

A New Time

Introduction: The NT picture of what has happened since Jesus came, and its implications.

Discussion

- I. The prophets of the OT were looking forward to a time when God would fulfill his plan, accomplish his purposes, and inaugurate his reign among men.
 - A. The world has been marred and defiled by sin and its terrible effects: estrangement, rebellion, corruption, perversion, and death.
 1. 2 Pet 1:4; Rom 8:21; 1:21ff
 - B. Everything in the OT pointed to this in one way or another: types, patterns, images. Seen in the laws, institutions, situations, events, characters, etc. in the OT.
 1. **NOT** just the specific predictions about historical details in the life of Jesus!
 2. The creation of the world, the flood, the exodus from Egypt (with its details: crossing the sea, manna, water, etc.), God's choice of Abram and his descendants, Melchizedek, David, the prophets, the tabernacle/temple, return from exile, the priesthood, etc.
 - C. That plan involved bringing man unto himself, but in a way that man came to God willingly, voluntarily, and with faith in God.
 1. So that God could *rest* with man.
 - D. This plan was, from the beginning, for the whole world.
 1. The Jewish mistake was to think of it only in (Jewish) nationalistic terms.
 2. But foreigners always played important roles in the revelation and accomplishment of God's plan. cf. Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba in Jesus' lineage in Matt 1.
 - a) The Jews were the way / means through which God incarnated and developed and unfolded the plan, but they were not the sole objects of it.
 - b) The Jews were themselves a type of all people in the age of fulfillment – a new Israel that was to come, a new people, chosen by God for his glory and fellowship.
 3. God's plan was to **fix the world, fix every person** (who was willing to be fixed – free will is the line God does not cross).
 - a) Col 1:28
- II. The NT picture is that the death and resurrection of Jesus was an apocalyptic event that ended the old age and began (ushered in) the new age.
 - A. What is apocalyptic, and what is an apocalyptic event?
 1. A drastic action by God in which the old existing order of things (that has become corrupted and is even hostile to God and to us) is superseded, wrongs are set right, wickedness is judged, righteousness is manifested, and a new order is established.
 - a) An OT example: the flood

- b) Also called (metaphorically) a new creation. Isa 65:17ff
- B. All of these things have been accomplished in Jesus, in his death and resurrection:
 1. the death of Jesus ended the reign of the Law of Moses, which was onerous and even hostile to us, that had become a tool in the hands of Satan to encourage lawlessness.
 - a) Col 2:14; Rom 7:7ff
 2. the death of Jesus ended the reign of sin, in that Jesus is a new (second) Adam who sets the precedent of righteousness
 - a) Rom 5:12ff
 3. the resurrection of Jesus ended the reign of death (which had also been facilitated by the Law, but not limited to it)
 - a) Rom 5:17ff; 6:12ff
 4. the time of relative ignorance of God, with the corresponding sin it produced, was ended in the incarnation of Jesus
 - a) Acts 3:17ff; 17:23, 30; Eph 4:18ff
 5. the sins of the old order were condemned in a public way by God in the death of Jesus; God punished him for the sins of all, demonstrating God's righteousness and justice; sin has been condemned, justice has been exacted
 - a) Rom 3:25f
 6. in the life of Jesus – a life of faith and love (for God and others) – Jesus demonstrated righteousness; righteousness is attributed to those who respond in faith to God through Jesus
 - a) Rom 3:26; 4:3ff
 7. Jesus' resurrection was the prelude to his coronation as universal king, who reigns to conquer all. In him the reign (kingdom) of God over men is established.
 - a) Phil 2:9

III. It is also significant that the event that ushers in the new age is the *death* of Jesus on the *cross* (*suffering*).

- A. Jesus' acceptance and endurance of the cross was his supreme demonstration of faithfulness to God and to God's will & plan for the world, a plan for man, for others. Jesus sacrificed himself, out of love for others, to accomplish the will of God.
- B. The death of Jesus:
 1. Provided forgiveness – but if this is all we ever see in it, we have surely missed much of it!
 2. Was an expression of love on God's part toward us – offering his son in our place, to draw us to him, to reconcile us to himself.
 - a) cf. Hos 2:15; Jer 31:3; Rom 8:3, 32; John 3:16
 3. The message of what God has done is the gospel of (about) Jesus Christ.
 - a) 1 Cor 15:1ff – the gospel = the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, proclaimed as (historical) fact.
 4. That *message* is a *pattern* for living.

