

Chart of the Ages

A “Roadmap” of Bible History, Important People and Events

“Write down the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that everyone may read it fluently.” Habakkuk 2:2

The Divine Plan of our loving Creator, as found in the Bible, is beautifully portrayed on the **Chart of the Ages**. This Chart can be thought of as a “roadmap” which guides us through God’s plan from the creation of man to the endless ages of eternity. The horizontal lines which go from left to right show the natures of existence—from the divine—spiritual nature, down to the angelic—spiritual nature, on down to perfect man, and finally down to fallen man. The vertical lines which go up and down show divisions of time in Bible history. The pyramid shapes indicate specific spiritual beings (as individuals or groups) and human beings (as individuals or groups). Each of these lines and shapes are identified with either **capital letters** or **lower case letters**. The numbers on the Chart are time-line details which are explained very well on the **Interactive Chart** found on the biblestudents.com website.

The Capital Letters On The Chart

The Three Primary Dispensations or Ages

A — First Dispensation: The “World that Was” lasted from the creation of Adam to the time of Noah’s Flood. It is also called the First Heaven and First Earth, and it was under the administration of angels. During this time, while still in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were tested as to their loyalty to God’s direction and care. Satan deceived mother Eve, and because she and father Adam lacked the experience needed to overcome temptation, they failed their testing. From this point on, all of their children inherited sin and death.—2 Peter 3:5,6; Genesis 2:7; 7:11,12; Hebrews 2:5

B — Second Dispensation: “This Present Evil World” began at the time of Noah’s Flood and will fully end with the great time of trouble now raging in the earth. It is also called the Second Heavens and the Second Earth, and it has been under the limited control of Satan. It will end when Satan is fully bound toward the beginning of the Third Dispensation.—John 18:36; Galatians 1:4; 2 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8; Psalm 46:9

C — Third Dispensation: The “World to Come” wherein dwelleth righteousness is under divine administration and control. This dispensation is also called the Third Heavens and the Third Earth—it is a “world without end.” It has already begun before the Second Dispensation has fully come to an end. During this overlapping period between the Second and Third Dispensations, the old heavens and earth must be torn down to make way for the fully established new heavens and earth. As soon as divine intervention puts an end to the trouble, righteousness will begin to spread worldwide with the establishment of the earthly phase of the Kingdom.—Hebrews 2:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 45:17; Revelation 21:1,2; 2 Corinthians 12:1-4

Ages within the Primary Dispensations

D — Patriarchal Age: The first age of the Second Dispensation is the Patriarchal Age. During this age, God dealt with certain of His “friends” such as Noah, Shem, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel. This age began at the end of the First Dispensation (at the time of the Flood), and it lasted until the death of Jacob.—Genesis 6:8; 7:1; James 2:23; Genesis 22:16-18; 26:4; 28:14; 48:21

E — Jewish Age: The next age of the Second Dispensation is called the Jewish Age. During this age, God recognized only the 12 sons of Jacob as his special, chosen people. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, and because of this, his sons became known as the 12 tribes of Israel. God set these tribes apart from the rest of the nations for a special purpose, and the events that happened to them in the Jewish Age became pictures or “types” of things which were to come at Jesus’ first advent. National favor to Israel, which began at the death of Jacob, lasted until that nation rejected and crucified the savior of the world. Following this rejection of God’s Son, fleshly Israel was eventually uprooted from their promised land and scattered among the Gentile nations.—Amos 3:2; Deuteronomy 14:2; John 1:11; Matthew 10:5,6; Luke 19:41-44

Note: The Harvest of the Jewish Age does not have a letter on the Chart, but it is very important as a transition between the Jewish and Gospel Ages. It was a time of sifting and trouble, and it overlapped the beginning work of the Gospel Age.

F — Gospel Age: The third age of the Second Dispensation is the period of time from Jesus’ baptism at the age of 30 until the spiritual phase of the Kingdom is fully set up. At the time Jesus was baptized (consecrated to do his heavenly Father’s will) he entered the “narrow way” of sacrifice which led to immortality. During the Gospel Age, God has invited others to follow in Jesus’ footsteps by faith, sacrifice and obedience to do his will and not their own. These followers are said to be a “little flock.” Those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus faithfully unto death, have the hope of receiving glory, honor, and immortality.—Hebrews 10:7,9; Acts 2:1-5; 15:13,14; 2 Peter 1:4; Matthew 13:37-43

Note: Like the **Jewish Age**, the **Gospel Age** ends with a Harvest. The **Harvest of the Gospel Age** is also a time of sifting and trouble which is a transition period between the Gospel and Messianic Ages. This Harvest does not have a letter on the Chart.

