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Four Ages and Four Earths



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #232 ~

As Christians, we need to see the big picture, where we have come from and where we are going, and how that fits in with God's overall plans. Having this perspective of His plans for our lives and the world greatly affects how we think about life and live for Him. As you know, people have all kinds of ideas about what has happened in the past, and what they think will take place in the future. Personally, I believe there are four distinct ages, and we are now living in the second one. You may have a different opinion on this, but this is what I believe God says in His word. Let me explain what I mean by these four different ages and four different earths:

The first age was a perfect age and Adam and Eve, perfect people, were living on a perfect earth. There were no sins, problems, or imperfections affecting mankind, animals, or nature – everything was perfectly good. *"God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it'… God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good"* (Gen. 1:27-28, 31). Genesis 1-2 describes this age when God created this sinless world and Adam and Eve were perfectly ruling over it.

The second age is an imperfect age, an evil age (Gal. 1:4), the time in which we now live. It began with the sin of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-7), sin which resulted in death (Gen. 2:17), and which spread to all people (Rom. 5:12-21) and to all generations, corrupting mankind, animals, and nature. *"Cursed is the ground because of you… for you are dust, and to dust you shall return"* (Gen. 3:17-19). *"The creation was subjected to futility… the whole creation groans… even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body"* (Rom. 8:19-23). Adding to man's sin is the fact that the devil rules the world during this second age. *"The whole world lies in the power of the evil one"* (1 Jn. 5:19). Because of the devil and this deadly curse, life can be spiritually, physically, and relationally difficult for Christians living during this sinful age.

Most of the Bible, from Gen. 3 to Rev. 19, focuses on this evil age. During this long period of time, God has worked through the Jews, sent His Son to die for our sins, and is now building the church. As part of the church, it's now our time to love God, live for Him, and be a bright shining light in this dark world (Matt. 5:16). We know this age has ended when we feel a great earthquake and see great signs in the heavens. Rev. 6:12-14

The third age is the millennial kingdom age, that 1000-year period when Jesus Christ, the perfect One, perfectly rules this world. This world will be restored (*"the period of restoration of all things"* – Acts 3:21), be regenerated *("in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne"* – Matt. 19:28), and be set free from sin (*"the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God"* – Rom. 8:21). Jesus Christ cannot rule over a corrupt earth, but only over one that has been restored and regenerated. There will be sin during this age, but there will be perfect justice, for Christ will rule this world with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9. Ps. 72). And yes, there will be death, but it will be rare, for *"the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought accursed."* Isaiah 65:20

This kingdom age, spoken of six times in Rev. 20, is described in detail in the Old Testament. There we read about the reign of Christ – *"God is the King of all the earth* (Ps. 47:7, Zech. 14:9), Jews and Gentiles being blessed – *"God blesses us so that all the ends of the earth may fear Him"* (Ps. 67:6-7, Gen. 12:2-3), and a renovated earth – "*Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy."* Psalm 98:8, Isaiah 65:25

It is at this time that *"He* (God) *has put all things in subjection under His* (Christ's) *feet"* (1 Cor. 15:27, Ps. 2:6). Therefore, *"God* (Christ) *reigns over the nations"* (Ps. 47:8). Glorified believers (Rom. 8:23, 1 Cor. 15:40-42) will have inherited the earth (Ps. 37:11, Matt. 5:5), and will be reigning with Christ (Rev. 5:10, 20:6). *"Then comes the end* (of the kingdom age), *when He* (Christ) *hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule, authority and power. He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death."* 1 Cor. 15:24-26

The fourth age is the eternal kingdom age. *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away"* (Rev. 21:1). The new city of Jerusalem will come down to earth (Rev. 21:1-3). There will be no more sin and death, and the devil, along with all demons and unbelievers, will be gone from this world, for they are forever being punished in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:4, 8; Rev. 20:14-15). All believers will be completely satisfied by God (Rev. 21:5-7, Rev. 22:1-5), and be living with Jesus in the holy city of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-27). God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28). Heaven and earth will be filled with God's glory (Is. 6:3). All believers will be eternally worshiping and serving God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 145:1-2, Rev. 22:3

