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The "Age to Come" and the Eternal State

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The gospels are full of parables and instruction about the "end of the world" or "age" and the world or age "to come." Futurists mistake this "end" as referring uniformly to the end of the *physical cosmos*, and the world "to come" as *heaven*. Preterists often go to the opposite extreme and interpret the "end" exclusively in reference to the end of the *Mosaic age*, and the age or world "to come" in reference to the *Christian age*. Both of these extremes are wrong. In this article, we examine texts referring to the "end" and the age and world "to come" and conclude that the definition must be guided by the context.

End of the Age - "This Generation shall Not Pass Away"

After his Great Denunciation upon Jerusalem and his announcement that all the righteous blood shed upon

earth would be required of his generation (Matt. 23:34-39), Jesus walked with his disciples to the Mount of Olives. There, his disciples exclaimed upon the beauty of the temple buildings, which could be seen across the way. Jesus responded

"See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2).

The disciples then asked him about fulfillment of this prediction. In the account reported by Mark and Luke, the disciples asked only two things: 1) When these things would be and 2) what signs would precede their fulfillment. However, Matthew's account adds two things more: 1) The coming of Christ and 2) end of the "world."

Matt. 24:3	Mark 13:3, 4	Luke 21:7
"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying Tell us, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"	"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?"	"And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things and what sign will there be when these things shall be come to pass?"

To read the accounts that follow the disciples' questions, there is no suggestion anything more than the destruction of Jerusalem and similar world-shaking events were in view: The context of all that is reported is almost entirely set in a Judean context and Jesus expressly states that these things would be fulfilled in his own generation.

Matthew 24:24	Mark 13:30	Luke 21:32
"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."	"Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done."	"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

The fact that the things described would be fulfilled in the disciples' generation shows that the Olivet Discourse is really just an expansion upon the Great Denunciation recorded in Matt. 23, which also expressly limited its dire predictions to that generation. The only reasonable conclusion that follows is that the "end" described was not of the natural world or physical cosmos, but an "age," an "era," or an "epoch" of which Jerusalem's destruction was a part and sign: A world *order* was passing away and would be replaced by another, not the world itself. This is uniformly borne witness to by newer translations, which substitute "age" for "world" in Matt. 24:3: *"What shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age?"*

With this premise in mind, Preterists largely interpret the word rendered "world" or "age" as the *Mosaic age*. Not all Preterists agree that the age should be defined by the Mosaic law and covenant. This writer sees the term in reference to the larger world order and epoch that had endured from the time of man's fall,

particularly as this was marked by Gentile dominion and the oppression of God's people. It was the peculiar office of the Messiah to deliver the saints from sin *and* their enemies amongst the world's civil powers. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, thus said:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us...that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Lk. 1:68-75

"Saved from the hand of our enemies." Clearly, deliverance of God's little flock from their oppressors among the world's civil powers was the expectation of every Jew. Unfortunately, many misinterpreted this to mean that the Messiah would be political figure, exercising dominion from an earthly throne. This was not to be: Jesus rules from the right hand of the Majesty in heaven; his kingdom is not of this world.

End of the Age - Kingdom Coming in Power - Wrath upon the Nations

Christ's salvation from sin was fulfilled at the cross; putting his enemies beneath his feet occurred in the coming of his kingdom "in power" within the generation of those then living (Matt. 16:27, 28; II Tim. 4:1), and it was *this* that would mark the end of the age. Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, which had become enemies of Christ and his people, persecuting the church and opposing the gospel, were thus swept away in a larger time of *world-wrath* that put Christ's enemies - Jews and Romans - beneath his feet. This is what Jesus alluded to when he told the Sanhedrin they would see him coming in clouds of wrath against the nation:

"I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mk. 14:62

This is also the point of John the Baptist's warning that the ax was already laid to the root of the trees and that Christ would thoroughly cleanse his floor:

"And now already the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy

Ghost, and with fire: Whose far is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but we will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3:10-12

As suggested by John's statement that Christ would "gather the wheat into the garner," simultaneous with this harvest of wrath, there was also a harvest of God's people into the eternal kingdom (spiritual realm). There are different views how this harvest or gathering was accomplished; some suppose an actual "rapture" or "translation" occurred. Against this view is the fact that many of the disciples outlived the end of the age, particularly the apostle John, so that the notion of the mass translation of saints lacks historical support. Others spiritualize this gathering, imagining there was some sort of a figurative translation out of the "body of Moses" or "grave of Judaism" into the resurrected body of Christ. This view is contradicted by the fact that the Gentiles were never in the so-called "body of Moses" or "grave of Judaism" but were plainly included in the harvest or gathering (II Thess. 2:1). It is also contradicted by the fact that, by this view the translation out of the "grave of Judaism" equals justification from sin, but justification occurred at the cross, not AD 70, and the epistles make abundantly clear that resurrection from the guilt of sin occurs at conversion (Eph. 2:1-6; Rom. 6:3-6). This writer has thus settled upon the view that the harvest of the righteous at the end of the age refers to the gathering of the saints into the eternal kingdom by martyrdom. Let's look at a couple parables to see if this is not so.

