

For a moment I want you to think about the word **apocalypse**. What jumps into your mind?

How many of you thought about “the end of the world?”

How many of you thought about “the return of Jesus?”

How many of you thought about “the rapture?”

How many of you thought about “revelation?”

Keep your hand up if you meant Revelation the last book of the New Testament?

Last week we kicked off this series by introducing the In Christ life. We are very comfortable with the Christ in me life, the personal relationship with Jesus life that leads to salvation, but the other side of the same coin is that we are also to live in Jesus. The rest of Ephesians is going to try to help unpack this idea in life altering ways. The unification of Gentiles and Jews into the same faith family meant everyone needed a change of perspective and purpose, but in Paul’s mind it’s going to take an apocalypse.

The Greek word **apokálupsis** from which we get the word apocalypse means a revelation, or to reveal something that was once hidden. I might use the phrase, “the light bulb turns on.” When this happens it can be a little disorienting. Like walking unknowingly into a Surprise party. The lights come on, everyone shouts surprise, and it takes a minute to register. Before the lights came on you had an expectation of how the evening unfold, but now a party has broken out in your honor and it requires a whole new set of expectations for the evening. You have an apocalypse.

As we read the rest of Ephesians Chapter 1 Paul wants his readers to process the surprise that has been revealed in Jesus and acquire the new set of expectations for what this means for the rest of their life.

15 For this reason,

The reason that Paul is referring to is that Gentiles and Jews have the same inheritance in Jesus.

because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation (apokálupsis) in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Eph 1:15–23). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

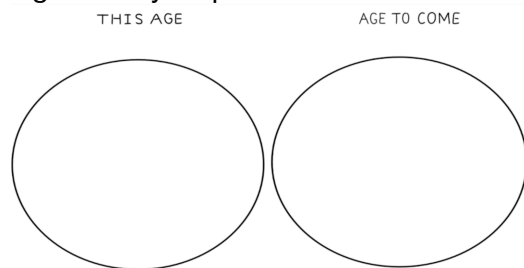
The result of receiving God’s wisdom and revelation is that we might know this hope we have in Jesus, know the riches of the inheritance that we share with other believers, and to know the resurrection power available to those who believe.

In order to achieve this Paul believes we need an apocalypse.

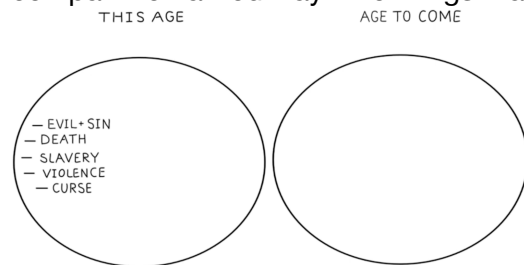
The apocalypse is that once Jesus was resurrected he was seated on a throne at the right hand of God far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and name not only in this age, but in the age to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

This is pretty lofty thinking. This first chapter is so dense in meaning and I just feel like I need to show you something that Tim Mackey illustrated in his class on Ephesians that I found to be significantly helpful.

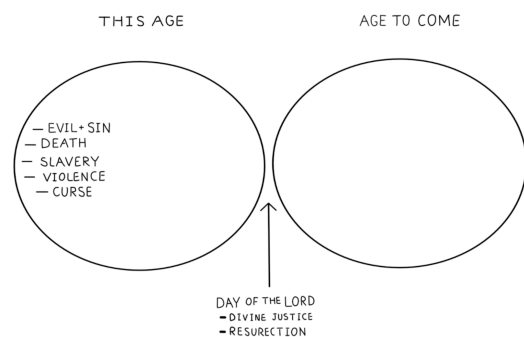


Jews would have been familiar with this kind of language, and would have thought about it in a compartmentalized way. The things that characterize This Age are...

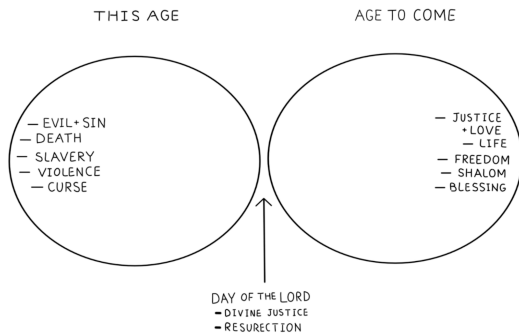


Evil, Sin, Death, Slavery, Violence, Curse

As the OT unfolds there comes a time when a transition will take place between This Age and the Age To Come called The Day of the Lord

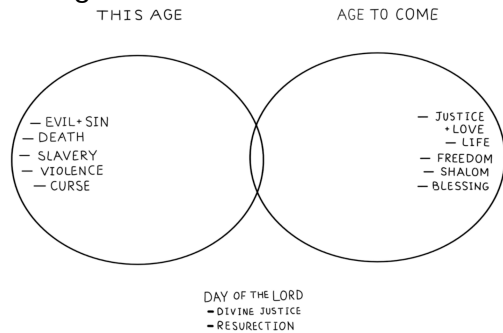


There was an expectation that this would be a day of Divine Justice and there would be a Resurrection of the Dead that would usher in The Age to Come which would be characterized by Justice, Love, Life, Freedom, Shalom, and Blessing

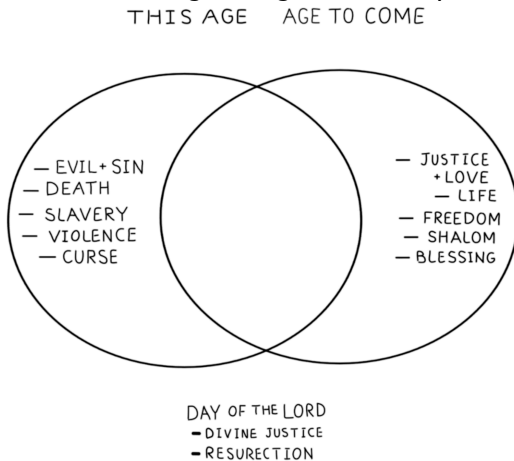


This might be how Paul would have illustrated his view before his apocalypse, which began on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9) and continued as he spent three years after this studying and resetting his expectations.