G — The Messianic Age: The first age of the Third Dispensation is called the Messianic Age. It is also known as the restitution or resurrection age, and it is the period of the thousand year presence and reign of Christ, the Messiah. The work of this incoming age begins before the work of the Gospel Age fully comes to an end. The transition period from the Second Dispensation to the Third Dispensation is a time of sifting, sorting, testing, and trouble such as never before occurred in the world. It brings down the old, corrupt world and ushers in the new world wherein dwells righteousness. When the Second Dispensation comes to a full end, Satan will be bound, and the earthly phase of the Kingdom will have its beginning. By the close of the Messianic Age, the work of destroying all enemies and bringing all the willing and obedient under the headship of the Messiah will have been accomplished.—2 Peter 3:8; Acts 3:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Revelation 11:18; Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 1:10; 1 Corinthians 15:25-28

H — Ages to Come: Following the Messianic Age, the endless ages of perfection, blessedness and happiness will begin. At the beginning of this second age of the Third Dispensation, a "little season" of testing will be necessary upon restored mankind. This will sift out those who are not sincerely in harmony with God's righteousness.—1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Isaiah 45:17,18; Ephesians 2:7; Revelation 20:3,7; Psalm 150:6

Conditions and Planes of Existence within the Ages and Dispensations

K — Glory of Power or Office: Those who follow in Christ's footsteps during the Gospel Age have given their hearts fully to God are being prepared for the high honor and privilege of reigning with Christ during the Messianic Age. Because they are willing to suffer for his sake now, if faithful until death, they will share our Lord's glory of power or office, as shown by Plane K. Together, Christ and his faithful "body members" will serve as the great mediator between God and mankind. Together they will bring all who are willing and obedient back into harmony with God.—1 Peter 2:9; 2 Timothy 2:11,12; Romans 8:37; Revelation 2:10; 22:17; Acts 3:19-23

L — Spirit Birth: Those who are faithful in carrying out their covenant by sacrifice are born of the spirit in due time. When they first gave their hearts to God, those whom He chose were then "begotten" of the spirit to the divine nature, but they are not "born" of the spirit until they die and are resurrected to the spirit realm. The faithful who slept in their graves down through the Gospel Age are resurrected to the divine nature early in the Millennial Age. Those who are still alive on the earth when this resurrection starts, must finish their earthly walk in the "narrow way" faithfully unto death, at which time they are immediately resurrected as divine spirit beings and united with the other resurrected saints, as shown on Plane L.—1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Revelation 14:13

M — Spirit Begetting: During the Gospel Age, many are called to become the body members of Christ, but only a few make a covenant with God by sacrifice. The ones who present their bodies a "living sacrifice" delight to do their Father's will. Because of this, the heavenly Father "begets" these fully consecrated ones with the word of truth. All who give up their human will and accept the will of God, during the acceptable time of sacrifice, are begotten of the spirit to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled which is reserved in heaven for the faithful, as shown on Plane M.—Matthew 20:16; Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 10:7,9; James 1:17,18; 1 Peter 1:3,4

N — Human Perfection (real or reckoned): Adam, a perfect man before his disobedience and Jesus, a perfect man at the first advent are both shown on Plane N. But, even though no other humans have ever been perfect, a few in every age have been "reckoned" as perfect because of their faith. Before the Gospel Age, the Ancient Worthies were considered "friends of God" because of their faith. During the Gospel Age, those who draw near in faith to God are considered "tentatively justified" or "in the way of justification." These have a measure of peace, but they are not fully at peace with God until they make a full covenant by sacrifice (consecration) with God. During the Mediatorial Reign of Christ and his Church, the world of mankind will be restored to perfection. These are also shown on Plane N.—Genesis 2:7; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 35:8; Hebrews 11:4-40; James 2:23; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 6:18-21; 12:1; 3:24; 5:9; 5:1; 4:24,25; 2 Corinthians 6:1; Isaiah 35:8

P — Typical Justification: During the Jewish Age, God set apart the nation of Israel from all other nations for a special purpose. The events that happened to them in the Jewish Age became pictures or "types" of things which were to come. Plane P shows the "typical" justification of the nation of Israel by the ceremonies and sacrifices of the Law. At the cross Israel's "typical" justification (or cleansing of the flesh) ended when Christ died upon the cross. From that point on, the blood of bulls and goats no longer made one "just" before God, for then, the institution of the "better sacrifices" began to "cleans" all those who come unto Him in faith by the merit of Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf.—Exodus 19:5; Hebrews 9:6,7; 10:1

