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THE END OF THE AGE HAS NOT YET COME

WHY THE CONSUMMATION OF REDEMPTIVE HISTORY REMAINS FUTURE

The End of the Age Has Not Yet Come

The claim that the end of the age has already occurred raises profound theological problems, not least of which concerns the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit with the Church. Jesus promised His disciples, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). The Spirit was given as a permanent indwelling presence, not a temporary covenantal placeholder (John 14:16–17; Romans 8:9–11; Ephesians 1:13–14). If the consummation has already passed, then the Church now exists beyond the promises Christ explicitly attached to His ongoing presence. Scripture allows no such conclusion.

Much of the confusion surrounding this issue stems from a failure to rightly divide the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). The disciples asked Jesus two related but distinct questions. First, “When will these things be?” referring to His prediction that the Temple would be destroyed (Matthew 24:2–3). Second, “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Jesus answers both questions, but not in the same way, nor with the same level of specificity.

Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, Christ speaks with remarkable clarity. He ties that judgment to the generation then living: “Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place” (Matthew 24:34; cf. Luke 21:20–24). History confirms the fulfillment of this prophecy in AD 70. The fall of Jerusalem stands as a covenantal judgment against Temple-centered Judaism and a public vindication of Christ’s prophetic authority (Matthew 23:37–38).

Yet when Jesus turns to speak of His coming and the end of the age, His language shifts. He refuses to provide a timetable. “But concerning that day and hour no one knows” (Matthew 24:36). He likens His coming to the days of Noah, sudden, unexpected, and universal in scope (Matthew 24:37–39). He emphasizes watchfulness rather than calculation (Matthew 24:42–44). This contrast is not accidental. It signals that He is no longer describing the same historical event.

The Old Covenant did not linger until the destruction of Jerusalem. It ended decisively at Calvary. Christ Himself declared, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The author of Hebrews is unequivocal: the New Covenant was established by Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11–14; 10:10–14). The tearing of the Temple veil at the moment of His death (Matthew 27:51) was not symbolic anticipation but divine proclamation. Access to God was now opened through Christ alone (Hebrews 10:19–22). Any theology that delays the end of the Old Covenant until AD 70 subtly undermines the finality and sufficiency of the cross.

The judgment upon Jerusalem, therefore, was not the climax of redemptive history, but the historical confirmation of what Christ had already accomplished. It validated Jesus as the true Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:22–23) and exposed the obsolescence of the Temple system (Hebrews 8:13). But Scripture never assigns to that event the weight of final resurrection glory, cosmic renewal, or the full realization of the age to come (Romans 8:18–25).

This is where hyper-preterism departs sharply from both Scripture and the unified testimony of the Church. No Church Father, no ecumenical creed, and no major Christian tradition has ever taught that the Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment were exhaustively fulfilled in the first century. The Nicene Creed’s confession, “He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,” echoes the plain teaching of Scripture (Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28).

The absence of hyper-preterism from church history is not incidental. It is fatal to the claim. The apostles consistently taught a future, visible return of Christ (Matthew

25:31–32; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 1:7). The idea that the Church universally misunderstood these texts for nearly two thousand years, only now to be corrected by a novel interpretive scheme, strains all credibility. Jude warns precisely against such doctrinal innovations divorced from the faith “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

Hyper-preterism also collapses under the weight of New Testament teaching on the resurrection. Paul grounds Christian hope in a future bodily resurrection patterned after Christ’s own resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20–23, 42–49). He explicitly ties the defeat of death to an as yet still future event: “The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26). Death has not yet been destroyed (Hebrews 2:14–15). Therefore, the resurrection Paul describes cannot be relegated to a purely covenantal or spiritual fulfillment in the first century.

Moreover, Paul explicitly locates the resurrection at “the coming of the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17), an event accompanied by the visible descent of Christ, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God. These are not metaphors for Roman armies or covenantal transitions. They are eschatological realities tied to the consummation of history itself.

Finally, hyper-preterism drains the Church’s mission of its eschatological urgency. The New Testament repeatedly grounds Christian perseverance, holiness, and hope in the expectation of a future consummation. We are those “on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Corinthians 10:11), yet we still await the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23). The Spirit is given as a guarantee, not as proof that all promises are already fulfilled (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14).

The end of the age has not yet arrived. Christ reigns now (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:33–36), but He will come again (Acts 1:11). The Kingdom has been inaugurated (Mark 1:15), but it has not been consummated (1 Corinthians 15:24–28). To deny this is not to advance biblical theology, but to sever the Church from her historic hope and to flatten the forward-looking horizon that pervades the New Testament.

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