during the second two thousand years. All of the people who were among the descendants of Abraham were required to come under the tenets of the covenants and the laws which God gave to their forefathers. However, there was no change in requirements for the rest of humanity. Those covenants and laws were given only to the descendants of Abraham, through the lineage of Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses.

Notably, in the New Testament there is no mentioning of the Gentiles being required to keep the Law of Moses, not even the Sabbath. In Acts 15:14-28, James, the brother of Jesus, being the Chief Apostle, said, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. ... It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, *to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things* ."

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God prophesied by many witnesses to send the message of His plan to us. He set us up, so to speak, forcing us to demonstrate faith in what He had said, and thereby be able to believe in the Messiah when He should come. There is a particularly straight forward statement in Amos 3:7 which testifies to this truth. He said, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

God began to give the promises and Covenants by Abraham, but He gave The Law, and other covenants by Moses. It was the third millennium from Adam. God made the first green life-giving things on the earth on the third day of creation, and he brought forth the Word of Life in the third millennium. It was not "the breath of life" which would come later by Jesus Christ, but like the green plants of the earth, the Law of Moses created the atmosphere by which those who are born of the Spirit must believe, and live. (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law, nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses.") (Rom. 5:8-14).

For 2,000 years Abraham and his faithful children were our example as they moved when God said move, and stayed when God said stay. In those days the children of Israel failed God many times, and were eventually rejected of God and destroyed as a nation. Still they were living prophecy of the great events which would transpire in the third two-thousand-year period.

**The third division** began with the lives and ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, quickly followed by the rise and spread of Christianity. The prophecies contained in the law and the prophets began to be fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matt. 11:7-14), and the plan of God, as pertains to the election of the Jews, reached its peak about seven to fourteen years after the ministry of Jesus Christ was finished.

In that short period of time, God accomplished the fulfillment of all the promises which He had given to the nation of Israel from Abraham until that time. ***The Apostles of the Christ, and those who heard and believed, and were chosen, flowered into "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."***

And they became "Members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bone. "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Romans 11:7).

Then God turned to the Gentiles, to do with the Gentiles as He had done with the Jews, but this time the plan would all play out in the Grace Age.

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The time had come for the fulfillment of the parable of "The Treasure in the Field." Almost all of us will remember that parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44).

He was really after two things, the redemption of mankind, and the "the Bride." The field is the whole world, and the treasure is revealed to us in Exodus 19:4-5 to be "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." It is the Spirit and the Bride together who say, "Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Paul said it well in his epistle to Titus, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation *hath appeared to all men*

teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,

*and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*

" (Titus 2:11-14).

In his epistle to the Church at Rome, Paul said, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:4-11).

God brought the redeemed in the Jewish community, and the Elect, to perfection, and glory, and honor, and peace, and eternal life, in the first Century A.D. But to those of Israel who still would not obey the truth, He thrust upon them "the day of His wrath" in A.D. 70.

Paul has put us Gentiles on notice that God intends to do exactly the same thing to Gentile

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Christians, and Church at this end of the sixth millennium, "For there is no respect of persons with God." The natural "seed of Abraham" were given every opportunity to see and believe, but except for a remnant, they rebelled and gave Jesus up to be crucified. Therefore, just forty years from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, God poured out His wrath upon them.

We among the Gentiles who believe in Jesus have now reached the last few months of our two-thousand-year-long journey to fulfill all of God's will for us. We received the gospel of Jesus Christ in the first century, and before a hundred years had passed, certain men had crept in unawares, and polluted the gospel message (Jude 1:4; Acts 20:29). By the end of the first century after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the gospel had reached Rome, and perhaps most of Europe, and seemed to stagnate. However, early into the sixteenth century, God began to move the thrust of the Gospel work to America, in order to have a fertile place to "raise up the Church again" in the last days (John 6:39).

God began to pour out His Spirit on His handmaidens and servants in North Carolina, in 1896, and began to restore His Church, in Cleveland, Tennessee, in 1903. That Church arose in the fulfillment of many prophecies, and fell according to prophecy in 1980. During those years the rest of Christianity also surged and ebbed, and today stands almost altogether in rebellion against God. I do not even seem to be able to get some of the best Christians I know to believe even the simplest things which the close friends and followers of Jesus have told us that He said.

We Gentile Christians have now come very near to the end of our allotted time. It is not too complicated to discover from the Holy Scriptures almost exactly when this sixth millennium will be finished. And by the time it is finished, the Grace Age will be over, and the gospel will cease to be preached anywhere on the earth.

The birth of Jesus was a notable event in the timing of God's work, but it was the phenomenon of Jesus' visit to the temple, when He was 12 years of age, which marked the beginning of the fifth millennium. According to that fact, carnal man's tenure of ruling the world will come to an end somewhere near the Autumnal Equinox in 2011, and the Grace Age will have come to an end.

The count-down has begun, and power has been given to the enemies of Christ Jesus that they should begin to execute the wrath of God upon His disobedient "Kingdom of Heaven." God is about to repeat, upon proud and rebellious Gentile Christianity, what He did to Israel in the first

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century of this era. Did not the Lord say, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it" (Amos 5:18-20)?

The time has come in which God will, once again, gather His Elect together, and bring them to perfection, and gather to himself a remnant from "the field" (2 Thess. 2:1). Then shall all the other Christians face His judgment and His wrath. When God has accomplished that, Jesus shall execute the wrath of God upon the nations of the world, as He begins His tenure as ruler of the world for a thousand years.