End of the Age - Harvest of the Wicked by Death - Harvest of the Righteous by Martyrdom

The parable of the "tares" provides a good example of Christ's end of age/world instruction. This parable tells the story of a man whose enemy sowed tares (a weed similar in appearance to wheat) in his field. When the workers discovered the tares growing among the wheat, they asked the owner if he wanted them to go and gather them up. The owner answered, no, that both should grow together until the harvest, then they would be sorted: The wheat would be gathered into the garner, but the tares would be gathered up and burned (Matt. 13:24-30). Jesus explained this parable, saying, field was the world; the good seed or wheat were the children of the kingdom; but the tares the children of the devil; the harvest was the end of the age; the reapers were angels.

"As therefore the tare are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of

fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. 13:40-43

This parable, commonly misapplied by futurists to the end of physical cosmos, actually spoke to events Jesus' own generation would witness. The term translated "world" in verse 40, in the Greek, is "aion." This is the root of our word "eon", and signifies a period time, rather than place, an era in history rather than the earth itself. This should be compared with the word "world" in v. 38, which is the Greek term "kosmos," which signifies the physical earth. The "age" extant when Jesus spoke was the pre-Messianic age. The field where the seed was sown is the kingdom or world (cosmos), showing Jesus' dominion over all earth. Wheat requires only a short time to germinate, put on heads, and become dry enough to harvest. The rapidity with which the harvest would follow the sowing of the word by Christ and the apostles is shown the parable in Mark 4:26-29:

"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

The Thessalonians thought the time of "gathering" was at hand, but Paul told them that the time was not ripe: that the "man of sin" (Nero Caesar) had not yet appeared on the world scene (II Thess. 2:1-12). However, by the time James wrote, the world scene had changed, and the harvest was close at hand:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Jm. 5:6-8

Finally, Rev. 14 depicts the harvest at the end of the age. Two groups are portrayed: the wheat is harvested by Christ and his angels in martyrdom under the beast (Neronean persecution), but the wicked are trodden the winepress of wrath "outside the city" (Jerusalem), the blood and gore running as high as the horses' bridles.

Harvest of Righteous - Rev. 14:9-16 "Wheat"	Harvest of Wicked - Rev. 14:17-20 "Grapes of Wrath"
<p>⁹And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,</p> <p>¹⁰The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:</p> <p>¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.</p> <p>¹²Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.</p> <p>¹³And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.</p> <p>¹⁴And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.</p> <p>¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the</p>	<p>And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.</p> <p>¹⁸And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.</p> <p>¹⁹And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.</p> <p>²⁰And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.</p>

<p>earth is ripe.</p> <p>¹⁶And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.</p>	
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These are first century events, fulfilled by AD 70. The persecution under the Nero and the Jews lasted from AD 64-68, represented by the harvest of the "wheat." The Jews' war with Rome lasted from AD 67-70, represented by the harvest or vintage of the wicked. We note that in all these harvest scenarios, both the wicked and just are gathered by physical death. Those who argue that the righteous were actually "raptured" or "translated" concede that the wicked in these parables, and in their actual, historical fulfillment, experienced physical death, and were not "translated" to hell fires without seeing death. How then can it be argued that the righteous departed this life without physical death, but were translated? Both were "gathered" at the same time, in the same harvest. Clearly, the harvest that gathered the one by death equally gathered the other, so that both the wicked and just were harvested by physical death, the one by famine, pestilence, and sword, the other by martyrdom under Nero and the Jews. (For a good example of God's wrath upon Israel in terminology of "harvest," see Isa. 17:4-11; for examples of "gathering" used for God's harvest of the righteous in death, see Gen. 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33)

No Marriage in the "Age" to Come?

Having established that the pre-Messianic age and its attendant world passed away in the earth-shaking judgments and events of the first century, we can now look at the phrases "this world" (or "age") as distinct from the "world (or "age) to come." An error that Preterists sometimes fall into is the assumption that *every occurrence* of "this world/age" refers to the pre-Messianic age, and that the "world/age to come" *always* refers to the Christian age that replaced it. However, this is clearly wrong and can produce some ridiculous and astonishing results. For example, in Luke 20:34-36, in response to the Sadducee's question whose wife the woman who had seven brothers as husband would be in the resurrection, Jesus said:

"The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels;

and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Does this passage refer to the Christian age? A surprising number of Preterists say, Yes. A question recently posted on line, asked:

"Do preterists still believe in marriage? If they do, why, since we are in the eternal kingdom, NOW, where we are neither married or given in marriage, but are like the angels? So, why bother to involve yourselves in trivial earthly matters as marriage?"

