

100 “THE LAST DAYS” LASTED 40 YEARS (AD 30 to AD 70)

Many Christians believe they are living in the last days. However, New Testament writers tell us that they were living in the last days. To resolve this contradiction, some believe that “the last days” have continued for 2,000 years. However, we need an explanation that adheres to the claims of the Bible and a rational use of language.

The New Testament refers to two ages: “this age” and “the age to come.” We will seek to show that the forty years between Jesus’ ministry and the destruction of the temple in AD 70 were the last days of the Old Covenant. During that time, the promised New Covenant was being preached, practiced and manifested. One may say Christians before AD 70 were living in the warm glow of the imminent New Covenant. This understanding can be discerned with logical reasoning, allowing scripture to speak without interference from futurist assumptions.

1. New Testament writers lived in the “last days” or “end times” or “end of the age” of the Old Covenant.

A. Jesus’ ministry was in the last days: “*On many past occasions and in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets. But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.*” Heb 1:1-2

B. The Day of Pentecost occurred during the last days: “*This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people....’*” Acts 2:16-17

C. Jesus’ ministry was in the last times: “*He [Jesus] was known before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in the last times for your sake.*” 1 Pt 1:20

D. Paul was writing at the end of the age, around AD 57: “*Now all these things happened to them by way of example, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.*” 1 Cor 10:11

E. John, writing around AD 62, was living in the “end times” and “the final hour”: “*Little children, these are the end times, and as you heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen. By this we know that it is the final hour.*” 1 Jn 2:18

Comment: New Testament writers lived in the Old Covenant age and wrote until about AD 66.

2. Writing around AD 57, Paul portrayed his age as inferior. It was the Old Covenant age.

A. Temple rulers and teachings of Paul’s age were unwise: “*We speak a message of wisdom—but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.*” 1 Cor 2:6

B. Temple ideology of his age blinded the people: “*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*” 2 Cor 4:4

C. The wisdom of his age was foolish: “*...Where is the debater of this age? Hasn’t God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”* 1 Cor 1:20

D. Temple rulers of his age didn’t understand God’s wisdom: “*But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom that has been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds for our glory, None of the rulers of this age understood it. For if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*” 1 Cor 2:7-8

3. New Testament writers portrayed the age to come as rich and eternal. It is the New Covenant age.

A. The age to come is eternal: “*Jesus replied, ‘No one who has left home... for My sake and for the gospel will fail to receive, ... in the age to come, eternal life.’*” Mk 10:29-30

B. Those who enter the age to come, can’t die: “*Those who are considered worthy to share in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead... can no longer die, because they are like the angels.*” Lk 20:35-36

C. Believers are recipients of God’s gracious presence in the age to come: “*In the ages to come He [God] might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*” Eph 2:7

4. The New Covenant, the Kingdom of God, is forever. It has no end.

A. “*He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom...*” Luke 1:33

B. “*To Him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever...*” Eph. 3:21

C. “*God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...and it shall stand forever.*” Dan. 2:44

D. “*Through an indestructible life, Jesus is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.*” Heb. 7:17

E. “*Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end... and on his kingdom to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from that time on, even forever.*” Is. 9:7

F. “*The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ. He will reign forever.*” Rev. 11:15

G. “*Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, our Lord Jesus, make you complete...*” Heb. 13:30

5. Jesus, the second Moses, led His people for 40 years in “the last days” (AD 30 to AD 70).

A. Peter revealed Jesus as the prophet like Moses: “*For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in everything He tells you.’*” Acts 3:22, (Dt 18:15)

B. At the transfiguration, Moses, Elijah and Jesus spoke about the “second Exodus”: “*They appeared in glory and spoke about His departure [literally, exodus], which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*” Lk 9:31

C. Jesus led His disciples for 40 years into the spiritual promised land of reconciliation with God: “*Jesus said, ‘...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.... And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’*” Mt 28:18-20

D. The final sacrificial Lamb of Passover (Jesus), was identical with the second Moses: “*The Lamb who is in the middle of the throne shepherds them and leads them to springs of life-giving waters.*” Rev 7:17

6. Day of Pentecost in Acts 2

A. Pentecost occurred during “the last days”: “Then Peter stood up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and addressed the crowd: ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, These men are not drunk, as you suppose.... This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, ‘I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams....’” Acts 2: 15-17

B. This passage from Peter’s speech reveals the second coming was to occur in the last days of the Old Covenant as well: “In the last days.... ‘The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and glorious Day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” (Read Acts 2:14-21 for full context.)