There you have it, four ages and four earths. Each of these ages is associated with a distinct earth related to God's purpose for that period of time. During the 1st age, when there is no sin and death, there is a perfect earth ruled by Adam and Eve (Gen. 1-2). During the 2nd age, when there is sin and death, there is a corrupt earth ruled by Satan (Gen. 3 – Rev. 19). During the 3rd age, when there is still sin and death, there is a restored earth perfectly ruled by Jesus Christ. (Rev. 20, Psalm 67:4). During the 4th age, when there is no sin and death, there is a perfect heaven and perfect earth ruled by God and Jesus Christ. Rev. 21:1 – Rev. 22:5

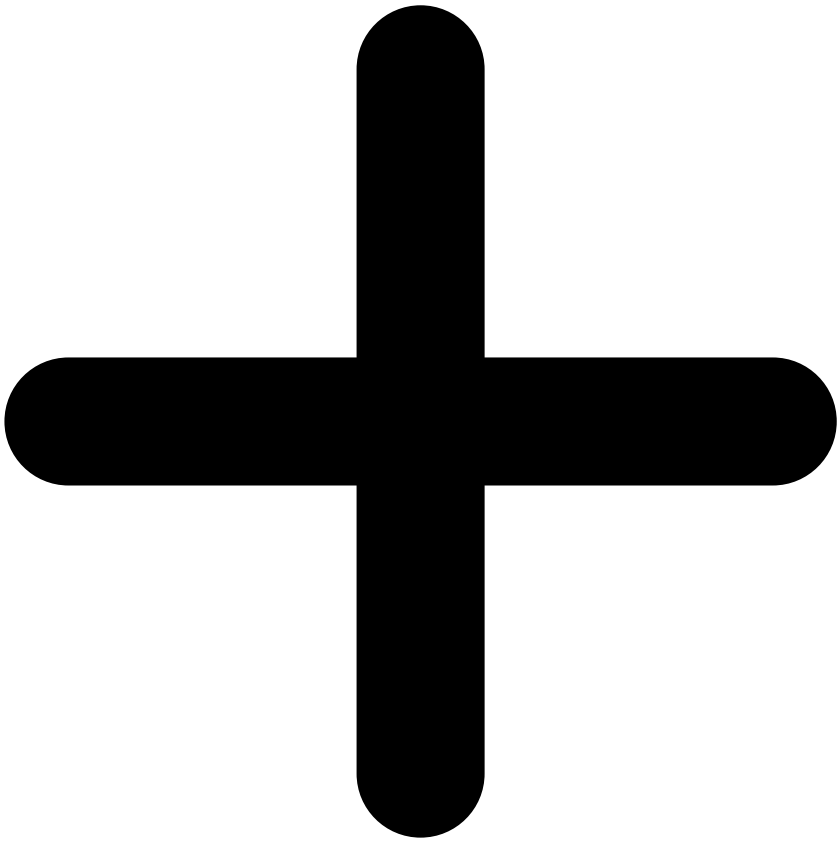
Here are a few more points about these ages, particularly as it relates to the future.

1. Once this present evil age comes to an end, the church will be raptured, God's wrath will be poured out upon this wicked world, a remnant of Jews will be saved, the Antichrist will be cast into the lake of fire, and the devil will be chained for 1000 years (Rev. 7-19). Then the next age (Rev. 20) will begin.
2. The fact that we live in the end-times means this age is almost over, and in a little while the millennial kingdom age will begin, and we will be reigning with Christ over this world.

3. 1 Cor. 15:20-28 speaks about the last three ages, this age (vss. 20-23), the millennial kingdom age (vss. 24-27), and the eternal kingdom age (vs. 28).
4. Eph. 1:21 and Eph. 2:7 also speaks of these three ages. Eph. 1:7 says, *"… in this age but also in the one to come,"* which refers to this present evil age and the coming millennial kingdom age. Eph. 2:7 tells us, *"… so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace,"* which speaks of the millennial kingdom age and the eternal kingdom age.

5. Knowing what God says about this age and future ages helps you understand the errors of unbelievers, who say this earth may catastrophically come to an end by nuclear war, meteorites, climate change, etc.
6. Be encouraged and excited by the fact that we now live in the end-times of this second age, that it's our turn to *"run the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith…."* Hebrews 12:1-2
7. It won't be long before Jesus Christ returns to rapture the church and, shortly after that, we will begin reigning with Him over a restored and glorious earth. *"The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."* Habakkuk 2:14

P.S. God wants you to know some things about the future, and it's an amazing and incredible future that He has planned out for you. Here are some very instructive and related posts – *"The Big Picture: the Present Age and the Ages to Come,"* and *"The Present Church Age and the Kingdom Age."*



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