

Lesson 4

Living Eastered Lives: The Ministry Patient Groaning

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Objective: As followers of Jesus we 'live between the times,' the time between Jesus' initial and decisive victory on the cross and in his resurrection and the consummation of that victory in full when he returns to make *all things* new. Only if we know the time, in a cosmic sense, will we in turn be able to learn to live faithfully and with hope in a creation that is still broken and groans for redemption. Acclimating us to this truth is the point of this particular lesson.

1. What Time Is It?

a. Two-Age Construct Regarding Time

- Jews viewed time as divided between Two Ages, the one they were living in (Present Age) and the one to come (Future Age)
- The Present Age would come to a long awaited end when replaced by a long expected Future Age
 - ✓ Scriptural Support
 - Eph. 1.21** – 'not only in this age but in the one to come'
 - 1 Tim. 6.17** – 'As for the rich in this present age...'

b. The Present Age

- The Present Age was comprised of sin, sorrow, suffering, the rule of Satan and death
- For this reason the Present Age was referred to as 'Evil' (Gal. 1.4). It was a mindset and way of life made defined by the dishonoring God (Rom. 1.18-32)
- Another name for the Present Evil Age is 'World' or 'Flesh'
 - ✓ Scriptural Support
 - Rom. 8.7-8** – 'For the mind that is set on the *flesh* is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed it cannot. Those who are in the *flesh* cannot please God.
 - Rom. 8.18** – 'For I consider the sufferings of this *present time*...'
 - Rom. 12.2** – 'Don't be conformed to this **world (age)**...'
 - 2 Cor. 4.4** – 'the god of this *world (age)* has blinded them...'
 - Eph. 2.1-3** – 'And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this *world*, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.'
 - 1 Jn. 2.15-17** – 'Do not love the *world* or the things in the *world*. If anyone loves the *world*, the love of the Father is not him. For all that is in the *world* – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride in possessions – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the *world* is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of the God abides forever.'

c. The Age To Come

- The Age to Come or Future Age would be comprised of forgiveness, wholeness (peace), the glory of God and life in the fullest
- For this reason the Age to Come was hoped for (Is. 11.5-9). It was the time when God put the world to rights and all things would be restored
- Another name for the Age to Come is 'Eternal Life,' 'New Creation' or 'Life in the Spirit'
- Jews expected the Age to Come to replace the Present Age instantaneously. Christians, on the other hand, came to believe, through the Advent of Jesus, the

Future Age had broken into the Present Age and was progressively replacing it. The Ages now overlapped, ex. Paul, the Pharisee

✓ Scriptural Support

1 Cor. 10.11 – ‘Now these things happen to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom *the end of the ages has come*.

2 Cor. 5.17 – If anyone is in Christ: *New Creation*. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.

Gal. 1.4 – ‘(Jesus), who gave himself for our sins *to deliver us from the present evil age*, according to the will of our God and Father’

Col. 2.20 – ‘If with Christ you do to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if *you were still alive in the world*, do you submit to regulations...’

2. Resurrection and Living Between the Times (A Very Brief Study of Romans 8)

a. Jesus’ Resurrection and Our Present Participation (Rom. 4.24-5.5)

- Jesus death and resurrection signaled that God’s promised Future Age had burst upon the scene
- This Future Age/Resurrection Life brought with it nothing less than life and full acceptance with God
- Suffering now not in vain in light of the future hope

b. God Is For Us In Christ

- No Condemnation, No Fear (8.1-3; 31-39)
- Set free in order to live, i.e. walk according to the Spirit (8.4)

c. Living Out Your Resurrection Identity (8.5-11)

- Where’s your mind?
- The Spirit is your resurrection life *now* and the guarantee of your full resurrection *then*

d. The New Exodus (8.12-17)

- No longer slaves and debtors to the Present Age, i.e. the Flesh (8.12,13, 15)
- The Spirit is leading us, the children of God, through the wilderness, i.e. The Present Age(8.14)
- The Spirit is leading us to the Promised Land...receiving the inheritance (8.17)
- The path to the Promised Land is suffering. This of course entails persecution, suffering can be much broader including simply living in the state of having not yet arrived and realizing that nothing in yourself and in creation can meet your deepest longings (8.17)

e. Groaning with Hope in the Present (8.18-30)

- Suffering and glory put on the scales
- In the present groaning is primary – the groaning of creation, the church and the Spirit of God (8.18-27). **What is the groaning for?**
- The Church in the middle...Entering into the groaning of creation, first and foremost through prayer, is our calling as followers of God, the God who himself groans for the life of the world
- When we groan we do so in hope that God is taking what is futile in our world and in our lives and working it for our good, which is our glory unto his glory (8.20, 28-30)