

The Present Age: Its Beginning, Progress and End

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

This sermon discusses the present age, its beginning, progress, and end, and how it relates to God's plan of redemption and restoration.

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 1:9, Matthew 24:14, 2 Timothy 4:3, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Eschatology", "Kingdom Of God"

Description

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches on the Book of Ecclesiastes, highlighting the cyclical nature of life and God's dealings with man and the earth. He emphasizes the past, present, and future states of creation, peace, and man's relationship with God. Gaebelein discusses the beginning, progress, and end of the current age, focusing on Christ's ministry, the Holy Spirit's work, the preaching of the Gospel, the rejection of Truth, the state of the world, Satan's influence, and the situation of the Jewish people. He concludes with the anticipation of Christ's return and the establishment of His Kingdom.

Transcript

The Book of Ecclesiastes is the Book in which the natural man speaks. The conclusion which the wisest man reached is that all is vanity, and there is nothing new under the sun. In this first chapter we read of generations which come and go. The sun rises and goes down; the wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about to the north again, according to its circuits. The rivers go into the sea, and to the place where they come from they again return. All moves in nature in cycles. What has been is always to be again, and what was done will be done again.

This is likewise true in respect to God's dealings with man and with the earth. That which has been shall be; and what was done will be done again.

The future will repeat the past,

As the first, shall be the last;

Ages of change between.

Once the earth was undefiled by sin. It was the Paradise of God. For a brief period it knew no sorrow, no suffering, no curse and no death. That is what has been; but it shall surely be again. Creation will have a

second birth, and after its travail pains, death and the curse will flee away. Once peace reigned, no strife was known and no groans heard in all creation's realm. That is what has been; it shall be so again. Groaning creation will be delivered; peace on earth and glory to God in the highest will follow.

Once man, the first man, unfallen, reigned. All things were under his feet. That has been before sin stripped man of his inheritance. But what has been, is that which shall be. The second man, the last Adam, will appear, and under Him man redeemed will again have all things put under his feet. What has been in the past shall be in the future.

God executed his judgments in the past. He will do so again. The past has manifested His power and glory; so will the future. The heavens will not always be silent as they are now; for "Surely our God shall come, and not keep silence."

His blessed Son was once upon earth, making known the glory of God in His Person. That was in the past, and it shall be so again; for He comes back to the earth once more to make known His glory, so that the earth shall be covered with the glory of the Lord.

How near, how very near, these things that shall be are! The age in which we live is the last stepping stone towards the glorious consummation; and in this age there is but a little step left, and soon darkest night shall end and give way to the brightest and most glorious day the world has ever seen. In these studies of Prophecy we shall first consider the present age, its beginning, progress and end. Other studies will put before us from the infallible Word of God the coming glorious consummation and what leads up to it.

I

The Beginning of the Age. In dealing with man and the earth, to work out his own plan of redemption and restoration, God works in certain periods of time which are called ages. Each age has a definite beginning and a definite end. All the different ages which preceded our own age were ages of preparation, for the present age in which we live. In every past age God announced the coming of Him by whom He not only created all things, but by whom He made the ages, that is, His Son. He is the One in whom and for whom all is planned, and through whom the things which have been shall be again, and infinitely more.

He was first announced in the Garden of Eden as the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. In the age after the flood Shem was singled out in whom the Name, that is, the Lord of Glory, should be revealed. Then Abraham, a son of Shem received the promise in the Patriarchal Age that He would come from his seed; and later in the Jewish Age He was promised as the Son of David, and David knew Him by the Spirit as his Lord.

And so in the fulness of time He came, born of a woman, made under the Law, the Son of God manifested in the flesh. His blessed earth life belongs still to the Jewish dispensation, the age which preceded our own age. He came as the minister of the circumcision; and as such He fulfilled the Law and moved exclusively among His own people Israel, bringing them the message of the Kingdom promised to that nation; a Kingdom in which righteousness and peace is to flourish, and into which all the nations of the earth are to be gathered.

The Jewish prophets had announced that Kingdom, but through God's foreknowledge it was also made known that Christ should suffer first, and be rejected by His people; and this came to pass. The nation

instead of giving Him the throne to which He is entitled, delivered their own King into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified. What Gabriel in his great message had communicated to Daniel, that Messiah should be cut off and receive nothing, happened, and that in the very time as revealed in the ninth chapter of Daniel. The Son of God died, rejected by His own nation, He died the sinner's death, He died for the ungodly, He died so that the flood-gates of Divine love and grace might be opened; and that a Holy God might be justified in saving believing sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, and making them the heirs of glory.