This is not the first time I have encountered Preterists struggling with the concept of the eternal state or kingdom and fulfilled eschatology. Don Preston is on record interpreting the "age" in question in reference to the Christian age:

"So, Jesus addressed the heart of the issue, the nature of the kingdom. He said that in the age to come-- the age of the resurrection-- that Torah and Temple would not rule the kingdom, because there would be no marrying and giving in marriage."¹

Others rehearsing this error include William Bell² and Ward Fenely³. If there is a source for this error it is Max King, who wrote back in 1971:

¹ Don Preston at <http://www.eschatology.org/all-articles-articles-211/37-responding-to-the-critics/895-objection-to-preterism-they-neither-marry-or-are-given-in-marriage>

² *"Paul plainly demonstrated that as sons of God in Christ, ...there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," (Gal.3:27-28). Hence, there is absolutely no possible manner in view of this spiritual "oneness" to get a "twain" of anything to become one flesh as demanded by physical marriages."* From an article posted at: http://www.preteristarchive.com/Hyper/0000_bell_dead-raise.html

³ *"There is neither male nor female, for they are all one in Christ. This corresponds perfectly with Christ's statement that there is no marriage in the kingdom of heaven. We are all one in Christ and there is neither male nor female. His kingdom has nothing to do with this world, for His kingdom is not of this world. Therefore, the fact that there is still marriage in this physical life does not negate the fact that there is not marriage in the kingdom anymore than the fact that there are males and females in this physical life does not negate the fact that there are not males or females in the kingdom."*

Ward Fenely at <http://www.eschatology.com/whymarriage.html>

"The statement that those in the world to come would neither marry nor be given in marriage is not, as it would appear on the surface, a denial of marriage or physical life in the Christian age. Rather, it has the meaning of Paul's statement that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17). Jesus was not teaching that the citizens of the world to come 'do not marry' anymore than Paul taught that citizens of the kingdom do not eat or drink. The point being debated is the nature of the world that was to come. The 'children of this world' (Jewish) were constituted as such by physical birth, being the fleshly seed of Abraham. Thus, the citizens of 'this world' were propagated by marriage or fleshly procreation. But such would not be true in the world to come (the Christian age). Jesus said those who would be worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, would not do so by physical means or methods. It was not the kind of world that could be entered by flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50) . . . 'Neither can they die any more' because they are 'the children of the resurrection,' refers to the spiritual state of redeemed man, and not his physical state."⁴

The error underlying all of these is the assumption that "this age" refers to the pre-Messianic age (or "Mosaic" age by the King/Preston/Bell/Fenely view), and "that age" to the present Christian age on earth. However, the dichotomy is not between the age extant when Jesus spoke versus that which was yet to come. The dichotomy is between *this life* versus the *next life*; *this world* versus *heaven above*. This is clearly seen by the reference to the resurrection.

The resurrection under discussion is the eschatological resurrection from Hades. The Sadducees were not quizzing Jesus about some spiritualized "resurrection" equal to justification from sin. They were questioning him about the *actual* resurrection of those that had died *physically* and gone to Hades. The Pharisees' concept of the resurrection was of physical bodies to earthly life, raising the prospect of physical marriage. Hence, the question "whose wife will she be?" Jesus' responded showing that in the resurrection from Hades, men do not return to earthly life, but have spiritual bodies like heavenly angels and, therefore, do not marry. Hence, the resurrection is not out of the "pre-Messianic age" into the Messianic age, but from Hades to heaven above. Thus, the translation of the Authorized (King James) Version is correct in rendering "aion" "world." Strong's agrees, and says

⁴ Max King, Spirit of Prophecy (Warren, OH 1971), pp. 237, 238.

that "world" is a correct rendering as determined by the context:

(#165) **Αἰων** "an age; by exens. *perpetuity* (also past); by impl. the *world*; spec. (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future)."

Another example were "aion" is correctly translated "world" is Matt. 13:22, where the seed of the word is choked by the deceitfulness of riches and the "*care of this world (Gk. aion).*" Is the word choked only by the care of the pre-Messianic age? Is that Jesus' meaning? Of course it is not. Clearly, "aion" in this context can only mean *this life and world*. A parallel verse is Tit. 2:12:

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world (aion)."

Were the saints to live righteously only in the pre-Messianic age and not the duration of their whole sojourn beneath the sun? Their whole sojourn, of course! In Mark 10:28-31, Peter asked Jesus what their reward would be, saying, "we have left all, and followed thee." Jesus responded:

"Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world (aion) to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

Is it Jesus' intention to say that those who sacrifice "in this time" (the pre-Messianic age) will receive everlasting life in the Christian age that was to come? Of course it is not. His purpose is to say that those who sacrifice during *earthly life*, will be recompensed in the *life to come* in the resurrection of the just *in heaven* above. Clearly, these passages show that the term "aion" sometimes means "world" as distinguished from heaven and the life to come.

Survey of Passages Containing "aion"

Here follows a table of passages containing the word "aion." We have sorted the passages by whether the term is best understood as pointing to the "pre-Messianic age" versus the Christian age, or this "world" versus the "next world (heaven)." Admittedly, some passages are debatable and can be argued both ways.

