

The “End of the Age” and Interpretive Changes

Tuesday, November 11, 2025 by [Gary DeMar](#)



One of the frustrating aspects of debating eschatology with the Three Questions Letter signers is their shifting interpretations and inconsistencies among them. As to their inconsistencies, Doug dismissed them as irrelevant to the topic because not all full preterists agree. I suspect that on the big issues, they do agree. We all make adjustments over time as we study more. I certainly have. I noted some significant changes by Ken Gentry on [Matthew 24:27](#) and his pullback from the way he interpreted the Greek word *mellō* in his defense of the pre-AD 70 composition of the book of Revelation in his book ***Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation***. For example, *mellō* appears 13 times in Revelation, and Ken Gentry translates it as “about to” 12 times in his two-volume commentary on ***Revelation The Divorce of Israel***. His exception is with [Revelation 1:19](#). Is there lexical certainty for not translating *mellō* as “about to” in 1:19? If there is, why do some commentators translate *mellō* as “about to,” and why did Gentry translate *mellō* in 1:19 as “about to” in the first edition of *The Beast of Revelation* and *Before Jerusalem Fell*?

There is no certainty that *mellō* should not be translated as “about to” in 1:19. In fact, in the way *mellō* is consistently used in Revelation, five times in chapters 2 and 3, the burden of proof is on those who do not translate *mellō* as “about to” in 1:19. It’s easy to understand non-preterist interpreters not translating *mellō* as “about to” but not a preterist like Gentry who translates *mellō* as “about to” or its equivalent 12 times and translates it once as “will

take place.” “When Jesus speaks of ‘the things which will take place after these things,’” Gentry wrote, “He uses the verb *mellō*, which can mean ‘about to,’ in the sense of nearness in time.... Though John’s basic concern in Revelation is with the near term ..., we probably should not translate the word *mellō* as emphasizing nearness, since it seems intentionally to be avoiding the clearer language already appearing in the context (1:1, 3).” It seems to me that translating *mellō* as “about to” supports what 1:1, 3; 22:6, 10 state and its 12 other uses as “about to” in Revelation.

In his books ***Perilous Times*** (pages 72-73) and ***The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?*** (pages 53-55), Gentry interpreted [Matthew 24:27](#) as referring to the judgment coming of Jesus in AD 70. He changed his position in his 2010 book *The Olivet Discourse Made Easy*.

I should note that my interpretation of this verse [Matt. 24:27] has changed recently. In earlier works (*Perilous Times*; *The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?*) I argued that the lightning flash could refer to his spiritual judgment-coming in AD 70. This is certainly possible, given the dramatic nature of prophetic language. But I now reject that view because of grammatical and contextual reasons. The “for” (grammar) in v. 27 clearly gives the reason (context) why they should not expect that he may be off somewhere in a wilderness. His physical return will be visible to all. After all, the original question (24:3) shows the disciples’ conflating of the two events: AD 70 and the second advent. Just a few verses later (24:36ff) Jesus will begin focusing on that more glorious event.

Similarly, it was frustrating dealing with some of Doug Wilson’s statements in the “debate” we had on November 3, 2025, in Moscow, Idaho. His comments on the meaning of “ages” in Scripture, especially on 1 Corinthians 10:11, baffled me. I didn’t have any idea what he meant. He seemed to futurize what Paul had written. What I heard radically changed his interpretation when compared to what he wrote in “**Biblical Pictures of the New Cosmos**” in the 1993 Canon Press book, ***And It Came to Pass***. The following is the relevant section from his chapter.

The End of the Age

Douglas Wilson

The Bible describes human history as divided up into ages. As we read the New Testament, we discover that the writers of the sacred volume considered themselves to have been

living at a terminal point for these ages. This did not mean that history was to end in their generation; they also quite clearly anticipated an age to come.

Paul reminds the Christians of his day that they are not to imitate the rebellious Israelites of the wilderness, and he points out that the record of that rebellion was handed down as a warning for the first-century Christians. He says the following: “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” ([1 Cor. 10:11](#)).

The ends of the ages had come upon *them*, two thousand years ago. A similar statement is made by the author of Hebrews. He places the crucifixion at the end of the ages: “He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” ([Hebrews 9:26](#)).

If this were all that was said, we might be justified in thinking that he was referring to the end of the world, and then trouble ourselves with wondering why the world had not ended. But in the sixth chapter of the same book, he says of those who fall into apostasy that they had “tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come” ([Hebrews 6:5](#)). The fact that they were at the end of the ages did not mean they were at the end of the world. Quite clearly, they anticipated an age to come. Paul’s anticipation can be seen in his recognition of the supremacy of Christ—not only in *his* age, but also in the coming age. God has exalted Christ, he says, “far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come” ([Ephesians 1:21](#)).

If the Bible spoke only of an age to come, it would be possible to think that such an age would arrive thousands of years after the writing of the Bible. But the biblical authors do not just say there is a coming age, they also maintain that *they* were living at the *end* of their age. This means that the coming age must be, from their perspective, arriving *soon*.

So we can say that Christ and His first-century followers appeared at the end of an age—the age of Judaic Temple worship, the aeon of the shadows. This age was to be followed by, if I dare say it, a new age. This new age is the Christian aeon, in which we live. In this age, the age which the biblical writers referred to as the age to come, the Temple is a spiritual one and will never be torn down, much less rebuilt.

This understanding affects how we read certain passages which warn of “this present evil age.” It is not that the warnings concerning moral purity are ever out of date, but rather there must be a shift in our thinking concerning what sort of deliverance they were looking for. There is a tendency among Christians to regard such warnings as *timeless*. There is no thought given to the possibility that the transition from one age to another changes the

nature of the conflict, as well as the nature of a believer's duties. Not that there is a lessening of the moral antithesis, but rather a change from defense to offense.

The early Christians had heard prophecy and had been taught that the old age was not going to go quietly. There was to be a cataclysm of fire, through which the faithful would endure. Those who endured to the end would be saved. This raging fire was going to consume the enemies of God ([Hebrews 10:26-27](#)), and they had been expressly warned to not be standing too close to the God-haters when it happened ([Matthew 24:15-20](#)). Just as Moses told those who feared God to stand back from the rebellious ([Numbers 16:5](#)), so Paul quotes Moses to similar effect ([2 Timothy 2:19](#)).

So, when they speak of deliverance from this present evil age, they are looking for a similar kind of deliverance to what Noah received in *another* transition from age to age. They are looking for a deliverance *through* the change.

In this category, we should place Paul's words in [Galatians 1:4](#), "...who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father..."

In another place, he says that "...denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age..." ([Titus 2:12](#)).

Of course this does not mean we do not have to be sober and godly and righteous and so on. But the *reason* for maintaining purity changes under the new circumstance. The early Christians were to maintain their witness as the old age collapsed under the wrath of God. Christians after that point were to maintain their witness because they were charged with the responsibility of conquering the world with the gospel. There is a difference between the sin of Korah ([Numbers 16](#)) and the sin of Achan ([Joshua 7](#)). The early church was in the wilderness; we are in the land—with the responsibility of conquest. If we are thinking biblically, then we should not be worried about how the present evil age might swallow us up; our concern should be about how to overcome the world. When Jesus says that the gates of Hades would not prevail against the Church, He was not thinking of those gates as an *offensive* weapon. Those gates were to be besieged by a conquering, triumphant Church.