After the Apocalypse of Paul he begins to illustrate a very different view where This Age and The Age to Come at first collide.



And the two ages begin to overlap

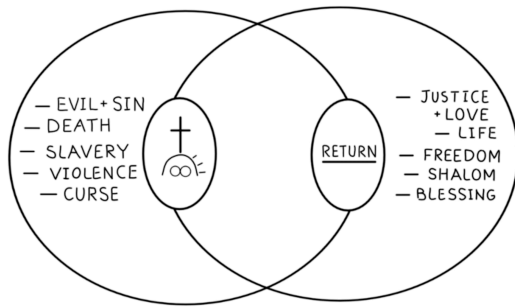


So we are left with This Age, The Age to Come and this area of overlap in the middle. It is the reality of this area in the middle that Paul is talking about in v20-23:

20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Paul sees two doorways open up that allows someone to go from one age to another.

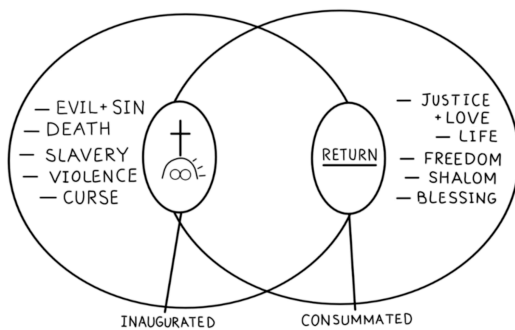
THIS AGE AGE TO COME



DAY OF THE LORD
— DIVINE JUSTICE
— RESURRECTION

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is one doorway and the return of Jesus is the second doorway. We enter the surprise party by placing our faith in the resurrected Jesus and now we live in both ages at the same time, but ultimately moving permanently into the Age to Come once Jesus returns.

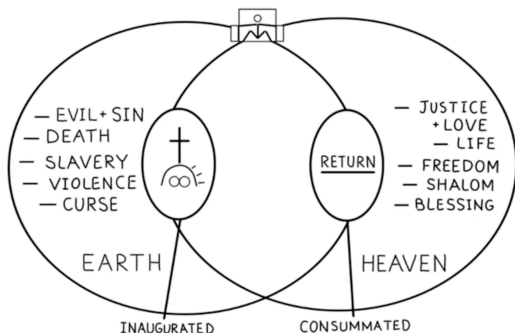
THIS AGE AGE TO COME
NOW NOT YET



DAY OF THE LORD
— DIVINE JUSTICE
— RESURRECTION

So, in the Church we live in this tension where we are both citizens of America, Germany, Japan, etc. and are also citizens of Heaven (Eph. 2). We will also experience things that characterize both ages. We will experience evil, sin, death, slavery, violence, curse, justice, love, life, freedom, Shalom, and blessing. This overlapping age that we live in was inaugurated by the death and resurrection of Jesus and it will be consummated once Jesus returns which opens up the doorway into the Age to Come. Or what we often term Heaven and Earth.

THIS AGE AGE TO COME
NOW NOT YET



DAY OF THE LORD
— DIVINE JUSTICE
— RESURRECTION

The key to living in this tension is to remember that Jesus is on his throne ruling over all of it. This is what will allow us to experience Justice, Love, Life, Freedom, Shalom, Blessing, Joy, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Self-Control. Keeping our eyes on Jesus allows us to live more fully in the Age to Come.

What Paul says in Chapter 1 has three implications or one implication stated three different ways:

1. The apocalypse is for the community you=ya'll

2. You cannot experience the full extent of the apocalypse without being a part of the community of faith, the Church.

3. You can't live the in Christ life if you aren't living the in the Church life.

You are not the body of Christ, but just a part of the body of Christ and in order for you to fulfill your purpose you have to be connected to Jesus and Jesus' faith family. It's why Paul can write to the Corinthians,

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (1 Co 12:12–20). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

It's why the writer of Hebrews writes, ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Heb 10:23–25). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

Jesus died so that you could be a part of the Church.

Salvation is the easy part because we don't have to work for it. Learning to love people with whom my only connection is Jesus is where the work comes in.

If we stop at just salvation we miss out on "the fullness of life in Christ."

Being part of the Church is what enables you to experience Age To Come outcomes now.

Being In Jesus is synonymous with being in the Church.

How do you know if you are in the Church or just come to Church.

We get a view of what it meant in the first church from Acts 2.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47

praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Ac 2:42–47). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

- 1. You share with other believers what God reveals through what you observe in scripture, prayer, and life experiences (regroups, other relationships)**
- 2. You share who Jesus is with non-believers having apocalyptic hope**
- 3. You share your resources as God leads with the Church, the poor, the orphan, the slave, or the refugee**
- 4. You eat together**

When this happens more people will have an apocalypse of their own. The Church will grow in number, and the timing of the Return of Jesus will grow nearer.

As we begin this new year might you have an apocalypse?

Might you recalibrate your life around the idea that being a part of the Church is essential to discovering the abundant life Jesus promised you and I?

That's my prayer.

Pray
Communion
Song
Benediction