Our age then begins with this fact: Christ rejected by His own people, cast out by the world, finishing on the Cross the work of sin bearing. With this, and the associated events, our age started in. Let us see then what we find in the beginning of this age, and then see how the things we shall mention are affected as this age progresses and comes finally to its close.

First, as to the Lord Jesus Christ. As we have already stated, the Son of God came to this earth, was rejected by men, put to death on the cross, and after His burial God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. In due time He left the earth and ascended in His glorified human body into heaven, where He is seated now at the right hand of the majesty on high. It is a wonderful fact that in heaven, seated at God's own right hand, there is a Man. One who was born of the Virgin, lived on earth a holy life, died the sinner's death on the Cross, was buried and raised by the power of God. Before this age He was also in heaven, but not as man. He was ever in the bosom of the Father as the Only Begotten. Now as the Man Christ Jesus who has conquered He fills that throne, the Father's throne. He has not His own throne which belongs to Him, nor will He get this throne, the throne of His father David, as long as this age lasts. Exalted in the highest place He has all power, and exercises in behalf of His people, His priesthood and His advocacy, ministering to the needs of His own on earth.

Second, let us see next about the Holy Spirit in His relation to this age. He came to earth on the day of Pentecost. In the Old Testament times He visited the earth, but not to abide, as is now the case. He strove with men from the very beginning, He endued prophets, and priests and kings, and all who believed the Word of God, of which He is the Author; but after Christ died and had gone back to the Father, He came as the other Comforter, the One who takes the place of the absent Christ. He is come to earth to accomplish God's purpose in this present age. Nowhere do we read in the New Testament that the purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit is to convert the world, and establish universal righteousness and peace. These blessings are not promised for the age in which we live. The great purpose for which the Spirit of God came in the beginning of our age is for the out-taking of the Church, the Body of Christ. He is gathering together Jews and Gentiles who believe on Christ and puts them into this Body. On the Day of Pentecost this Body began; then all the gathered believers were baptised by the One Spirit into one Body. This work continues throughout this age. Then He Himself bestows the gifts which are needed for the upbuilding of that Body. In the beginning of this age He unfolded His special energy in sign gifts, confirming by these the truth of Christianity. These special gifts and signs were only confined to the beginning of the age. Nowhere is it stated that they were to continue to the end, for this age is an age of faith and not of sight.

Third, during this age there is preached a special message which was unknown in former ages. This message is the Gospel of Grace. It is true that before Christ died an innumerable company of people were saved, and salvation of course was always by grace. They believed God, confessed themselves sinners, trusted in the promise, and then they were saved. But the Gospel message as it began to be preached after Christ died and the Holy Spirit came to earth, was not known in Old Testament times. That Gospel not only offers remission of sins, but tells the believing sinner that he becomes in Christ a Son of God and

a joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ; that eternal life is his present possession and that he is one spirit with the Lord, for the Holy Spirit makes His abode in him. This then is the great message which was preached with the beginning of this age, and which is to be preached to its very end. It is the only power of God unto salvation, and anything else is a miserable, good-for-nothing substitute and counterfeit, which not alone cannot please God, but upon which the curse of God rests; for anything short of the Gospel of Christ is an insult to God and a denial of His righteousness and love. And this Gospel is to be preached according to the word of our Lord beginning in Jerusalem, in Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost ends of the earth. This Divine program given by our Lord has been carried out; the preaching began in Jerusalem, that is where the Gospel stream started; from there it flowed into Judea and Samaria, and then Gentiles heard the Gospel and were saved. Our Lord indicated this world-wide sowing during this age in the first parable of Matthew xiii, when He spoke of the sower going out into the field, telling us that the field is the world. Israel in the preceding age was spoken of as a vineyard with a fence about, but in this age there is no more vineyard, no more special place where labor is to be done; but as John Wesley used to say, "The world is my parish."

Fourth, let us also notice that with the beginning of the age there is made known the full Truth of God by revelation. It is the faith which is once and for all delivered unto the saints. When our Lord was on earth He spoke repeatedly to His disciples that He had many things to say unto them, which they could not grasp, but that they should know them afterward. The "afterward" does not mean heaven, but it means the afterward of the Holy Spirit. He told them that when the Spirit came He would take of these things of Christ and show them unto them; and so when He came He brought with Him the fullest revelation concerning Christ Himself, the believer's position in Him and all the gracious truths connected with it. In this sense, the Word of God was completed in the beginning of this age. Nothing can be added to it, nor must anything be taken away from it. There is no such thing as progress in the Truth of God, that man by research can discover something for himself, as he attempts to do in the different sciences. The Truth and doctrine made known in the beginning of this age is a fixed Truth, it is eternal Truth, it is unchangeable Truth, and as such the only light which man has during this age.

