

GOODNEWS LETTER

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MATURITY BY AGE

An "**Age**" is defined as a length of time **marked off** by certain characteristics or achievements. There are entirely too many ages for one man to study; much less, condense an age down to a short article.

But, our primary interest is in Biblical things. So, we try to keep any writing within the covers of the Bible. Hence, this "**age article**" will not be about any of the age old facts, truths and philosophies that are about the earth, man or any of the proposed ages. Without Scriptural support, our interest wanes.

And, while we may have just a tad bit of interest in other ages of man, we can't take the time to wade through all the material. Our article would not be fair and balanced. We leave the Computer Age and such to someone else.

Certainly, we do have an interest when it comes to the age of the earth. Genesis whets our appetite and we try to fit a young earth into a seven day structure. That's what evolution teaching will do to Bible believers.

We limit our thoughts on the age of the earth, however, and use only a "**Head Line**" approach. We are just barely getting into the subject. It's just too scientific; too time consuming for us.

Yes, we want a young earth; one that supports the Bible account of creation. But, it's just that we don't see the need to affirm or deny the age of the earth. It may be old. But, if we tilt the head in a faithful Biblical slant, we can easily see a very young earth. Neither view effects God's creation account of Genesis, in our thinking.

And so, when we come to man, we see many "**marked ages**" that separate his length of time on earth. Man has matured, advancing socially and technologically; albeit it, many thousands of years passed before his agricultural lifestyle of the horse and buggy gave way to the **Industrial** and our current **Computer/Information Age**.

We see some Biblical advancement, too. Man matures, spiritually, as a whole and, his understanding about his maturity, also has deepened. However, since man **Fell** from God's grace, any maturity of man that is on a spiritual level, is directly related to the work of his Creator, the Lord, God.

God had to step in and either rescue man, or change the landscape completely. Periods of freedom were given, but: "Then the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth, that...his heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5). The flood was sent.

After the deluge, rather than populate and subdue the earth as God commanded, people sought safety in unifying themselves by their own devices. The Lord took notice and said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language...now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language..." so the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city," Gen 11:6-8.

If it were not for God's grace and mercy, man's length of stay on the earth would have been cut short, ending ages ago. But, God is good. Each time that man was left to his own thoughts, God had to enter and rescue him from his own sin and self destruction.

One of the giant periods of time that the Bible "marks off" is the giving of the **Law Covenant**. Under this dispensation, the Lord was pleased to bring a people into Covenant and have them carry out His plan. Israel was born.

But, it wasn't until God gave man a king to rule them (and, that didn't always work out) "...everyone did what was right in his own eyes," Judges 21:25.

It may be that man will correctly identify the ages; if only in his collective mind, which will bring the world into another unification. Only, that's not an answer to his problem. Man's problem has always been, and continues to be, his spiritual condition; his separation from the Lord, God. The question is: "**How to get back to God?**"

It is for that reason that God "**took upon the flesh**" in the Person of Jesus and entered man's sphere of living. Jesus was born to live a perfect life and then, die on man's behalf. This is the only way God could forgive sin. Man broke God's Law and man had to repair it. Jesus did, and then, He took the Law out of the way. By Jesus fulfilling God's standard, man could be saved.

Therefore, the future is glorious. Man will live because Jesus extended the length of his life from **three score and ten** to a life that is **everlasting**. Our Lord rescued man; not only another time, but for eternity. Now, that's good news.

When this truth is grasped, everyone eagerly joins with Paul, calling for all men to give God glory in the church (Eph 3:21) throughout all ages; or, as the Greek has it: *Ton Aioninos Ton Aionion*, "**ages upon ages**;" this age, and for all eternity.

And, if we catch this, there is wonderful good news when Jesus marked off the Christian Age; the best period of time that man shall ever know. Our Savior took

away the sin of the world in order that, "**Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have ever lasting life**" (Jn 3:16). "**If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord, Jesus and believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,**" Romans 10:9.

From the point of salvation - the moment that a sinner trusts in the name of Jesus and His eternal characteristics and achievements that He accomplished, man is brought into a relationship of life.

Now, man has a glorious opportunity of maturity. He may take in "**the sincere milk of the word**" (1Pe 2:2); as well as, "**grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**" (2 Pe 3:18).

Thus, when Jesus brought the Christian Age to earth, He brought eternity with Him; setting man up as a New Creation in a fully mature man; the man, Christ Jesus. This Age, then, is the Age of eternity for man - the only age he needs. Without which, there is no hope and man would cease to be.

Yet, the flesh comes along to fight like Amalek against Israel at Rephidim (Ex 17:8). The flesh blindsides us, taking its stand against any spiritual maturity. Quickly, a Christian learns that maturity has a strong opponent. The flesh is totally against God's righteousness.

And, because salvation is not on auto-pilot, not everyone believing in Jesus wants to live within the new Christian age and walk in God's covenant.

So, man studies his history using natural eyes; apart from the Bible. His desire is not the word of God that saves his soul (life), but he wants to re-live a particular period that feels good to him, all over again. It's much more than a mid-life crisis, too. The sinful flesh will always have a tendency to look back to the old way of life just as **Lot's wife** did.

But, thinking in the past and living out memories, denies the grace period that Jesus "**Marked Off**" for us. Past times will never pay off the way we think it will. But, if it did, then what? In one of His teachings, Jesus warned, "**What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul**" (life), Mt. 16:26.

What we must recognize is what it means to be saved for God's glory. Jesus is not only "our Savior **who died for us**;" He also is our Savior **that lives for us** in order that we might live for Him.

And so, while each age has its definite characteristics and achievements that mark off a period of time that man goes through, there is nothing that is more distinctively marked off than the **Christian Age**. Eternity has entered the present in the birth, life and death of Jesus, the Christ.

Then, another length of time - another Age, comes to light in the resurrection that was accomplished because of Jesus. Further, the Holy Spirit baptized the

church, **marking them off**; not only for this age, but for the ages of ages, as well. Praise the Lord for asking Adam, "**Where art thou.**" And, praise the Lord for His interrupting the plans of men.