R — Depraved (Unjustified) Plane—Broad Way: At the time of Adam's disobedience, he fell from perfection and communion with God (from plane N) to the depraved plane of the unjust, as shown by Plane R on the Chart. Ever since this time, Adam and his descendants have been walking on the broad way which leads to destruction (Adamic death).—Genesis 2:17; Matthew 7:13; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22

S — The Time of Trouble: The shaded area S depicts the time of trouble which comes upon the "nominal" Christian church and the nations of earth during the transition period between the Second and Third Dispensations. Jesus prophesied that during this time, there would be a time of trouble such as was never before experienced (see also Daniel 12:1). This trouble began at the time our Lord returned with his Kingdom to accomplish the "restitution of all things." Three and one half years later, the call went forth to the fully consecrated to come out of Babylon ("nominal" systems—Christian in name only). A time of testing and trouble is separating the ripe wheat from the unripe—separating mature Christians from those who remain babes. In a particular sense, the trouble upon the nations began in 1914, with the beginning of World War I. This trouble, which is coming in spasms (war, revolution, and anarchy), is permitted in order that those things out of harmony with the Kingdom can be removed.—Matthew 24:21,22; Joel 2:2; Revelation 18:4; Matthew 13:41, 42

W — World of Mankind Lifted Up to Perfection and Life: At the time Adam disobeyed, God turned His back upon Adam and his unborn children. For over 6000 years, man has been walking on the broad way which leads to death. Because of the costly ransom sacrifice of Jesus, in due time, the dead and dying human race will (during the Mediatorial Reign) have the opportunity to repent of sin, and accept and obey the dear Redeemer. Those who do so will be lifted up to the plane of human perfection and life, as shown by W on the Chart.—Genesis 3:16-19; Matthew 7:13; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Isaiah 35:8

The Lower Case Letters On The Chart

a — Adam as a Perfect Man: When God created Adam, he was a perfect man, as shown by Pyramid a. Although Adam was perfect as a man, at this point, he lacked experience with the consequence of sin.—Genesis 2:7; Luke 3:38

b — Fallen Adam and His Children Who Lived before the Flood: Partial Pyramid b depicts Adam after he fell from God's grace and was removed from the Garden of Eden. It also illustrates those who were condemned to death because of inherited imperfection from their father Adam.—Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 3:10; 5:12

c — Abraham and Others Justified to Friendship with God: In the Patriarchal and Jewish Ages, Abraham and others of faith had fellowship with God, as shown by Pyramid c. In the eyes of God, these men and women of faith were lifted up above the depraved, sinful world of mankind to a position of friendship with God.—Genesis 6:8; 22:15-18; 26:1-4; 28:10-14; James 2:23; Psalm 45:16; Hebrews 11:4-40

d — Adam's Posterity Still Sinners after the Flood: Partial Pyramid d represents Adam's posterity (children) born after the flood. These were all still at "enmity" (considered enemies) against God. At this present time, the number of Adam's posterity living in fallen, dying bodies is approximately six billion. These prisoners of sin and death, condemned because of Adam's disobedience, die at a rate of approximately 147,000 every 24 hours. These have actually reached the end of the broad way which leads to death, and have joined the billions who are already in their graves.—Romans 3:10, 23; Psalm 49:7; Matthew 7:13

e — Natural Israel "Typically" Justified: During the Jewish Age, the sacrifices of the priesthood cleansed natural Israel so that they, as a nation, had a relationship with God. This cleansing was not "actual," but "typical" as shown in Pyramid e. God set Israel apart from other nations so that they, as a nation would picture in "types and shadows" what would happen to the world of mankind through the "better sacrifices" of Christ and the Church.—Hebrews 10:1-4; 7:19

f — The Fire of Trial and Trouble upon Fleshly Israel: At the first advent of Jesus, sincere Israelites who had faith in God's promises left their nominal religious system to follow their Messiah. The nominal religious system of Jesus' day was much like our nominal church systems of the Gospel Age—insincere Christians in name only. Those who did not receive Jesus as Messiah when he was among them were symbolically considered "chaff," which is the unusable husks around grains of wheat. This chaff was discarded and burned as shown by Figure f. Because of their rejection of Jesus, a time of fiery trouble came upon Israel as a nation.—Luke 3:16,17; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