Fifth, as to the moral characteristics of this age. The Apostle John tells us that the world lieth in the wicked one, and that the character of the world is antagonistic to the Word of God. The age therefore is branded in every portion of the New Testament as an evil age. Certain exhortations to believers make this clear. All exhortations in the New Testament to Christians are exhortations to separate from this age. In the beginning of Galatians we are expressly told that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us out of this present evil age. Then again we read what Paul wrote to Titus that the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men, teaching us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age. This shows that the present age is evil.

And nowhere is the promise made in the Epistles that this present age can ever be anything different than an evil age. It continues evil to the end.

Sixth, what is the relation of Satan to our age? He is the enemy of God, and seemingly achieved a triumph when he got man to reject the Lord of Glory. On this account He is called in the New Testament "the god of this age." He is the domineering spirit of the age in which we live, which is also called Man's Day. Christ is rejected, with no throne on earth, but Satan instead has his throne in this world and controls the affairs of the age. That this is so may be seen from the very events with which this age started. Persecution soon set in, believers were slain, and in every other way this dark shadow antagonized the work of the Spirit

and counterfeited the Truth of God. Therefore the spiritual warfare of believers in this age is to stand against the wiles of the devil, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the wicked spirits in the heavenly places. (Eph. vi:12). From this we learn that the age is ruled over by Satan and the wicked spirits.

Seventh, there is another item which needs to be mentioned in connection with the beginning of this age, and that is the Jewish people. Their measure of wickedness was filled when they delivered the Son of God into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified. God in mercy lingered over the city for forty years before the announced judgment was executed upon the city and upon the nation. Thousands upon thousands repented and accepted the Gospel; in fact, the beginning of the entire Church was Jewish. But the nation hardened its heart, and finally the tears which the Lord had shed over Jerusalem were justified in the awful siege of Jerusalem, followed by the dispersion of the nation. Ever since they have been in fulfillment of the predictions of their own prophets, scattered amongst the nations of the world, and this is continuing throughout this age.

We see then that there is a marked difference between this age and the ages which preceded it. Christ as the glorified Man in heaven, the Holy Spirit on earth, a new message, a new work which the Spirit of God does, the full revelation of God given to men, the world in darkness, Satan its god, and the Jews no longer in their land but wandering amongst the nations with judicial blindness upon them.

II

The Progress of the Age. This present age is unrevealed in the Old Testament. When Daniel received the great prophecy which Gabriel carried from the Throne of God to the praying Prophet, he heard that at a certain time the death of Christ should take place, and that the city and the sanctuary should be burned, and the nation scattered. This was at the close of the sixty-ninth week, four hundred and eighty-three years after the command to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem had been given. As we have shown in our book on Daniel this has been literally fulfilled, and as all students of prophecy know there is an unfulfilled week, or seven years, which are yet to come to pass in the history of that nation. The space between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week is this present age. Nor is there anywhere in the Word of God a revelation which tells us of the duration of this age. There is no hint about it in the Old Testament; and when the disciples asked the Lord about the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, which manifestly takes place at the close of this age, He told them, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons." It is therefore useless trying to find out about the duration of the age.

But when we come to the moral and religious characteristics, in connection with the progress of this age, it is different. They are fully revealed by the Lord and also by His Spirit. Especially is this true of the very end of this age. Twice our Lord spoke on these matters, once on earth when He gave the Kingdom parables in Matthew xiii and spoke of the progress of the age and what should take place during His absence. Again He spoke from heaven about these same things, when He gave the messages to the seven churches. In them He outlined the course of the professing church on earth, and reveals in it what is to take place during the progress of this age.

We shall cover the same seven things which we have mentioned in connection with the beginning of this age, and learn how they are affected as this age progresses and nears its end.