Matthew

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
<p>Matt. 13:40 - "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world."</p> <p>This verse points to the end of age then passing; not the cosmos or world of men.</p> <p>Matt. 13:49 - "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."</p> <p>Like the preceding verse, this passage describes the time of wrath that would mark the end of the pre-Messianic age when the existing course of the world was irrevocably changed.</p> <p>Matt. 24:3 - "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?"</p> <p>The course of the world that had obtained from the time of mankind's fall passed in the world-events that witnessed the fall of Jerusalem and wrath upon the</p>	<p>Matt. 12:32 - "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Cf. Mk. 3:28-30; Lk. 12:10)</p> <p>The terror of this verse supposes "world to come" points to the eternal doom in the resurrection of damnation. Hence, we judge that "aion" is correctly translated "world" in this verse and points to the next life.</p> <p>Matt. 13:22 - "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." (Cf. Mk. 4:19)</p> <p>We have already discussed this verse, above. The "care of this world" points to the cares of this life, not the pre-Messianic age.</p>

<p>Roman Empire, as Jesus put his enemies beneath his feet and began ruling the nations in righteousness.</p> <p>Matt. 28:20 - Teaching them to observe all thing whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."</p> <p>This verse can be debated both ways. Given the context and the fact Jesus is speaking to the apostles, the better view probably is that his is affirming he will be with them and carry them through the tribulation and persecutions that attended the end of the pre-Messianic age.</p>	
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Mark

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>Mk. 4:19 -"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."</p> <p>See comment at Matt. 13:22</p> <p>Mk. 10:30 - "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."</p> <p>The contrast here is between the sacrifices made during our earthly sojourn and the recompense we will receive in the resurrection of the just in heaven above.</p>

Luke

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>Lk. 1:70 - "As he spake by the mouth of his prophets, which have been since the world began."</p> <p>The prophetic gift has been with men from the very beginning of the creation, and not just from the time of Moses. Jude 14 says that even Enoch, who lived before the flood, prophesied of Christ. There is simply no basis to limit <i>aion</i> here to any period less than the beginning of creation.</p> <p>Lk. 16:8 - "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."</p> <p>The contrast here is between "children of light" and</p>

	<p>"children of the world," the latter of which does not seem properly limited to children of the pre-Messianic age, and therefore must be taken in the general sense of natural, unregenerate men of this world.</p> <p>Lk. 18:30 - "Who shall receive manifold more in this present time and in the world to come life everlasting."</p> <p>See comment at Mk. 10:30</p> <p>Lk. 20:34, 35 - "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage."</p> <p>This passage involves a discussion of those that are raised from physical death, and goes on to explain that the children of the resurrection are equal to angels. This clearly signifies that the "world to come" is not the Christian age, but heaven itself. For it is then, and not before, that we enter the eternal state and are clothed upon with immortality.</p>
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John

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>Jn. 9:32 - "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind."</p> <p>It cannot reasonably be maintained that the speaker has less in view that the whole period from the beginning of creation. Hence, <i>aion</i> here is properly rendered "world."</p>

Acts

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>Acts 3:21 - "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."</p> <p>"Since the world began" can have no other meaning that "from the beginning of creation." Aion is therefore properly rendered "world" in this context.</p> <p>Acts 15:18 - "Known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world."</p> <p>Does God know all his works from the beginning of</p>

	creation, or only some lesser period beginning with Moses? From the beginning of creation, of course.
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Romans

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>Rom. 12:2 - "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."</p> <p>Although <i>aion</i> here is susceptible of meaning "this era or time" in which the speaker lived, his intention is not merely to condemn the manners of his own age, but the world as disconnected from Christ without regard to the time in which men live. Hence, "world" gives the proper sense and meaning, where "age" would not.</p> <p>Rom. 16:25 - "...according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept secret since the world began."</p> <p>See comments at Jn. 9:32 and Acts 3:21.</p>

I Corinthians

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
<p>I Cor. 10:11 - "Now all these things happened unto them for ensample: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."</p> <p>Unless the end is 2000 years long and growing longer each day, we must understand "aion" in relation, not to the cosmos, but the pre-Messianic world-course or age that was then passing away as Christ took up his rule from the right hand of God.</p>	<p>I Cor. 1:20 - "Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."</p> <p>"Aion" occurs three times in this passage. In each case world gives the better sense, for the things Paul describes belong to the world and not to any particular age.</p> <p>I Cor. 2:6-8 - "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."</p> <p>Specific reference to the rulers who crucified Christ tempts us to interpret "aion" in reference to the pre-Messianic age. However, the hidden wisdom (the gospel), which God ordained before the "aion," has the meaning of "before creation." Hence the prevailing</p>

