

Eschatology

This is a controversial area where godly Christians differ. It is rarely a gospel issue. The guidance of Romans 14-15 applies – we must not tear each other down but come to our own convictions and bear with one another in love. The most important thing is that the Lord Jesus will certainly return, there will be a judgment, there will be a New Creation and the best thing about that New Creation will be being with the Lord.

- What do you understand as the last things? What are you expecting to happen in the last days?

Read Joel 2:28-3:3; Zechariah 12:1-14:21

- What will happen on the day of the Lord / in the last days?
- When are the last days? (Acts 2:16-21)¹

The whole of the NT is eschatology – the fulfilment of the OT. The Cross and the resurrection of Jesus and the giving of the Spirit are eschatological events.

The Coming of Jesus

Compare the descriptions in all the ‘coming’ passages and ask, “How many comings are there?”

1 Thess. 4:13-18 – encouragement in the face of death – believers eternally with the Lord

2 Thess. 1:4-10 – encouragement in the face of persecution – unbelievers eternally away from the Lord

2 Thess. 2 – a different ‘coming’?

1 Cor. 15:24-26; 51-55 – when is death destroyed?

Matthew 24:29-31, 37-44; 25:31-46 – heavenly bodies destroyed, Noah, thief - When is the tribulation? Do you want to be taken or left behind? How many times does Jesus come with his angels in glory?

2 Pet. 3:1-12 – again Noah, thief, heavenly bodies destroyed

Millennium

- Read Revelation 20
 - Mark 3:27 - binding
 - John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Rev 20:11-13 – one general resurrection
 - Eph. 2:5-6 – raised and reigning with Christ – first resurrection is Christ’s resurrection, the firstfruit, in which believers participate (cf. also 1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Pet. 1:3)
 - 2 Thess. 2:1 – the release of evil and the great deception happen just before Jesus comes to gather the elect and destroy Satan

¹ Cf. Also 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Peter 1:20.

Israel, OT Prophecy and Replacement Theology?

There is an argument that all the OT prophecies – particularly concerning ethnic Jews and physical Israel, physical Jerusalem – will be literally fulfilled – if not happened yet it will happen. It is said that in the early centuries of the church, as the church became increasingly Gentile, it started to spiritualise these promises, twist them and take them away from the Jews and apply them to the church. So we need to resist that and believe the promises to the Jews for the last days.

- Have you come across those arguments? What do you think of that theology?
- Should we pray especially for the City of Jerusalem? Are prayers that are made at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem more effective?

Truth – some in the Church have hated and despised Jewish people – in fact we Gentiles are grafted into Israel, we should not boast, God does have a special love for the Jews (Rom. 11), like Paul, we should love and go first to the Jews (Rom. 1:16).

But counter argument – *look at the way the (Jewish) NT interprets these promises and look again even at the promises within their own contexts.*

Read Isaiah 65:17-25

- What are the different pictures in this vision? (New Creation, Jerusalem, Eden)
- When will they be fulfilled? cf. Rev. 21-22

The People – Jer. 31:35-36 cf. Rom. 9

The Land - Gen. 13:15; 17:8 cf. Heb. 3-4; 11:8-16; 12:22; 13:14; Rom. 4:13

The City – Psalm 122 cf. Gal 4:21-31

The Temple – Ezek. 39:25-48:35 cf. John 2:19-21; Rev. 21

Return – Deut. 30:1-5 (return to the Lord *then* return to the land); Jer. 16:14-15; 23:3-8 (cf. Luke 9:31 – literally: “his exodus”); Isaiah 11:11-12, 16; 27:12-13; 43:5-6 (exodus, gathering, nations)

Gathering – Jer. 32:36-41

Read the verses, then the context, think about NT parallels and think who the promises refer to:

- Ezek. 11:17 - look at the context Ezek.11:14-21 cf. Rev. 21:1-4
- Ezek. 34:13 – look at the context Ezek. 34:11-16 cf. John 10:14-16
- Ezek. 36:24, 28 – look at the context v22-38 cf. Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5

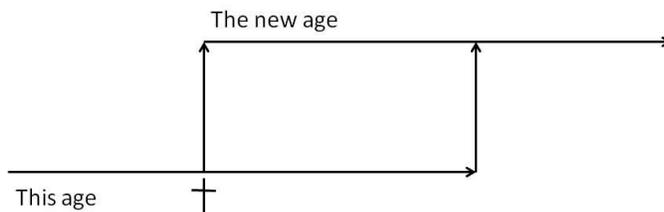
Restoration – Jer. 32:44; Amos 9:11-15 (cf. Acts 15)

Deut. 30:1-5 – return to the Lord *then* return to the Land (the opposite order to the Zionist view)

- ✚ Sometimes things in the OT that we might be tempted to separate are found in the NT to be one.
Renewed Temple, Return and restoration of Israel, Resurrection, Return of Jesus, Judgement, Rule of Jesus, Renewed Earth
Isaiah 65 cf. Rev. 21
Rev. 2:7; 19:15 – ruling is equated with final judgment/destruction
- ✚ Sometimes things that appear in the OT to be one event are found in the NT to be separated out.
Ezek. 37:10-14 – resurrection, Spirit, land
Joel 2:28-3:3 – Spirit, judgement, salvation, restoration
Zech. 12-14 – defeat of enemies, restoration, atonement, living waters

Big Point – it's all fulfilled in Christ – Luke 1:67-79; 24:25-27, 44-47; 2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 22:12-13

Now and not yet



Such an important thing for us to get our heads around.

Because it underlies all the New Testament letters – it's the basic dynamic that drives them.

The Great Exodus has happened and the New Age has started. We have been freed from bondage to hell and the devil – we have been taken out of Adam and grafted into Christ – we are seated with Christ on high – we've been adopted by the Father – we have every spiritual blessing.

But we're still here – we're still in our decaying bodies, we still get sick, we still sin, other people sin, there's persecution and disasters, and car accidents, and Jesus is not physically here with us, ruling over everything, this is not The New Creation is it?

Then one day there will be part two of the Exodus – the consummation – when Jesus returns and this age finishes and there is no more pain or crying or suffering and we see Jesus as he is and we are made like him.

For Now - The Kingdom of God, The New Age – is Now and Not Yet. The great sacrifice, the great victory has happened, the promises have all been fulfilled in Christ, we have all the spiritual blessing but much is still ahead.

Further reading:

[Will Christians be Secretly Raptured \(Jeramie Rinne\)?](#)

Understanding Dispensationalist (Vern Poythress) [[pdf](#)] [[mobi-Kindle](#)]