First, as to the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. Enthroned in the highest glory He can never be affected by what is going on down here. Satan's power cannot reach Him. The Lord Jesus is the same, yesterday, today,

and forever. Whatever man does on earth, however great the hatred may be against Him, even if the nations unite to cast off His cords and bands, in the language of the second Psalm, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh at them and hold them in derision." But there is a comforting truth in connection with this, the comfort of which has been the blessed portion of all God's people as the age progressed, and its true character became more and more known. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me," was the word the Lord Jesus addressed to the persecutor of the Church of God. It shows His loving interest and sympathy for His suffering members on earth. And so as the age progressed in the pagan persecutions and the equally bad, if not worse, Papal persecutions, He has sustained His people on earth, He has never failed them, He has carried them through the water and through the fire. He has presented their petitions before the Throne of God, and answered their prayers. Nor will He ever fail His people until they are gathered home into His presence, the trophies of His grace.

Second. Nor can the Holy Spirit and His work be affected by what the progress of this age brings. He knows no failure. His Divine mission cannot fail. In every generation during this age, no matter how dark it may have been, He has continued successfully His work and added to the Body of Christ, in each generation those who believed on the Son of God.

Third and Fourth, as to the Gospel and the Truth of God it is different, for we shall notice here at once what the progress of the age has brought about in connection with what God has given to this age. Our Lord tells us in the second parable, in Matthew xiii, that no sooner had the wheat, the Truth, been sown in the field, which is the world, but that an enemy came and sowed the tares. Then He revealed this fact that the wheat and the tares were to grow together until the harvest, which is the end of the age. There is then a development in the progress of this age, a development in the wheat, which is ripening for the harvest, and the development of the tares. The Truth is to shine more brightly as the age progresses, and darkness becomes more dense. We see therefore that after a brief period of purity the evil began in the professing church. The Gospel, even in Apostolic days was being denied, and the Apostles' doctrines corrupted.

What the Lord Jesus taught in the parable of the mustard seed came also to pass as the age progressed. The little mustard seed became a great tree, and the birds began to lodge in its branches to defile the tree. The professing church became a great world institution, and in alliance with the world where the throne of Satan is, became corrupted; instead of being the espoused virgin, she became the harlot and adultress. What the Lord Jesus announced in the Parable of the leaven came likewise to pass as this age progressed. The leaven, which is corruption, evil in every form, especially in Christian doctrine, has been introduced into the pure doctrine of Christ, the three measures of fine wheat.

And so we see that as the age progressed the rejection of every phase of Divine Truth set in. The Deity of Christ denied, the Virgin Birth, His atoning death, His physical resurrection, everything denied; the Bible as the revelation of God rejected; and with these denials there came the increase of unrighteousness and moral declension, till the age produced the condition which the Word of God clearly foresaw, a great professing church, with the harlot character, unfaithful to Christ and to His Word; while of course it is equally true that there is the true Church, which remains true to Christ and to His Word.

Fifth, as the age progresses there is no change seen in the condition of the world. It is true man has been developing Man's Day. As the age progressed great inventions and discoveries were made. These are often taken to be indications that the age is getting better. They point to the telephone, and wireless, the great engineering feats, the chemical discoveries, and everything else in these lines as evidences that the age is constantly improving. Before the war we were told that the age had improved to such an extent that

a great war would no longer be possible. Everybody was lauding our great civilization to the skies. A few weeks after everything was knocked sky-high, and what is left of all these optimistic ramblings? No, this age does not improve, and everything which the Word of God has to say about it has been solemnly verified and confirmed by the roar of cannons and by the slaughter of millions. Our great inventions and discoveries have not made the world more righteous. On the contrary, unrighteousness and lawlessness have increased, and later we shall show how everything in these conditions points to the very end of this age.

Sixth, Satan. The world does not change, neither does Satan. He can never be anything else but the enemy of God, nor can his person and work be arrested by man's efforts. As the age continues his opposition becomes more marked. We know from the lips of our Lord that he is the liar and the murderer from the beginning. He has made good these titles throughout this age. He tried to stamp out more than once the Truth of Christ by instigating the cruel persecutions of the people of God. They were slain by the thousands and hundreds of thousands during the reign of the Roman Emperors. When he failed in this then he manifested his character as the liar from the beginning. He began to counterfeit the Truth, and partially succeeded in corrupting the professing church and putting a spurious system in control, where he makes good his title as the liar. When in the progress of this age the Spirit of God began reviving the Truth, when the noble men and women refused to bow before Rome, he again acted as the murderer. Thousands upon thousands were tortured, slain, and burned alive, until he discovered that the Truth cannot be stamped out by the fires of persecution, that he was failing again as he had failed in the first century of the age. Then once more he appears in the garb of an angel of light. Now he does his work through demon-cults like Christian Science, Spiritism, Mormonism and others. He manifests himself once more as the liar from the beginning in the New Theology and the Destructive Criticism, so widely accepted everywhere. And thus he continues his work as the age progresses; no change for the better.