g — Jesus as a Perfect Man: Jesus, as a perfect and mature man at the age of 30, is shown by Pyramid g. He left the glory which he had with the Father, as a spirit being, and took the nature of man in order that he might be a “ransom” or corresponding price for Adam. The perfect man, Jesus, paid the penalty for Adam’s sin, which was death. “Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death.”—Luke 1:26-33; John 1:14; 17:5; 1 Timothy 2:5,6

h — Jesus Begotten to the Divine Nature: At 30 years of age Jesus gave up his human will and accepted the will of his heavenly Father. After having made this consecration, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. There, God anointed Jesus with the holy Spirit, begetting him to the divine nature, as represented by Pyramid h. For three and one half years, until his death on the cross, Jesus is pictured on Plane M, the plane of spirit begetting.—Hebrews 10:7,9; Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:29-34

i — Jesus as a Divine Being, Born of the Spirit: The human existence of the man Christ Jesus ended on the cross. After being dead for parts of three days, our Redeemer was resurrected as a glorious divine spirit being, as shown by Pyramid i. He there became the “firstborn” from the dead and was given a divine spirit body. He had given his perfect flesh for the life of the world and would never again take this fleshly body back.—John 6:51; Luke 23:44-46; 24:1-7; Colossians 1:18

k — Jesus Ascends to the Father on His Throne: Our Lord was a divine spirit being from the time of his resurrection. Forty days after his resurrection from the dead to the divine nature, he ascended to the majesty on high, as shown by Pyramid k.—Luke 24:50,51; Revelation 3:21

l — Jesus in Glory Directing the Church During the Gospel Age: From the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ until the beginning of the Gospel Age Harvest, our Lord was in heaven with his Father. From this throne in heaven, Christ has been guiding and directing the affairs of his Church, the “little flock,” who have been in process of development through their experiences. These are being perfected as “New Creatures in Christ” and will, if faithful, be with him on his throne.—Matthew 28:19,20; John 14:2,3

m — Great Company of Spirit Begotten Children: Down through the Gospel Age, all who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice were “begotten” of the spirit to the divine nature. However, a large number of spirit begotten Christians have become “overcharged with the cares of this life,” as shown by partial Pyramid m. These are pictured as “foolish virgins” in Matthew 25, because they have failed to take advantage of the precious promises which would have enabled them to grow in grace and knowledge. These, who were careless, lost their anointing to the divine nature, but not their begetting to the spirit nature. They never lost their love of God and faith in His Son, but, eventually, had to wash their robes “white in the blood of the Lamb,” because these had become soiled from their worldly associations.—Revelation 7:13-15; Matthew 25:1-12; 1 Peter 1:4-8; 1 John 2:1,2; Psalm 45:14,15

n — The Little Flock of Spirit Begotten Children: Down through the Gospel Age, the true Church, the “little flock” of Jesus’ faithful followers is represented by partial Pyramid n. These faithful New Creatures in Christ fulfilled their covenant to sacrifice. They remained “dead” to their earthly wills, aims, and ambitions. The precious promises found in the Bible made it possible for them to grow in grace and knowledge. Those who become “more than conquerors” sit with Christ in his throne of glory.—Psalm 50:5; Romans 8:37; Colossians 3:1-3; 2 Peter 1:4; 2 Timothy 2:11,12; Revelation 7:4

p — The Majority of the Nominal Church Tentatively Justified: Down through the Gospel Age, many, with a measure of faith, have associated themselves with the “nominal” church. The word “nominal” means “in name only.” These had a measure of peace with God and the privilege of prayer to a very limited degree and are shown by partial Pyramid p. From these “tentatively” justified ones who were “in the way of justification,” many were called to become the bride of Christ. If someone who was “invited” rejected that invitation, he received the measure of grace which he had enjoyed “in vain.” However, these did not die the second death, but, becoming a part of the world again, these will have the opportunity to walk up the “highway of holiness,” in due time.—Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 6:1; Isaiah 35:8-10

q — Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing: Down through the Gospel Age, many have associated themselves with the “nominal church” for business, social and selfish reasons, as shown by partial Pyramid q. These are considered “tares” (imitation wheat, wolves in sheep’s clothing) and are shown below the plane of “tentative justification”—they were never “in the way of justification.” They have done many bad things in the name of Christ, pulling down the high standard of true believers, and have given the world a wrong impression of what it means to be a Christian. Being a part of the world, in due time, they will have the opportunity to walk up the “highway of holiness.”—Matthew 7:15-18; Acts 20:29; Isaiah 35:8-10

