

## *The End of The Ages Has Come Upon Us*

"...the overlapping of the two ages (the "already/not yet" tension produced by the Christ-event) is the key to interpreting the apostle." (C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come*, p. 41)

"If one culls together Paul's 'aeon' terminology and traces its impact on him, the following temporal frame of reference surfaces: God's kingdom or reign (the age to come) has begun in Christ, but it exists in the midst of this present world (this age). In effect, Christ's death and resurrection initiated the temporary messianic kingdom, the consummation of which will occur at the Second Coming. In other words, the Christ-event has produced an overlapping of the two ages." (C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come*, p. 44)

"But it must be stressed that, for Paul, the Christ-event has resulted in an overlapping of the two ages. The age to come has moved into the present, so that the believer exists at the turning point of the ages. This accounts of for the tension and ambiguity that Christians presently experience. The believer belongs to the new age but is not isolated from this evil age. The presence of the evil anti-God forces in this world give rise to the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit within the believer...Indeed, this dialectical relationship between the already and the not yet will govern the Christian life until the *Parousia*." (C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come*, p. 61)

**Matthew 12:32** (cf. *Mark 3:29*)—"And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in *this age* or in *the age to come*."

**Matthew 13:22** (cf. *Mark 4:19*)—"As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the *age* and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful."

**Matthew 13:36-43**—"Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is *the close of the age*, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at *the close of the age*. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

**Matthew 13:47-50**—“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at *the close of the age*. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

**Matthew 16:24-28**—“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man *is going to come* with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who *will not taste death* until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

**Matthew 24:3**—“Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of *the close of the age*?”

**Matthew 28:18-20**—“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, *to the close of the age*.”

**Mark 10:28-31** (cf. *Luke 18:30*)—“Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now *in this time*, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and *in the age to come* eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

**Luke 16:1-9**—“He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’ And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of *this age* are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.”

**Luke 20:33-36**—“In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife.” And Jesus said to them, “The sons of *this age* marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to *that age* and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.”

**John 5:19-29**—“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.. Truly, truly, I say to you, *an hour is coming, and is now here*, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”

**Acts 2:16-18**—“But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ‘And *in the last days* it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants *in those days* I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.’”

**Romans 8:18-23**—“For I consider that the sufferings of *this present time* are not worth comparing with the glory that *is to be* revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the *firstfruits* of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

**Romans 12:1-2**—“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to *this age*, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

**Romans 13:11-14**—“Besides this you know *the time*, that *the hour has come* for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. *The night is far gone; the day is at hand*. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

**I Corinthians 1:20-21**—“Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of *this age*? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.”

**I Corinthians 2:6-16**<sup>1</sup>—“Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of *this age* or of the rulers of *this age*, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed *before the ages* for our glory. None of the rulers of *this age* understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”

**I Corinthians 3:18-19**—“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in *this age*, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.”

**I Corinthians 7:25-31**—“Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that in view of *the present distress* it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers: *the appointed time has grown very short*. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. *For the present form of this world is passing away*.

**I Corinthians 10:1-11**—“For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some

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<sup>1</sup> This passage is particularly helpful in demonstrating the connection between eschatology and the flesh/Spirit contrast. Immediately after 2:6-8, Paul launches into his contrast of natural/spiritual and fleshly/spiritual in 2:7-3:4. These two contrasts are exactly parallel to the flesh/Spirit contrast found elsewhere, and here Paul clearly assigns them to two ages.

of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, *on whom the end of the ages has come.*”

**II Corinthians 4:4-6**—“In their case the god of *this age* has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

**Galatians 1:3-5**—“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from *the present evil age*, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (cf. *Galatians 6:15...the dawn of the new creation is already here in the midst of the present evil age*)

**Galatians 4:3-7**—“In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when *the fullness of time* had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

**Ephesians 1:7-10**—“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for *the fullness of time*, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

**Ephesians 1:19-21**—“...what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in *this age* but also in *the one to come.*”

**Ephesians 2:1-7**—“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of *this age*, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in *the coming ages* he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

**Ephesians 3:8-10**—“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for *ages* in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

**Ephesians 5:15-16**—“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because *the days are evil*.”

**Colossians 1:25-27**—“I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for *ages* and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

**I Timothy 1:17**—“To the King of *ages*, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

**I Timothy 6:17-19**—“As for the rich in *this present age*, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

**II Timothy 3:1-5**—“But understand this, that *in the last days* there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. *Avoid such people*.”

**II Timothy 4:9-10**—“Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with *this present age*, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.”

**Titus 2:11-14**—“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in *the present age*, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”

**Hebrews 1:2**—“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in *these last days* he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created *the ages*.”

**Hebrews 6:4-6**—“For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of *the age to come*, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.”

**Hebrews 9:8-10**—“ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for *the present age*). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until *the time of reformation*.”

**Hebrews 9:24-28**—“For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all *at the end of the ages* to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

**Hebrews 11:3**—“By faith we understand that *the ages* were created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”

**I John 2:15-18**—“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. Children, it is *the last hour*, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is *the last hour*.”

**James 5:1-3**—“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure *in the last days*.”

**I Peter 1:19-20**—“...with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest *in the last times* for the sake of you.”

**II Peter 3:3**—“...knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in *the last days* with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.”