

## Living in the Now and Not Yet

"The day of the Lord is coming." Joel 2:1

### 1. Introduction

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ... Titus 2:11-13

The unresolved issues of the gospel:

## 2. The Eschatology of the Old Testament

### 2.1 Expectation of God's kingdom

The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name (Zechariah 14:9)

By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear (Isaiah 45:23)

### 2.2 Expectation of God's redeemer/king

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever (Isaiah 9:7)

I will proclaim the LORD's decree:  
He said to me, "You are my son;  
today I have become your father.  
Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.  
You will break them with a rod of iron;  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery." (Psalm 2:7-9)

### 2.3 Expectation of judgement

He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples in his faithfulness (Psalm 96:13)

The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment.  
He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity (Psalm 9:7-8)

## 2.4 Expectation of a new covenant and the age of the Spirit

"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

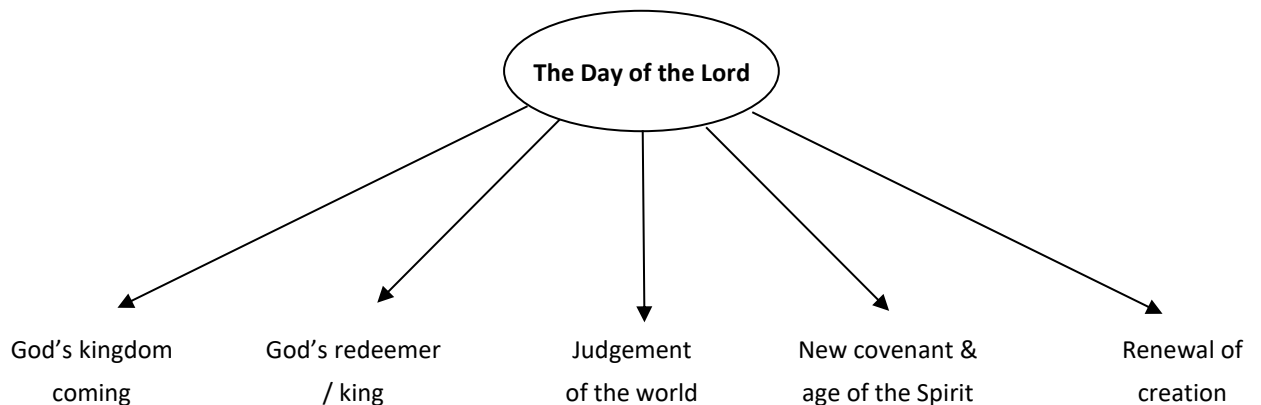
I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

## 2.5 Expectation of renewal of creation

See, I will create new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind (Isaiah 65:17)

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9)



## 3. The Eschatology of the New Testament

### 3.1 Fulfilment in the NT

Fulfilment now:

'The time is fulfilled' he said, 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news' (Mark 1:14)

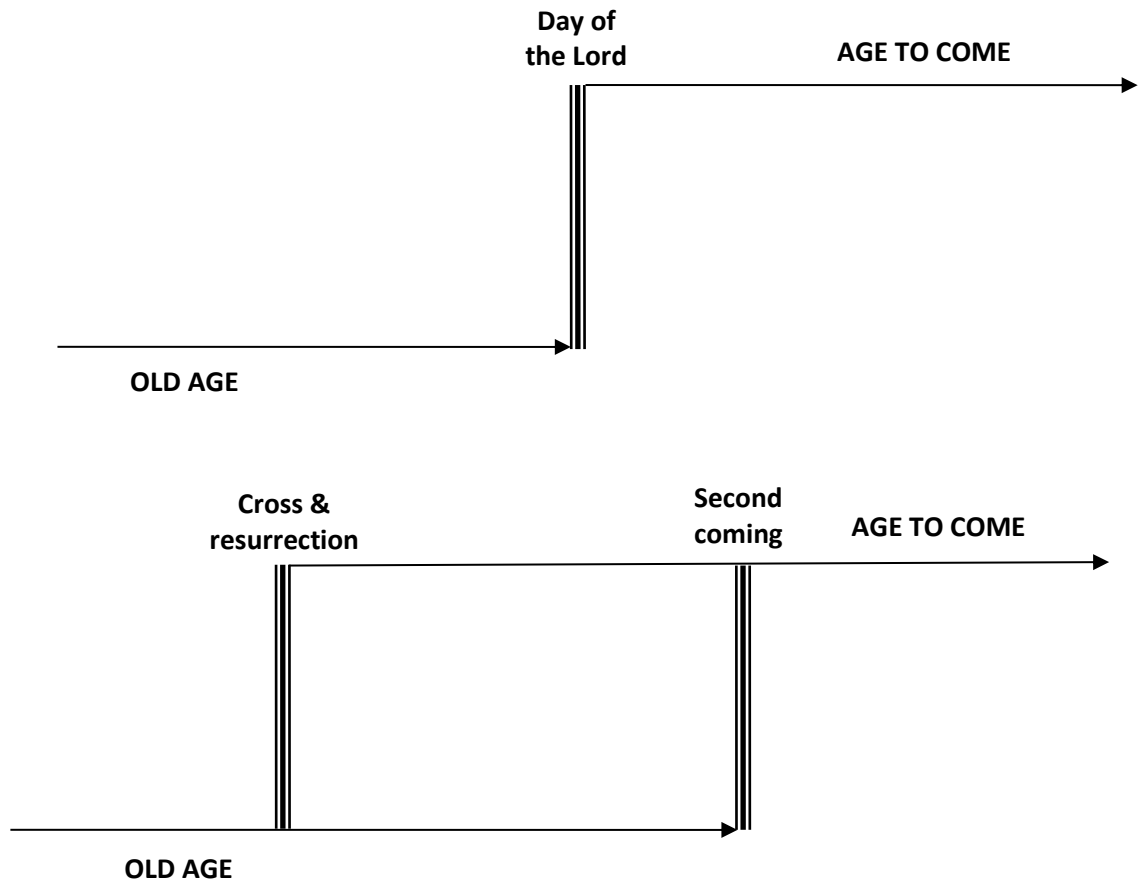
These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

But future fulfilment then:

Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne... (Matthew 19:28)

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2)

3.2 The now but not yet



Examples of overlap of the ages:

Jesus as Lord:

Redemption:

Renewal by the Spirit:

Relationship with God:

Defeat of the devil:

### **3.3 Implications**

- Right expectations

- Understand our identity

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-3)

- Tension of Christian experience

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. (Romans 8:24-25)

- Christian life is characterised by waiting.

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. (Hebrews 3:14)

- Reassurance

When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

### **4. Questions for Reflection**

- What is new to you in this 'big picture' of how God works?
- Why is it so important to know what we have now, and what we will have in the future?
- How does this picture make sense of Christian experience now?
- How does this picture encourage or challenge you?