

# Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning

## *Frameworks and the Future*

### 1. Some conclusions:

- a. While it is true that “the age to come” has broken into this age for the believer just as the new creation has broken in, the position that “this present age” was the Jewish Aeon and has given way to “the age to come” is an over-realized eschatology and biblically unsupported.
- b. This present age is filled with temptation toward corruption, is marked by shrewdness and foolishness, is unworthy of conformity, is evil, has a false god, and is filled with tribulation.
- c. The end of this age is judgment for the wicked and glory for the believer.
- d. The age to come is marked by eternal life and glory and is ushered in at the end of this age.
- e. Suffering/tribulation/persecution are means the Lord uses for our sanctification and will be part of the Christian experience until the return of Christ.
- f. The position that this present age will give way to prevailing global righteousness and shalom is speculative (not derived from NT text), and it must relegate many passages to the 1<sup>st</sup> century, reinterpret what seem to be lasting instructions for the Church, overlook the pattern of sufferings with Christ, and diminish the nature of sufferings in the golden age.

### 2. Some additional thoughts:

- a. The “pessimist/optimist” word fight is unhelpful at best, is very often misleading, and at worst borders on blaspheme if it was indeed our Lord who taught us to expect an age filled with persecution and hatred of the gospel until the end.
- b. Although Christians must live as Christians in the world and though this conduct may well have many social benefits, our mission is global evangelization and discipleship and not socio/political Christianization.
- c. Our expectation ought to be that Christ will save *every one* of His elect through the faithful labor of His Church but that this work will require endurance through much opposition.
- d. The hope held out to us in the Scriptures, especially in light of tribulation, is the revelation and vindication of Christ at His return and not global/material “victory”.

## The Events of Christ’s Coming

### 1. Key questions to be answered:

- a. According to the Scriptures, what happens at Christ coming?
- b. Is there NT merit for positing more than one coming of Jesus or for separating resurrections or judgments, or does this all happen at one time—at one return?

### 2. Scriptures that address Jesus’ return and the associated events:

Key premise: The Second Coming of Christ ushers in a complex of events that serve as the dividing line between this age and the age to come.

#### **Daniel 12:2:**

Daniel speaks of a resurrection for the righteous and wicked that implies judgment of the same.

[Note the names written in a book (v 1, cf. Rev. 20:15; 21:27).]

#### **Matthew 13:36-43**

The harvest of all is the end of the age (v. 39).

The tares are gathered up and burned—at the end of the age.

The angels will gather up all the stumbling blocks and those who committed lawlessness and throw them into the furnace of fire (v. 41-42; cf. Revelation 20:15).

The righteous will shine as the sun (vs. 43).

#### **Matthew 13:47-50**

At the end of the age, the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous.

The angels will throw the wicked into the furnace of fire (cf. Rev. 20:15).

#### **Matthew 24:29-44**

The Son of Man will appear “*after* the tribulation of those days”.

He will send forth His angels and gather His elect.

His coming will be like the days of Noah and like a thief in the night (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

#### **Matthew 25:31-41**

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, He will judge “all the nations”, the righteous and the wicked. The wicked will be thrown into “eternal fire prepared for devil and angels” (v. 41; cf. Rev. 20:15).

#### **John 5:28-29:**

An *hour* is coming (cf. the “hour” of Jesus’ death).

At this *hour* “all” in the tombs will be resurrected, some to life and some to judgment.

### **Acts 3:19-21**

Times of refreshing come at the presence of the Lord whom heaven must receive until that time of restoration (cf. 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21).

### **Acts 24:15**

A resurrection (singular and anarthrous) of both the righteous and the wicked.

### **Romans 8:19-25:**

Creation will be set free at the revealing of the sons of God. The earth is set free from the curse.

This happens at the “redemption of the body,” the resurrection, our glorification.

### **1 Corinthians 15:22-26 and 50-57**

We will be made alive at Christ’s coming at which time comes the end (24).

He is currently reigning and will do so until He puts all His enemies under His feet and abolishes death.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom (50).

At the twinkling of an eye death will be swallowed up (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

### **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

The dead are raised when Christ returns with a trumpet. We will always be with Him (cf. Matt. 24:29-31).

### **2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2:1-3f**

Note the connection to the kingdom in v. 5.

Vindication comes when Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels and deals out retribution to those who do not obey the gospel; these pay the penalty of eternal destruction (cf. Matt. 24:31; Rev. 20:15).

This coming *follows* the revelation of the man of lawlessness.

### **1 Peter 1:3-9; 13**

Our inheritance is reserved (is being kept) for us in heaven.

Our final salvation will be revealed in the last time (v. 5, 9).

We will be vindicated in our trials “at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 7).

### **2 Peter 3:3-13**

In the last days scoffers will scoff about Jesus’ coming.

The heavens and earth will be burned with fire.

The day of the Lord will come like a thief and the heavens will pass away with a roar (cf. Matt. 24:36-44 where Jesus uses the same language of Noah and thieves in the night).

This is at the coming of the Lord.

Then will come the promise of new heavens and a new earth (cf. Rev. 21).

### **Revelation 20:11-15**

Judgment is executed for all the dead, those in the seas and those in Hades (cf. John 5:28-29).

There is a book of life from which judgment is brought (cf. Daniel 12:1).

Death is thrown into the lake of fire (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26, 54-55).

### **3. Some conclusions:**

- a. The Scriptures use the various terms and images associated with the coming of Christ interchangeably:
  - i. Coming, appearing, revelation, Day of the Lord, day and hour, gathering, glory, etc.
  - ii. Angels, trumpets, clouds, days of Noah, thieves, fire, etc.  
(compare Matt. 24:29-31 – 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 5:1-11 – 2 Pet. 3:3-13 – Rev. 20-21).
- b. The NT throughout speaks of a present age and an age to come and puts the events of Christ’s return at the point of transition between these two ages (cf. Matt. 13; Luke 18:30; Rom. 8, etc.).
- c. This suggests that there is only one coming at which time there is one general resurrection (a gathering together), one final judgment, and one glorification and damnation.