Seventh, as already stated the Jews are wanderers amongst the nations. We know two things concerning the Jews. The first is that they are given the promise in earthly things, and though they are now blinded, God has not cast them away; and the other is that they are during this age under judgment. These two facts stand out in the history of that remarkable people as the age continues. If we want to see the richest people, the most influential, the brightest, we must turn to the Jewish people. In that fact God witnesses that they are still His people. And then the greatest sorrow, the greatest suffering, the greatest poverty is found amongst them; the witness that they are under judgment. Over and over again in every century has solemnly come to pass what their forefathers cried, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." We shall later point out the startling change which is coming upon them as a nation when the age ends.

III

The End of the Age. Like every previous age, our age will also come to a close. It is here we find one of the vital errors amongst Christians at the present time. They never think of this age of Gospel preaching and Gospel privilege as coming to an end. If one speaks to them about the end of the age, they think it means after the world is converted, and the passing away of the world itself. Peter has given us the witness that this would be one of the characteristics of the last days, when mockers shall come, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for from the day the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." This is what we find so much in our day. In spite of the horrible conditions in which this age has been plunged, and the confirmation of the predictions of the Bible relating to this age, the mass of professing Christians expect that things will continue, and that after the war the age will speedily improve. We have seen before how impossible this is, for the Bible teaches us that this

age is an evil age, and there is not a single passage which promises an improvement. On the contrary, everything in the Word shows that as the age ends, and its real end comes, all the evil conditions present in this age come to a head and climax. We find therefore a great deal said in the Scriptures about the end of the age. The Lord Jesus speaks of it in His parables in Matthew xiii. He has given also a complete panorama of the age-ending in His great Olivet discourse. Then when we come to the Epistles we find that the Spirit of God through every writer gives a warning and a witness about the end of the age. All these warnings and witnesses do not tell us of a converted world, and a world which is won to righteousness, of nations who lay down their armaments and no longer make war; nor do these warnings and predictions speak of a triumph of the doctrine of Christ. They tell us the very opposite. They give warnings that the faith is going to be rejected, that delusions and errors are going to multiply, that nation is going to lift up sword against nation and kingdom against kingdom, that lawlessness and unrighteousness are going to increase, and that the age itself is going to end in a time of trouble such as the world has never seen before.

If we turn to the last Book of the Bible we find also an argument concerning the age and its end. Before the heaven opens and He comes, whose right it is to establish His Kingdom over this earth, the wicked and wild conditions prevailing on this earth are described, and that on account of them the judgments of the Lord will be in the earth.

And now to follow the same line of thought as in our preceding meditations, let us again notice the same things which we mentioned before in connection with the beginning and progress of this age.

First, as this age comes to a close Christ is still on the Father's Throne. His ministry in behalf of His people both as Priest and Advocate continues unbroken. He has promised, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age." We say again, He changes not. As He sustained His people in the beginning of the age and gave them victory, as He kept the feet of His saints in every generation and gathered them home into His own presence, so He will still minister to the needs of His members on earth. Let the age become as dark as it possibly can, His people who trust in Him and walk in His fellowship will be kept and preserved. We do not know all that is going on in glory. We know he is there as the upholder of all things. We know that the greater part of the children of God are as disembodied spirits in His presence. Some day a startling thing will happen in that glory. The hour has come when the redeemed are to have their resurrection bodies, and all the living saints shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. When that hour strikes He Himself will arise from the place at the Father's right hand and pass out of the third heaven, and then from the air give the shout which will summon all the redeemed to meet Him in the sky. For this the people of God are waiting in the end of this age.

Second, the Holy Spirit also remains the same. His energy is undiminished. The work He came to do and which He has done throughout this age, will be done by Him to the very end. Indeed, while darkness increases and the enemy becomes more active, God's people may confidently expect that the Holy Spirit will also demonstrate His power in the behalf of those who love and walk in the Truth. Some day He will have finished the work for which He came, the Body will be complete as to numbers; and when that crowning event, the coming of the Lord for His saints, takes place, the Holy Spirit will have His part to do. Not alone Christ will present the Church but the Holy Spirit as well; and then He will leave the earth, no longer to be here to do the special work which He came to do on the Day of Pentecost. He has finished the work.

