

05 THE CHRISTIAN/MESSIANIC AGE HAS NO END

Introduction: Generally speaking, first century Jews had the conception of two ages—the Mosaic Age and the Messianic Age—also called the Old Covenant [OC] and New Covenant [NC]. (Jer. 31:31f). Because the New Testament writers wrote before the collapse of the Mosaic Covenant in AD 70, they describe the two ages as “this age” (Mosaic) and “the age to come” (Messianic, Christian, Kingdom of God). After the destruction of the Jewish state in AD 70, believers gained the fullness of the Kingdom of God. The following is consideration of these assertions via scripture.

1. The Christian/Messianic Kingdom 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 and ever!” Rev. 11:15

2. The “time of the end” or “end of the age” or “last days” pertains to the Old Covenant.

Logically speaking, if we understand the above scriptures, we can safely deduce that when the Bible speaks of the “time of the end” or the “end of the age” or the “last days”, it is speaking of the Old Covenant and not the Messianic Age (New Covenant). We will seek to verify this deduction through scripture below.

3. The Bible does not speak of the “end of time.”

The Bible speaks of the “time of the end” but not “the end of time.” One needs to appreciate the wide difference between these two concepts. Events and epochs have a time of the end. The end of time pertains to a completely different reality. (Note: The NASB incorrectly translates Dan. 12:4 “end of time” instead of “time of the end”).

4. Jesus and the Apostles lived at the end of the Old Covenant Age, therefore, the time of the end/end of the age/last days/last times/etc pertains to the ending of the Old Covenant.

- a) “You [first century believers] by the power of God are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” I Peter 1:5f
- b) [Paul’s contemporaries] were those “upon whom the end of the ages has come.” I Cor. 10:11
- c) “Now once at the end of ages, he hath appeared for the destruction of sin, by the sacrifice of himself.” Heb. 9:26
- d) “[God] in these last days did speak to us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He did make the ages.” Heb. 1:2
- e) “...Precious blood, as of a faultless and pure lamb, the blood of Christ; who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of times for your sake.” I Peter 1:20

5. Was the Old Covenant “nailed to the cross” in AD 30? Col. 2:14-15

Many of the O.T. prophecies were still unfulfilled in AD 30. Jesus had promised to fulfill “every dot and tittle” before the Mosaic Covenant would pass away. The gospel still had to be spread throughout the land to include both Jews and gentiles. The iniquities of the unbelieving Jews had to be “filled up” as Jesus prophesied in Matt.23. All the elements of the seventy weeks of years in Daniel needed to be accomplished, including the desolation of “the city and sanctuary” (Roman/Jewish War). Dan. 9:26-27.

6. In Acts, we see Jewish Christians still observing the law after the cross.

The apostles observed Pentecost (Acts 2). Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16). Paul took a Nazarite vow (Acts 18). Jewish Christians were honorably zealous for the law (Acts 21). Paul lived in observance of the law (Acts. 21:24). Paul purified himself for the temple ritual and offered a sacrifice (Acts 21:26).

7. New Testament writers stated the Old Covenant had not yet passed away.

- a) “For we don’t have here an enduring city, but we seek that which is to come [New Jerusalem].” Heb. 13:14

- b) "In that he says, "A new covenant," he has made the first old. But that which is becoming old and grows aged is near to vanishing away." Heb. 8:13
- c) "... that the way of the [holy of] holies has not yet been made manifest while as yet the first tabernacle has [its] standing; Heb. 9:8

8. "Already but not yet"

We often see what seem to be contradictions in the New Testament where something is said to be present and later said to be future. These are what theologians have identified as "already but not yet" passages. They illustrate that the bringing in of the New Covenant Age was a process—a process that lasted approximately a generation or 40 years (i.e. AD 30 to AD 70).

Example of "already": Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Mark 1:14

Example of "not yet": (In speaking of the future destruction of Jerusalem to take place in AD 70, Jesus said) "...these are days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled, that is written." Luke 21:22

9. It is not Biblical to maintain that Old Testament scripture still needs to be fulfilled. Jesus made it clear that the law and the prophets had to be fulfilled before the Old Covenant passed away.

- a) "Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill. For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the law, until all things are accomplished." Matt. 5:17-18
- b) "These are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled, that are written.." Lk. 21:22 (Regarding The Roman-Jewish War AD 67-70).

10. All would be fulfilled at the Coming of the Lord (AD 67-70).

"Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God spoke long ago by the mouth of his holy prophets. Acts 3:19-21

11. When we understand the time statements, we know "The Coming of the Lord" was at the judgment on Israel during the Roman/Jewish War AD 67-70.

- a) The harvest is the end of the [Old Covenant] age." Matt. 13:39
- b) The disciples asked, "When will these things be [destruction of the temple buildings]? What is the sign of your coming and of the close of the [Old Covenant] age?" Matt. 24:3. (The disciples understood these events to be linked.)

12. More examples of end times scriptures:

- a) Eph. 1:20f. "He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this [Old Covenant] age, but also in the one to come [New Covenant]."
- b) John 6:53-54 "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you don't have life in yourselves. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day [of the Old Covenant]."
- c) Acts. 2:16-17 "This is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel. It will be in the last days, [of the Old Covenant] says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams.'"

13. Some may ask, to what do we look forward, if everything is fulfilled?

What is more tragic than one waiting for riches one already possesses? The 40 years of "already but not yet" was the engagement period for the church. We now live in the marriage. Would a newlywed ask, "Now that I am married, what is left to do?" We are united with Christ. The alienation from our Heavenly Father has been mended. The fear, loneliness, and shame of sin has been undone. Daily we grow in the comfort and knowledge of His Love, Wisdom and Power and seek to serve Him, which is our joy.