	<p>thought is the absence of wisdom in the natural man of this world, which is alienated from God and at enmity with him, and therefore did not recognize Christ, but slew him; qualities that belong to the world in general and not to any particular age.</p> <p>I Cor. 3:18 - "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."</p> <p>Here again the prevailing thought is worldly wisdom versus spiritual wisdom, not the wisdom of any particular age.</p> <p>I Cor. 8:13 - "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, let I mane my brother to offend."</p> <p>Would Paul begin eating meat after the pre-Messianic age passed, or is the meaning that he would not eat while the world exists? The latter to be sure.</p>
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II Corinthians

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>II Cor. 4:4 - "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."</p> <p>The "god of this world" is not a supernatural demonic being, but the spirit of those that are carnally minded, who follow the things of the flesh and are at enmity with the things of the Spirit and of God. This spirit (the "spirit of the power of the air" - Eph. 2:2) is the prevailing mindset of unregenerate men and, hence, keeps all men who seek not God under its thrall. Since this spirit exists in every age and generation, it will not do to translate "aion" "age," for it is the spirit of the world, and not any particular age.</p>

Galatians

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>Gal. 1:4 - "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."</p> <p>This one can be argued both ways. Most Preterists would argue that the "Mosiac" age is here in view, and would point to the context of the letter, which argues against keeping the law, as evidence supporting this</p>

	<p>interpretation. But where the phrase "this present world" occurs elsewhere, the context clearly shows that this world is in view, and not merely a particular age (II Tim. 4:10; Tit. 2:12). Jesus died to open the way to heaven for us and deliver us from the bondage of sin and death that rules this world (Rom. 5:14, 21).</p>
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Ephesians

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
<p>Eph. 3:21 - "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus through out all ages, world without end. Amen."</p> <p>The literal Greek here is "throughout all generations of the age of the ages." The Christian age is the age of the ages; the age to which all others were tending and which will last so long as earth endures.</p>	<p>Eph. 1:21 - "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."</p> <p>The contrast appears to be between the powers and authorities of this world over against the next world, and not merely Christ's exalted status in the pre-Messianic and Christian ages on earth.</p> <p>Eph. 2:7 - "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."</p> <p>This verse seems to speak in anticipation of the resurrection, and the ages to come in heaven where we will live as sons of the living God.</p> <p>Eph. 3:9 - "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."</p>

I Timothy

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>I Tim. 6:17 - "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."</p>

II Timothy

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>II Tim. 1:9 - "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according</p>

	<p>to his won purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."</p> <p>I Tim. 4:10 - "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."</p> <p>Here "present world" looks to earthly life, not the pre-Messianic age. The context here distinguishing this passage from the like phrase in Galatians 1:4.</p>
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II Timothy

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
	<p>Tit. 1:2 - "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."</p> <p>The promise of man's salvation was purposed in the mind of God before the creation.</p> <p>Tit. 2:12 - "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and world lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."</p>

Hebrews

"aion" as pre-Messianic or Christian Age	"aion" as this World or the next World
<p>Heb. 9:26 - "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world ("kosmos"): but now once in the end of the world ("aion") hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."</p> <p>The literal Greek here is "now once in the consummation of the ages." The meaning is not the end or terminus of the ages, but their fulfillment and completion in Christ. Christ appeared at the very apex of history to consummate God's salvific purpose by death upon the cross. His second appearing (v. 28) would be to put his enemies beneath his feet and thus bring salvation to his persecuted flock (see comments under Heb. 6:5).</p> <p>Heb. 11:3 - "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear."</p> <p>"Worlds" here is probably best interpreted "ages" and points to the various ages of God's redemptive purpose, which were framed (ordained) by the word and decree of God, the fullness of their purpose being Christ.</p>	<p>Heb. 1:2 - "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."</p> <p>Unlike Heb. 11:3 where "worlds" is better understood as redemptive "ages," "worlds" here seems to point to the creation, which God accomplished in Christ through the Spirit before he was clothed upon with flesh (Jn. 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Gen. 1:1).</p> <p>Heb. 6:4, 5 - "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."</p> <p>"Powers of the world to come" seems to look to powers possessed by angels, which were foretasted by those who were "partakers of the Holy Ghost." Most Preterists (and Christians in general) are agreed that the <i>charismata</i> belonged only to the era of the prophets and the closing days of the pre-Messianic age, and have</p>