Third, the Gospel is still preached during the end of the age. As long as the Church remains here the true Gospel testimony can never be silenced, because behind it stands the omnipotent Spirit of God and the power of Christ. But as the age closes the true Gospel is being more and more rejected. We see this today; we hear on all hands that man no longer needs to be born again, that the blood of Christ cannot save, that character saves; that the soldiers who die on the battlefield bring a sacrifice like Christ brought on the Cross, and that the hero's death makes all things right in the past life and opens the gates of glory. On all sides we see these rejections; the Son of God is denied and every phase of His work is set aside. This is exactly what is taught in the New Testament, that men would turn away their ears from the Truth, and that the great mass of professing Christians would only have a form of godliness and deny the power thereof.

When at last the Church has ended her ministry the sound of the Gospel of Grace will no longer be heard. While this is true, on the other hand the Gospel still preached up to the end of the age brings about the completion of the Body of Christ. We see this today in a startling manner. While amongst the so-called Christian nations the Gospel is rejected, in heathen countries the Gospel is accepted by thousands upon thousands, and thus the Body of Christ, the true Church, is being made complete.

Fourth, when this age closes the whole body of the doctrine of Christ and the Truth will be rejected. The foundation for this has gradually been laid. It started over a hundred years ago in Germany, where the modern criticism of the Bible started. This criticism has constantly been growing, until everywhere throughout Christendom an infallible Bible is being denied. Thus the foundations of the faith have been undermined, and the way is prepared for the final apostasy, the complete falling away from the Truth.

Fifth, in regard to the world. As stated previously this age cannot get better, but becomes worse. We see it today, how all inventions and discoveries in which we used to boast as evidences of progress are being made use of in the most horrible catastrophe the world has ever seen. Europe is like a human slaughterhouse. Nations are against nations and kingdoms against kingdoms; and all this was started by a nation which boasted of having the most light in religious things and the best culture and civilization. And all along they denied Christ and the Truth of God; and when the outbreak came it was only a demonstration that behind their Christless civilization and culture there stood the domineering shadow of the prince of this world. When we look closer into the Prophetic Word we find that these conditions continue to the end of the age, and that finally there comes a tremendous crash, when the Lord Himself will deal with these horrible conditions and smite the wicked and the ungodly.

But some one might say, "What is the use of doing anything at all if this is the program?" "What is the use of us to fight as a nation?" But this is wrong logic. There are principles of righteousness and justice which must be maintained in this world, for which man must stand up, and as far as our nation is concerned we are on the side of justice and the defense of righteousness, which have the approval of God, for they are in line with His righteous government. When the time comes for the reckoning, not from the human side but from God's side, this will fall heavily into the scale when the nations are judged.

Sixth, as to Satan. Like a huge serpent he has been winding his way throughout this age, leaving everywhere his contamination. While Satan is not omniscient and perfect in knowledge, he has sufficient knowledge of his destiny and how soon that destiny will be accomplished, and so as the age closes he becomes fiercer in his wrath; like a serpent which is attacked and in danger of being caught, his hiss is heard on all sides. He is now actively engaged in counterfeiting the Truth, in putting in his demon doctrines, in perverting the Truth wherever he can. And by and by after the true Church is gone he will put

his masterpieces into the world, of whom we shall have more to say in these studies. Then he will blind the nations as never before and rush them on to the final climax of the age.

Seventh, as to the Jews. We have seen how they were scattered at the beginning of this age, and how they continued to wander amongst the nations as the age progressed. When we come to the end of the age a startling change takes place with His people. The figtree, once cursed, puts forth new leaves; the dry bones of the house of Israel begin to show signs of life. There is a movement amongst them, bone comes to bone, they organize, their faces are turned towards the east; they are getting ready for the greatest event in all history. The Lord Jesus Christ said that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. When the end of the age comes the times of the Gentiles are about fulfilled; and the startling sign that the age ends is the movement amongst the Jews so prominent today. The capture of Jerusalem and the complete downfall of the Turk are significant signs. Palestine will be given to the Jews when the war ends. Then the stage is set, so to speak, for the predicted end of the age.

We have rapidly pointed out the leading features of the beginning, progress and end of this age. The real end is composed of seven years, the last prophetic week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. ix). The true church will then no longer be on the earth. Her translation has taken place. The Saints are with the Lord. But on earth the things will come to pass which are so prominently revealed in the prophetic Word. And when the seven years are over the Lord Jesus Christ will come back in power and glory to establish His Kingdom of righteousness and peace. Then that which has been shall be again and still greater glory added.

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