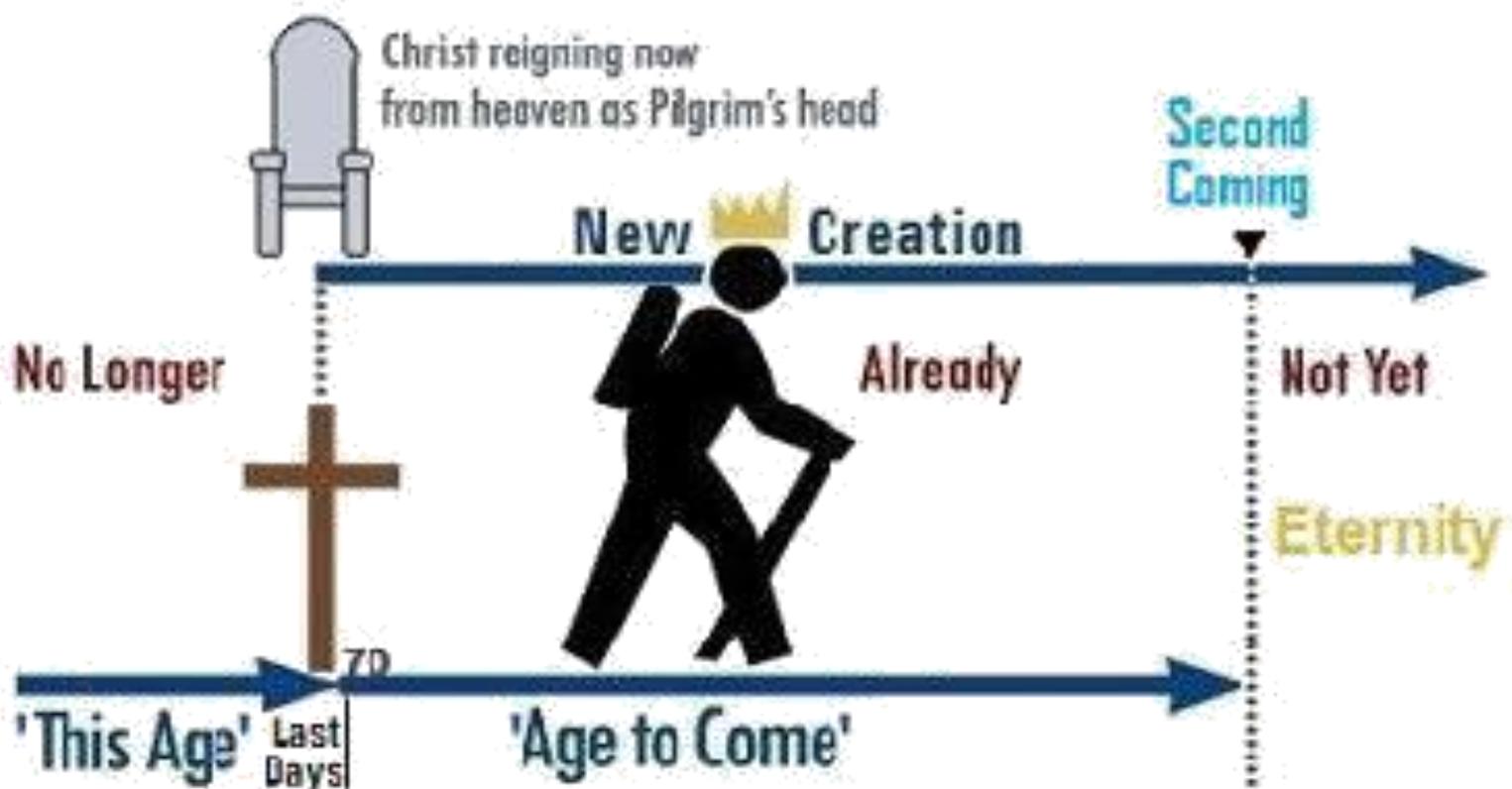


The Age to Come and the Eternal State



The "Age to Come" and the Eternal State

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 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 fan 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 tares 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 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>	<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>

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 nor 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 Bell^[2] and Ward Fenely^[3]. If there is a source for this error it is Max King, who wrote back in 1971:

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

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

Another example where "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 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>	<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>

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 "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>
--	---

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</p>

	<p>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 creation, or only some lesser period beginning with Moses? From the beginning of creation, of course.</p>
--	---

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</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</p>

or age that was then passing away as Christ took up his rule from the right hand of God.

the things Paul describes belong to the world and not to any particular age.

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."

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 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.

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."

Here again the prevailing thought is worldly wisdom versus spiritual wisdom, not the wisdom of any particular age.

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."

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.

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 "Mosaic" age is here in view, and would point to the context of the letter, which argues against keeping the law, as evidence supporting this 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>

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> <p>"Beginning of the world" can only mean beginning of creation, not the Mosaic age.</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 to his won purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."</p> <p>II Tim. 4:10 - "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is</p>

	<p>departed unto Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."</p> <p>Here "present world" looks to earthly life, not the pre-Messianic age.</p>
--	---

Titus

"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>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>

"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.

"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 *charismata* belonged only to the era of the prophets and the closing days of the pre-Messianic age, and have 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.

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 *place* or *thing* under Christ's subjection, rather the age or time when it accrued, and must therefore be translated "world" and placed here.

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.

[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>

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

[copied from <http://www.preteristcentral.com/index.html> – ***warning: a pantelist (heteropreterist) site**]

*To the "full" or hyperpreterist, the judgment coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in AD 70 was "the" Parousia, and there will be no second (*physical*) Coming, which is a definite departure from Christian orthodoxy. There are variations within the heteropreterist camp as to how to explain away Acts 1:11 and to spiritualize 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, etc., etc. The sorrowful aspect of it is that many who cross that line and fall into unorthodox preterism have so much else correctly understood over and against the flawed hermeneutic of dispensational/premillennial futurism.

The term pantelism (from the Greek words for "all" and "fulfilled") was coined by C. Jonathan Seraiah, who has written an excellent refutation of the viewpoint (see [The End of All Things: A Defense of the Future](#)). The label pantelism (instead of hyper- or consistent preterism) is a neutral term that does not use the pejorative "hyper" prefix nor define non-pantelist preterism as somehow "inconsistent".