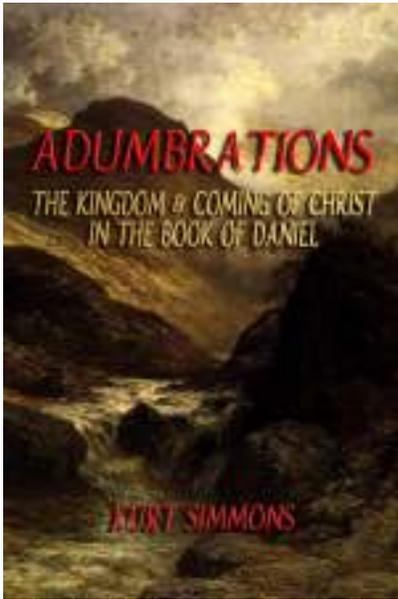
	<p>today ceased. Hence, the powers of the age to come cannot have in view the Christian age, since the gifts of the Holy Ghost do not belong to the present time.</p> <p>Another passage worth considering, but which uses a different word, is Heb. 2:5: "For he has not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." The word here is "oikumene," which means the "inhabitable earth" or "world." The idea behind this verse is that the government of the world has not been committed to angels, but to Christ, under whose feet God has placed all things. The writer says in verse 8, "But now we see not yet all things put under him," signifying the fact that the kingdom had not yet come in power, crushing Jesus' enemies among the Jews and Romans. But his imminent return in judgment and wrath to deliver his persecuted people is the promise of the epistle. "For yet it is a very little while and he that is coming will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37). Thus, although the "oikumene to come" is co-terminus with the Messianic age in which Jesus rules the nations with a rod of iron, and in some ways thus belongs to the other column, "oikumene" looks to the <i>place</i> or <i>thing</i> under Christ's subjection, rather the age or time when it accrued, and must therefore be translated "world" and placed here.</p>
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Summary & Conclusion

The "end of the age" announced in the gospels refers to the "pre-Messianic age." The world-events that marked its conclusion, and the beginning of the reign of Christ from the right hand of God, included the destruction of Jerusalem, wrath upon the Roman Empire, and harvest of the saints by martyrdom. However, not all occurrences of the word "aion" refer

to this end; in fact, the majority do not, but refer instead to the world and time of life beneath the sun.

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Questions from Our Readers

Q: Hey Kurt

Awesome article on Heb 9:10. I remember reading Don on that numerous times and cringed. The time of reformation is clearly shown once you read on. v 11 BUT, there's a shift here, but Christ HAS come, he has already entered into the MHP. That's the time of reformation. Your on the money there, the cross is that time, not AD 70. The sanctuary represented both covenants.

I tell people if you want to read good stuff on basic Preterism and refuting Dispensationalism, read Don Preston; once you become a full Preterist, best to go with Kurt. The covenantal view places justification not at the cross; they hardly speak of the Hadean resurrection etc. I have both of your commentaries; there're both awesome; the one on Daniel is the best commentary I've read on Daniel.

I wrestled with resurrection for 5 years, since I became a Preterist 5 years ago, was holding out for future resurrection as I could never see anything but individuals in 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 5; 1 Thess 4 etc. Your view and Stevens, Stevens without the rapture, have recently helped me to see what's going on.

I'd love to talk to you sometime but I realize your probably pretty busy, if it is possible let me know. Thanks for your work. It has helped me a lot.

A: Thanks for the kind words. Call me any time. You are never a bother. 575-236-6111.

Q: Hey Kurt. I'm from St Louis Mo. One quick question if I may. Did God discard, trash, or annihilate the glorified body of Jesus after the ascension. Also in the resurrection will we be dis-embodied spirits. I have some views on all this. I want to get a take from someone as I see level headed and lives a god fearing life. God Bless

A: Thanks for the question. The Bible is not totally silent on this issue, but it does not speak directly or explicitly to it either. We do know that "flesh and blood" (physical, corporeal bodies) cannot inherit the kingdom of God in heaven (I Cor. 15:50). Paul also

says that "to be absent from the body [that is, our physical bodies] is to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:10). Since Jesus ascended to heaven and that is where we are destined, it follows that Jesus' physical, corporeal body was in some form or manner "changed." In fact, Paul uses this very term to describe what happens to us at the last trumpet that calls each of us out of this world at the time of death (I Cor. 15:51). "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:50-53). However, I would not say God annihilated the glorified body of Jesus. Just the opposite, I would say that in the ascension, God changed the physical body for a glorified one. Thus, when Jesus appeared to John on Patmos, it was not the weak, frail human body that he possessed during his earthly ministry, but one of power and terrible to behold: it was the body of his divinity.

Hope that helps. Write again if you need further clarification!

Q: Hi Kurt,

Just a note to say thank you for your work again. I've been devouring your books and continually read your articles online. Your writing is very well thought out and presented.

I've been around other sites of people who are jumping from label to label it seems, and their arguments are downright immature. I've seen articles about why some guy left Full Preterism for Idealism for some other "ism". Most of it seems to me to be rushed thinking and striving after wind.

So anyway, thank you again for your massive amounts of work and your conservative approach to the topics. You seem to have a pure heart that loves the truth.

Have a great day,

A: Thanks for the encouraging words, but the glory is God's. Whatever I have learned or gifts I possess come from God and I merely pass them along freely to you. I am grateful to be of service in the Kingdom and to my brethren. However, the encouragement is greatly appreciated and helps me stay at it, even when sometimes I feel uninspired and burned out. Thanks again. God's blessings, Kurt.