- a) Rom 6; Matt 16:24
 - 5. Those who respond (appropriately, correctly) to that message do so with *faith* in God (faith in Christ, Gal 2:20 & c), which results in a full surrender of the self to God (love).
 - a) Acts 15:7; Eph 1:13
 - b) God has demonstrated that he is worthy of our trust – he has withheld nothing to bring us to himself. Rom 8:32.
 - c) Our love for God is a response to the overwhelming love he has shown to us. 1 John 4:9f.
- IV. Those who have responded to Christ and God band together in communities (churches) in order to praise God and help each other.
- A. They come from every facet of humanity; it is open to all. This is the new humanity in Christ Jesus.
 - B. They are a temple of God; where God dwells and is praised. 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21; 1 Pet 2:5
 - C. That is, they act toward each other as God (their father) has acted toward them. They take on the characteristic of their father: love for others. Eph 4:32 – 5:2.
 - D. The love of each member of the church provides for the unity of the local church. Col 3:14; John 17:23, 26; Eph 4:2f; Phil 2:2.
 - E. This church is a body; every member has some participation in it, and the body grows and works to accomplish the will of God on earth. Eph 4:15f
 - 1. Thus the work and purpose of God is accomplished *for* and *through* his servants.
- V. The new has begun, but it is not yet perfected or fully consummated.
- A. We live in a juncture – the end of the old and beginning of the new overlap.
 - 1. Illus: VE day was not the end of the war, but it signaled the end was soon to come.
 - 2. 1 Cor 10:11
 - 3. A tension exists as we live at the end of the old and beginning of the new; we are called to crucify the former and take up the latter.
 - 4. The old order was characterized by sin and certain mundane / fleshly things like hierarchical social relationships, etc. Some of these things continue to exist.
 - a) Sin is a constant threat, enemy.
 - b) Certain relationships are characteristic of a temporal age – obedience to civil government Rom 13); marriage (Matt 22:30); etc.
 - c) cf. Rom 16:25f
 - 5. But those things of the old order which were associated with the reign of sin must not be allowed to persist in our lives. cf. 1 Pet 4:1ff
 - a) Col 2:20ff – put off the things characteristic of the old order; this is an argument for not returning to the Law of Moses and against Judaistic gospels. Gal 4:3-9

6. We must put off the old and put on the new; even though we live in a world that is still engulfed in the old order and is passing away. This is the challenge of Christianity: to live like people of the new order in a world engulfed in the old order.
 - a) John 5:24; 1 John 3:14
- B. The time of the juncture is thus a time of tension, conflict, opposition, and battle, leading to the victorious and decisive day of the Lord.
 1. Eph 6 – requires us to wear and use spiritual armor, weapons
 2. 2 Cor 10:4
 3. cf. 2 Tim 2:4
- C. It may also be viewed as a time of preparation – in which we prepare and are being prepared by God for the day of the Lord and eternal salvation and life in heaven.
 1. 2 Cor 5:1-5 – prepared by God, fashioned by him into something new
 2. This preparation is accomplished by lending ourselves to God, for his service.
 3. This often means that we are called upon to suffer, and ultimately die, in the course of the service we render to God in a world that is hostile to him.
 4. We are not just forgiven in Christ, but in him we are being *transformed* into the image of God himself. 2 Cor 3:18
 - a) Response to the gospel is response to the love of God, and in the full surrender of that response we allow God to change us into a new person in Christ.
 - b) Ultimately resulting in the transformation of our bodies for eternal life with him. Phil 3:21. Not a deliverance from our bodies, but a change of them.

VI. The ethical import of all of this.

- A. No doctrine / practical distinction in the NT!
- B. Ethical behavior is living in accordance with what God has done and is doing with us in Christ.
- C. We may phrase the outcomes as a series of ethical questions we may ask in any situation, for any decision (with NT examples):
 1. Is this action characteristic of the old order of sin and death, or does it reflect my belonging to the new order of righteousness and life?
 - a) Does this demonstrate that I am being transformed into a new person of righteousness?
 - b) Does this reflect a battle against sin or a compromise and surrender to it?
 2. Does this reflect the pattern of the cross (hence of Jesus) in my life:
 - a) a death to (total repudiation of) sin
 - b) a sacrifice of my own will for the will of God
 - c) a trust (faith) in God's will for me
 - d) and a love for God above all else?
 3. Does this help others?
 - a) does it serve God and others?
 - b) especially, does it contribute to the unity of the body of Christ?

What is an apocalyptic event?

A drastic action by God in which the old, existing order of things (that has become corrupted and is even hostile to God and to us) is superseded, wrongs are set right, wickedness is judged, righteousness is manifested, and a new order is established.

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