

A Revealed Framework

SEEING THE GLORIOUS HOPE OF THE GOSPEL IN A STUDY OF LAST THINGS

The Bible teaches us how to interpret prophecy and provides us with a basic framework for understanding it.

Review: Eschatology Is Important

- impacts our view of God
- informs our understanding of salvation
- fuels our sanctification
- shapes our worldview
- tests our hermeneutic

How Do We Interpret Prophecy?

The Bible teaches us how to interpret the Bible.

Numbers 12:6-9a:

6 “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. 7 Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD”

Principles from this Passage

- The Bible teaches us how to interpret itself.
- Different genres (types of literature) must be recognized. They require different approaches to interpretation.
- Some types of revelation are more difficult to understand than other types.
- The prophetic genre is particularly obscure and difficult to understand.
- Plain teaching (“didactic”) passages are easier to interpret than highly symbolic prophetic passages.

Daniel didn't understand his own prophecy

Daniel 8:15-17:

15 ¶ When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end."

The New Testament Interprets the Old

The NT clarifies that which was obscure in the OT.

The NT doesn't change the meaning of OT passages.

*The NT may change what you **thought** the OT meant without the further light of the NT.*

The New Testament Expands the Old

Matthew 11:11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 13 parables: the kingdom comes in two stages—a preliminary hidden stage and a final glorious stage

- Sowing and harvesting
- Mixed field and pure field
- Mustard seed and tree
- Lump of leaven and whole loaf of bread leavened

Colossians 1:27 To [the saints] God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

A Simple Structure for Redemptive History

Scripture reveals a two-age structure: this age and the age to come

Matthew 12:31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in *this age* or in *the age to come*.

Mark 10:29 Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in *this time*, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in *the age to come* eternal life.”

The Two Ages Cover All Time

- Not forgiven in this age or the age to come = not forgiven (no other opportunity)
- The term “***the*** age to come” implies that the age to come follows directly with no in-between
- It also implies that there is no age after that.

Whatever will happen must happen in one of these two ages.

Contrasting the Two Ages

Luke 20:34 And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, 36 for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Four Contrasts

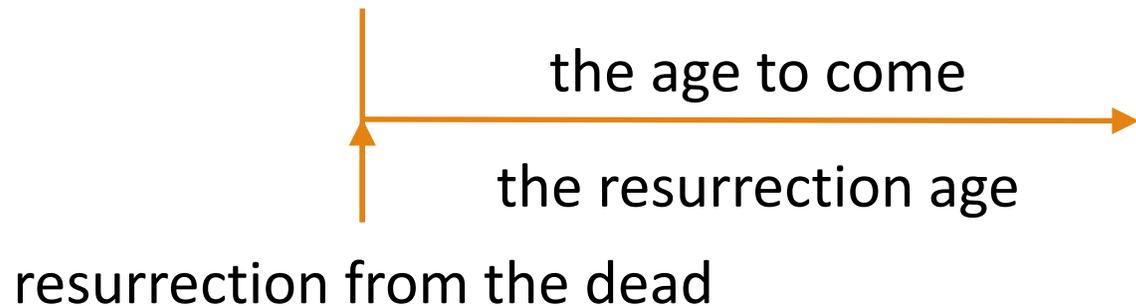
1. marriage vs. no marriage
2. death vs. no death
3. natural vs. resurrection bodies
4. mixture of saved and unsaved vs. only those who are worthy

Luke 20:35

Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.

Attaining to the resurrection is the same as attaining to the age to come.

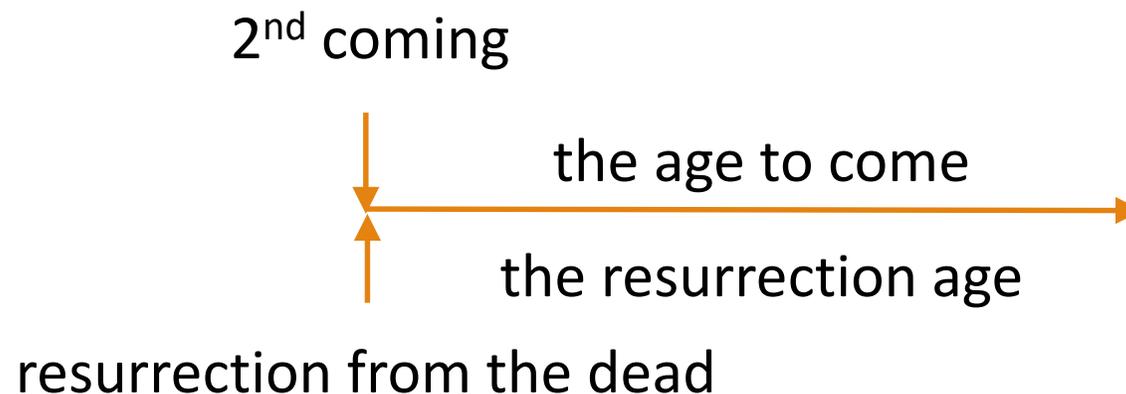
The age to come is the resurrection age.



1 Thessalonians 4:15-16

15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until *the coming of the Lord*, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And *the dead in Christ will rise first*.