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A Christian's View of Israel

W. N. (Bill) Fangio

As most Bible students are aware, Israel is the name given to Jacob, son of Isaac, grandson of Abraham. You can read about it in Genesis 32:28. Thereafter, Israel has been the general title for the descendants of Jacob. But when Israel is mentioned today thoughts turn to the State of Israel located on the Mediterranean coast. Dating from about AD 70 for nearly two millennia there was no State of Israel as the Israeli people were dispersed throughout the world. Then, beginning in the last quarter of the 19th Century a political movement known today as Zionism began to assert itself in the Ukraine. The goal was to establish a homeland for the Jews around Jerusalem. This was a factional effort but eventually gained the favor of the Crown following the Balfour Declaration. The idea of the homeland for the Jews was subsequently sanctioned by resolutions in both the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Why should the Jews be given a homeland after nearly two thousand years? From the Jew's standpoint the land is his by right of promise from God. To understand it is necessary to review the promises by God to Abraham recorded in the Old Testament. The promises were in three parts. First Abraham would be the father of many nations. Second his descendants would be given the land of Canaan. Third that in his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed.

There is no question that the first promise was fulfilled since through Isaac and Ishmael and others Abraham's descendants are innumerable. As to the second promise the Jewish position is that the land is theirs in perpetuity. This is suggested by the use of the English word 'everlasting' rendered from the Hebrew. However, Joshua makes clear shortly before his death that the land promise had been fulfilled and was conditional. Nothing failed thereof. (See Joshua 23:14-16) For failing to comply with the conditions God decreed, Israel was continually frustrated in its attempt to hold onto the land. This is clearly illustrated when she was dispossessed of the land during the great Babylonian captivity. (See II Kings 25)

Is the modern State of Israel in compliance with the terms today? Does she keep the law and commandments or has she embraced tradition? During His earthly ministry Christ warned the Jewish leaders of the day that by their traditions they had made the law of God of none effect. (See Mark 7:13) So, from a

Christian point of view it is debatable whether the Jews are entitled to the land of Canaan today.

Regardless, a modern State of Israel has existed since 1948. By lobbying efforts it has succeeded in diverting some of the productivity of Americans to Israel's account through direct foreign aid and military hardware. The Jewish lobby is strong and effective. The State of Israel is frequently referred to as our ally. To be an ally is to cooperate or be united in some way. At the moment I fail to see what America needs from the State of Israel.

A movement known as Christian Zionism further influences American foreign policy regarding Israel. This movement sees the Jewish people as still being God's chosen people and has expectations connected with the modern State of Israel and a second coming of Christ. Those who hold this view must really be conflicted since the Christian is enjoined to regard all those who would reject Christ as anti-Christ. For the true Christian there are only those who are in Christ and those who are out of Christ. No other divisions matter.

For those supportive of Modern Israel you will frequently hear them say that those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed. The reference is to Genesis 12:3. Of course, this is quoted in error. God is speaking to Abraham. Israel does not yet exist. And this brings us to the third promise, that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the world would be blessed. How? The Apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear in his letter to the Galatians when explaining the promise. *"He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ."* (Galatians 3:16) How is it then that Jews after the flesh remain God's chosen people? As he says in another place, *"For they are not all Israel who are of Israel; neither because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed."* (Romans 9:6-8) And how is the promise fulfilled? Once again, *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek; there can be neither bond nor free; there can be no male or female; for ye are one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, THEN are you Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise."* (Galatians 3:27-29 emphasis mine.)

The Jews after the flesh are an admirable people. But from a true Christian point of view, no one can claim to be God's chosen people simply according to the circumstances of his or her birth. Christians should be very careful where they place their allegiance.

Romans 13: Setting It Straight

By Chuck Baldwin

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the biggest reason America is in the mess that it's in today is directly due to the apathy and indifference of the American pulpit. I am reminded of what Charles Finney, the famed 19th Century revivalist, said: "If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discernment, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in Christianity, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that they very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it."

Our second President, John Adams, put it this way: "It is the duty of the clergy to accommodate their discourses to the times, to preach against such sins as are most prevalent, and recommend such virtues as are most wanted. For example, if exorbitant ambition and venality are predominate, ought they not to warn their hearers against those vices? If public spirit is much wanted, should they not inculcate this great virtue? If the rights and duties of Christian magistrates and subjects are disputed, should they not explain them, show their nature, ends, limitations, and restrictions, howmuchsoever it may move the gall of Massachusetts?"

Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, was even more direct. He said, "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. And to be steady on all the battle fields besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

For at least the past half-century Christian pastors and churches have been all but neutered. On the whole, they have ignored Christ's admonition to be the "salt of the earth," and as a result, have failed to do much of anything to preserve freedom's Biblical Natural Law principles in this great land. In fact, the average church is so sugary sweet that it is downright sickening!

And the two main reasons for this dereliction of duty by America's pastors and churches are the IRS 501c3 non-profit tax status, which turns the Lord's church into a government corporation; and the erroneous, fallacious interpretation of Romans chapter 13 that teaches Christians are obligated to submit to government regardless of whether government acts within the confines and jurisdiction of God's law or not. In reality, the American church today, on the whole, is not even a church. It is a government corporation whose loyalty is offered first to Caesar, not to Christ, and whose message is first politically correct before it is Biblically correct.