C. According to Paul, Jesus was to return at the end of the (Old Covenant) age: “Who will also confirm you until the end [of the age], blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I Cor 1:8

Note: When Paul spoke of “the end,” he was speaking of the Old Covenant. The New Covenant has no end.

7. The destruction of the temple signaled the end of the Old Covenant and the consummation of the New.

A. Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of the temple is reported three times: **#1.** “He said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, no not even a stone shall be left here upon a stone, which will not be thrown down.’” (Mt 24:2) **#2.** “Do you see all these great buildings?’ Jesus replied. ‘Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.’” (Mk 13:2) **#3.** “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” (Lk 21:6)

B. The writer of Hebrews knew the temple, a symbol of the present Old Covenant Age, had to be done away with as Jesus had stated: “The Holy Spirit was showing that the way into the Most Holy Place [New Covenant] had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle [Jerusalem temple] was still standing.” Heb 9:8

8. Jesus, the perfect High Priest, established the New Covenant with His second coming.

A. The Old Covenant was still operative when the author of Hebrews wrote: “It [temple ritual] is an illustration for the present time, because the gifts and sacrifices being offered were unable to cleanse the conscience of the worshiper. They consist...in external regulations imposed until the time of reform [New Covenant].” Heb 9:9-10

B. The earthly high priest took blood into the Holy of Holies and his exit meant the peoples’ sins had been forgiven: “But only the high priest entered the second room, [Holy of Holies] and then only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.” Heb 9:7

C. Like the temple high priest, Jesus entered the true Holy of holies, heaven, at His ascension: “But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come, ... He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, thus securing eternal redemption.” Heb 9:11-12

D. During the 40 years, Jesus offered his blood, the perfect sacrifice and waited for the defeat of his enemies, the last of which was death. “Since that time, He waits for His enemies to be made a footstool for His feet, because by a single offering He has made perfect for all time those who are being sanctified.” Heb 10:13-14

E. The writer of Hebrews reveals the Old Covenant was present, but would soon disappear: “By speaking of a new covenant, He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.” Heb. 8:13

F. The writer of Hebrews stated, Jesus would bring salvation upon exiting heaven in the second coming, establishing the New Covenant (salvation) in place of the Old Covenant: “Christ...will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await Him.” Heb 9:28

G. Believers are currently dwellers in the spiritual Kingdom of God: “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world.... My kingdom is not of this [earthly] realm.’” Jn 18:36

Note: The second coming was in the imminent future to the N.T. writers, but is past to us. Spiritual death was the separation of man from God in the garden. See: P.P.#9 “The Death of Adam was Spiritual.”

Concluding thoughts: When we get the timing of the scriptures wrong and believe in a future second coming of Christ, the message of the Bible becomes incoherent, inviting skepticism, disappointment and abuse by false teachers. A contextual understanding helps us know the riches of God’s grace we possess in Christ this very day. No waiting for a second coming of Jesus is needed.

Helpful notes:

See: Preterist Papers #1 and #2. These give foundational understanding for the discussions on this website.

See: P. P. #5 “The Christian Age Has No End” also see P.P. #7 “Already But Not Yet”

End of time: The Bible does not teach anything about the end of time. It is “time of the end” of the Old Covenant.

101 preterist scriptures: <https://preteristcosmos.com/preterism101.html>

Ages: New Testament writers sometimes use the plural “ages” to not only refer to the Mosaic age, but, “presumably, also the Abrahamic Age, the Noahic Age and the Adamic Age.