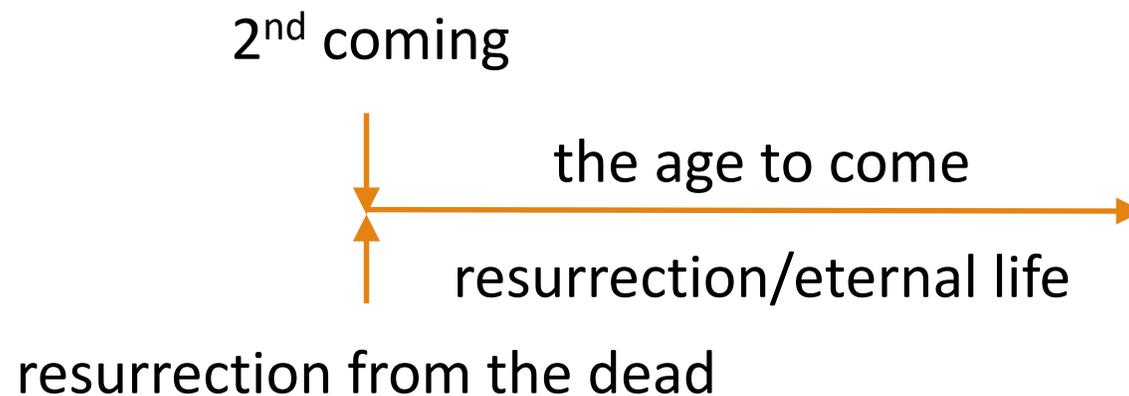
The 2nd coming coincides with the resurrection.



Mark 10:29-30

...there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the *age to come eternal life*.

The age to come is an age of eternal life.



The Close of this Age

Matthew 13:40 Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be *at the close of the age*. 41 *The Son of Man will send his angels*, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Compare:

Matthew 24: 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see *the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*. 31 And *he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call*, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

This age is closed by the coming of Christ.



The Nature of This Age

Characterized by a Struggle Against Evil

For the sons of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. Luke 16:8

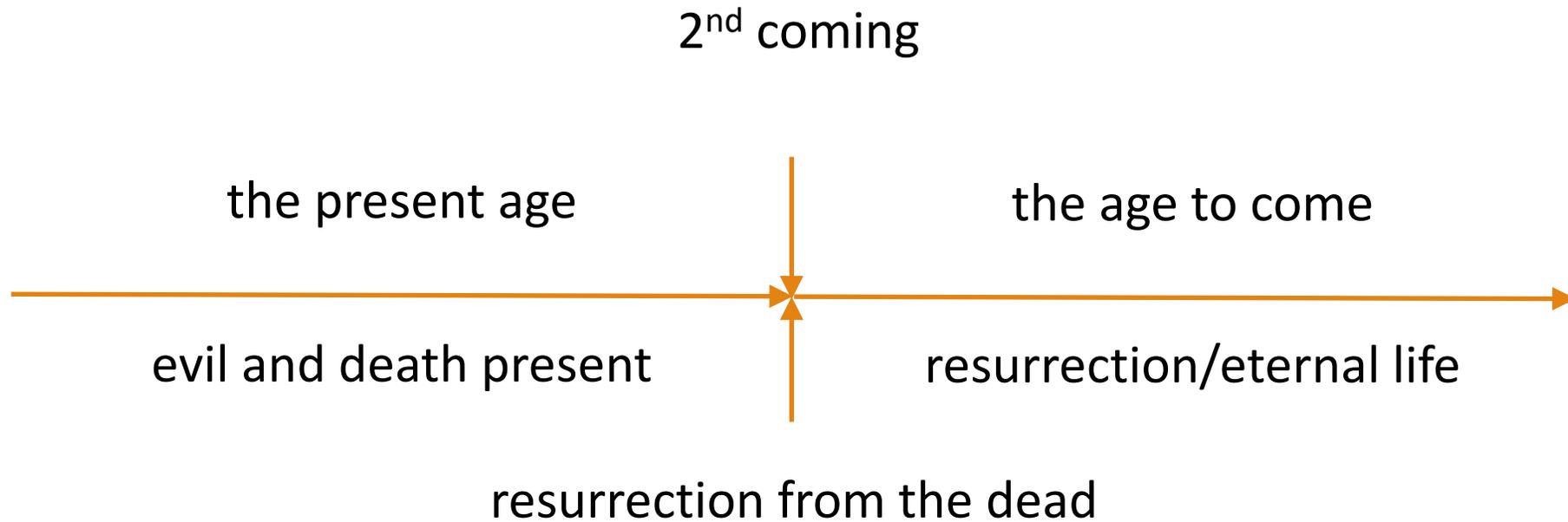
Do not be conformed to this world (age), but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Romans 12:2

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. 2 Cor. 4:4

The Lord Jesus Christ...gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age. Galatians 1:4

Putting It All Together

Basic Two-Age Structure of Redemptive History



Hope in the Present Age

Christ's presence and authority are with us in the present age.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me....And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:18-20

We should expect growth of the kingdom.

(Matthew 13)

- growth of the wheat
- mustard seed to tree
- leaven spreads to whole loaf

Conclusion and Preview

- Scripture gives us a basic framework for understanding eschatology.
- All of history is under the sovereign direction of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Preview: What is the kingdom of God? Is Jesus reigning now? Why do we see so much opposition if Jesus is reigning?