r — Our Returned Lord as Bridegroom, Reaper and King: When it was time for the Harvest of the Gospel Age to begin, our Lord returned to earth's atmosphere with the Kingdom, as shown by Pyramid r on Plane L. Our Lord's Kingdom work, which began upon his arrival, will continue throughout the Messianic Age. Three and one-half years after our his second presence began, his faithful "little flock," who had been asleep in death throughout the Gospel Age, began to be resurrected. Since that time, those who have proven faithful to their covenants of sacrifice have not slept in death, but have immediately been "changed" from their earthly bodies to the divine nature. These are now engaged in Kingdom work with Christ and the other faithful saints, as shown by Pyramid r on Plane L.—John 14:2,3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; Revelation 14:13

s — Little Flock Separated from Babylon: Three and one-half years after our Lord's second presence began, the "wise virgins"—those who were alert and watching for their returned Lord—were invited to come out of Babylon (the nominal church systems), as shown by partial Pyramid s. These spirit begotten ones who are living up to their consecration vows are faithfully engaged in Kingdom work with laborious efforts. They are longing for the time of their resurrection change to the divine nature—the reward of having been faithful until death.—Revelation 18:4; 14:13; 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53

t — Great Company Manifested as a Class: The Great Company as a class, has failed to keep their robes "unspotted" from the world. They have built their faith structure with "wood, hay, and stubble," which does not stand against the strong winds of their trials. After the Church (the ripe wheat) has been resurrected, the Great Company (the unripe wheat) still on Plane M, will be manifested as a class, as shown by partial Pyramid t. After experiencing "great tribulation," these will pray to the Father, asking Him to remove the "spots" from their robes through the blood of Christ. These will die and will then be resurrected as spirit beings, but not to the divine nature. At this same time, the members of the Great Company who died throughout the rest of the Gospel Age are also resurrected.—1 Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 7:13-15

u — Tentatively Justified Returning to the World: No one has ever been called to the "high calling" unless there was a crown available, and they received an invitation from the Lord to accept this privilege. Those shown by partial Pyramid u were never spirit begotten—either they were not called, or, being invited, they did not accept their invitation to the high calling. Being a part of the world, they will have the opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness in due time.—Isaiah 35:8

v — Wolves in Sheep's Clothing Returning to the World: During this transition period between the Gospel and Messianic Ages, the nominal church collapses. Before the Harvest of the Gospel Age is over, each class depicted on the Chart will have been manifested. Those who have professed to be Christians, but who are tares—imitation wheat or wolves in sheep's clothing—will be made manifest in due time, as shown by partial Pyramid v. These, being a part of the world, will have the opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness when the Kingdom on earth is established.—Isaiah 35:8

w — The Glorified Christ (Jesus, the Head and the Church, His Body): After the last member of the "little flock" finishes his earthly walk in the narrow way, the full union or marriage of the Bridegroom and his bride will occur, as shown by Pyramid w. The bride will share the glory of office or power (shown on plane K) with the Bridegroom. Together, these will reign in the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature.—Revelation 19:7; Romans 2:7

x — The Christ (the Head of All Things): After the full union of the bride to the Bridegroom, all things in heaven and on earth will be gradually brought under the Headship of "The Christ"—Jesus, the Head, and the Church, his body. By the end of the Messianic Reign, anyone who will not, at heart, come into harmony with the principles of God's righteousness will be cut off in the second death.—Ephesians 1:10; Revelation 22:17; Acts 3:23

y — The Great Company before the Throne: The spirit begotten ones of the Gospel Age who receive the lesser reward of the Great Company class, must wash their robes "white in the blood of the Lamb," if they desire life. Those who do so will be born of the spirit, in due time, and will serve "before the throne," as shown by partial Pyramid y on Plane L. All other spirit beings, who then recognize "The Christ," are also shown by Section y.—Revelation 7:13-15; Ephesians 1:10

z — Israel after The Flesh: At the time divine intervention stops the great time of trouble, the New Covenant will be sealed with the precious blood of Jesus. The Ancient Worthies will be resurrected upon the earth—those who were faithful before the higher calling of the Gospel Age was open. The New Covenant will be inaugurated with those in Israel who have faith, as shown by partial Pyramid z. Only those who are sincere, Israelites indeed, will serve as earthly representatives of the Messianic Kingdom. They will be the leaders of all other earthly nations and will teach the rest of the world of God's ways, for they have known His prophecies more thoroughly than any other nation.—Zechariah 14:1-3; Psalm 45:16; Exodus 20:18,19; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Zechariah 8:22, 23; Isaiah 2:3