It is more than interesting that some 95% of the 14,000 evangelical churches that graced the German landscape during Hitler's rise to power bought into the identical misinterpretation of Romans 13 that the vast majority (probably at least 95%) of the 300,000 evangelical churches that grace America's landscape have bought into today.

For example, one German pastor in 1933 gushed, "Christ has come to us through Hitler." In like manner, many pastors today foolishly preach that God directs us through our President (whoever he is), or our Supreme Court, or virtually any other government agency. And speaking of the ignominious infatuation with government by Nazi-era German clergymen, Erwin Lutzer, in his brilliant book, "Hitler's Cross", wrote, "The swastika meant more to some pastors than did the Cross." And there is absolutely no question that many pastors in America today place far more value on the US flag (symbolizing to them the power and authority of the state) than they do the Cross of Christ or the teachings and authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Without a doubt, tyrants of all stripes love to exploit this asinine attitude of these sheepish, slavish preachers who idolize the state! Lutzer quotes Hitler as saying, "The parsons will dig their own graves. They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable jobs and incomes." And that is exactly what many pastors, deacons, elders, and churchmen are doing today: for the sake of their paychecks, insurance premiums, and retirement benefits, they are betraying the lawful authority of Christ to the tyrannical authority of the state. And the bastardized teaching of Romans 13 is one of the major tools by which this is being done.

Therefore, before we can see any significant return to legitimate constitutional government in this country, the thinking and philosophy of Christians and churches regarding Romans 13 must change. This is absolutely obligatory!

The reality of the importance of a proper understanding of Romans 13 was the impetus behind my constitutional attorney son, Tim Baldwin, and me co-authoring an in-depth analysis of Romans 13, which is entitled “Romans 13: The True Meaning of Submission.” This book is absolutely a must read, if I do say so myself! We quote hundreds of scriptures from both Testaments, along with hundreds of quotations from Christian apologists, theologians, and philosophers throughout history. Quite frankly, I do not know of another book such as this on the market today.

To order “Romans 13: The True Meaning of Submission,” go to:

http://chuckbaldwinlive.com/home/?page_id=3754

In the same vein as the book, I delivered a four-part message series entitled “The True Meaning of Romans 13.” This four-part message series is now available on one DVD. In fact, the four-part message series is simply a condensed version of the book. To order my four-part message series, “The True Meaning of Romans 13,” go to:

<http://chuckbaldwinlive.com/home/?p=3146>

If I may be so bold, I suggest that readers order both the book and the DVD. The DVD can be used for those folks who prefer to watch a video presentation, and the book can be used for those folks who desire a more in-depth understanding of the subject. And may I further suggest that you obtain as many copies as you can to give away to your friends, relatives, co-workers, and fellow church members? It is absolutely critical to the reclamation and maintenance of liberty that a proper understanding of Romans 13 be obtained. Without it, we are going to continue down the same road toward socialism and oppression, as surely as did Hitler’s Germany.

I cannot think of a more important book or DVD that you could purchase this year! If every reader of this column would purchase one or more of these books and DVDs, and put as many as possible into the hands of others, think of the potential impact this could have upon our country!

Again, to order the book “Romans 13: The True Meaning of Submission,” go to:

http://chuckbaldwinlive.com/home/?page_id=3754

And, to order my four-part message series, “The True Meaning of Romans 13” on one DVD, go to:

<http://chuckbaldwinlive.com/home/?p=3146>

Plus, let me again remind readers that Liberty Fellowship here in Kalispell, Montana, is a non-501c3 Christian fellowship that preaches the unadulterated truth of Scripture with an emphasis on Biblical Natural Law freedom principles that does not bow the knee to Baal or Caesar! To see the difference between this and your typical 501c3 state church, tune in each Sunday afternoon at 2:30pm (MST) and watch our service livestreamed. To watch my message live online, go to:

http://chuckbaldwinlive.com/home/?page_id=17

Or, to watch or download my archived video messages, go to:

<http://chuckbaldwinlive.com/home/?cat=16>

I began this column with quotes from Charles Finney, John Adams, and Martin Luther. Let me end with a quote from Winston Churchill: “If you will not fight for the right when you can easily win without bloodshed, if you will not fight when your victory will be sure and not so costly, you may come to the moment when you will have to fight with all the odds against you and only a precarious chance for survival. There may be a worse case. You may have to fight when there is no chance of victory, because it is better to perish than to live as slaves.”

It is also opportune that my latest video message is entitled, “Arise, And Fight!” taken from the book of Nehemiah. This is also a message you won’t want to miss. Watch it here:

<http://chuckbaldwinlive.com/home/?p=3793>

Please get in the fight! Help us get the message out about the true meaning of Romans 13. Never was a book more necessary!

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