



Paul

On a Mission from God

Week 8

Paul's Big Ideas – Part 4

Michael Gorman's book, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, has been very helpful in the development of this class.

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Today's Three Big Ideas

The Spirit as Promise Fulfilled and Hope Guaranteed

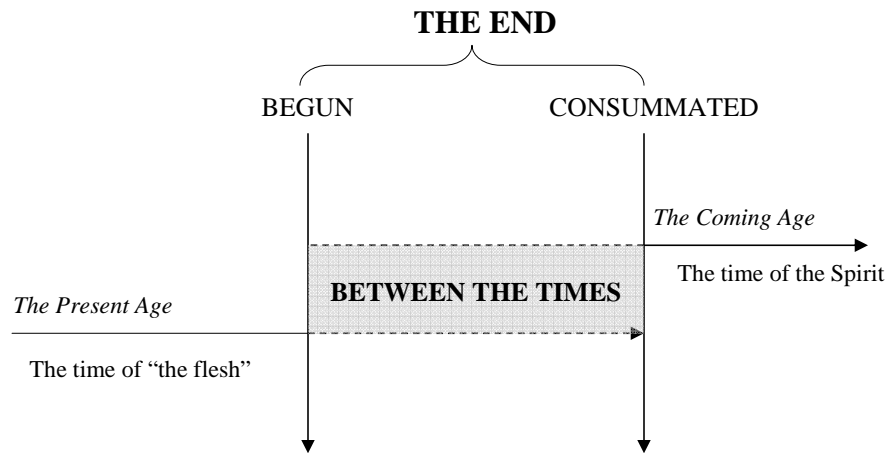
The Church as Alternative Community

The Parousia, the Resurrection, and the Final Triumph of God

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Christians' New Perspective ("already/not yet")



from *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, by Gordon Fee, 1996



The Spirit as Promise Fulfilled and Hope Guaranteed

- ❖ “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’— in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:13-14)
- ❖ “But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)
- ❖ “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30)

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The Spirit as Promise Fulfilled and Hope Guaranteed

- ❖ The Spirit is the certain evidence that the future had dawned & the *guarantee* of the yet-to-come consummation.
 - The Spirit is the “down payment” or “first installment” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:14).
 - “But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.”
 - The Spirit is the “first fruits” (Rom 8:23), as Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection (1 Cor 15:20,23)
 - The Spirit is the “seal” – “with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). The Spirit marks us as God’s possessions.

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The Church as alternative community

- ❖ In the NT, the Greek word for church is *ekklesia*
- ❖ This refers to a newly created community of believers gathering to worship and praise God in response to the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - Paul went around the Mediterranean founding colonies of the new human race!
 - “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation! Everything old has passed away, everything has become new.” (2 Cor 5:17, NRSV)
- ❖ The image of a community of believers is one of the most dominant in the NT, not only in Paul.
 - The NT world was enormously communal and this worldview permeates the New Testament.

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What is our place in the church?

- ❖ We are still individuals!
 - “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:27)
- ❖ We all have been given gifts to contribute to the building up of the church and its work!
 - “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,” (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- ❖ There are certain ways we are to live with one another in community!
 - “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” (Colossians 3:12-14)

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The Holy Spirit and the Church

- ❖ *Koinonia* – Greek for fellowship
 - We enjoy fellowship (*koinonia*) with God through Christ (1 Cor 1:9)
 - In our fellowship we participate in the Holy Spirit
 - “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion (*koinonia*) of [sharing in] the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:13; see also Philippians 2:10)
 - Fundamental to Christian community is the shared experience of God’s Spirit – it is the Spirit who makes *koinonia* a concrete reality.
- ❖ The church is God’s temple, indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit, who is the God’s presence in and among his people.
- ❖ The church as a “charismatic” community, sharing Spirit & grace
 - *pneuma* = spirit; *pneumatikon* = expression of spirit
 - *charis* = grace; *charisma* = expression of grace
 - Christian community consists in the fullest expression of the gifts (the *charismata*) that build up.

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The Parousia, the Resurrection, and the Final Triumph of God

- ❖ “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:10-11)
- ❖ “For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

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The Parousia, the Resurrection, and the Final Triumph of God

- ❖ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’ But when it says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:20-28)

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The Parousia, the Resurrection, and the Final Triumph of God

❖ “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Romans 8:18-21)

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Jewish Expectations of the End

THE PRESENT AGE

**THE COMING AGE
(= THE KINGDOM OF GOD)**

Satan's time
sin
sickness
death
no Spirit

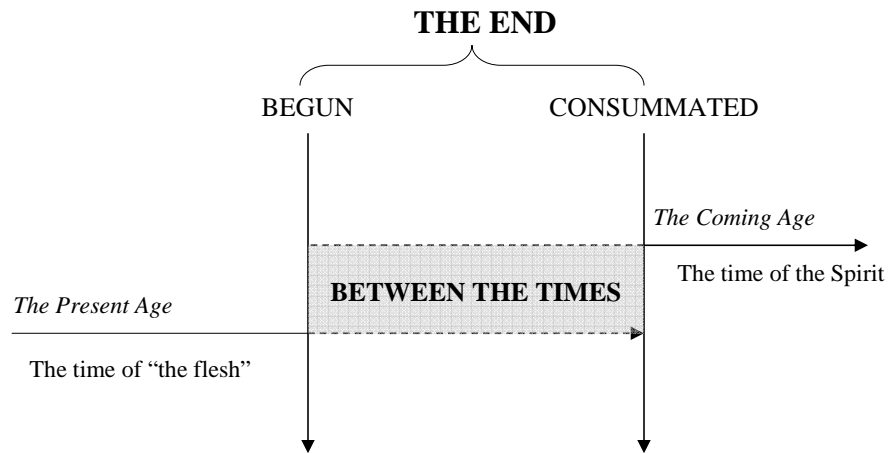
God's time
righteousness
wholeness
resurrection
the Spirit

from *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, by Gordon Fee, 1996

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Christians' New Perspective ("already/not yet")



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Our Christian Hope

- ❖ The essentials
 - The return of Jesus – the *parousia*; the 2nd coming
 - The consummation of God's kingdom
 - The new heavens and new earth; the city that is to come
 - Isaiah 65:17; Rev 21; 2 Peter 3:13; Hebrews 13:14
 - The bodily resurrection of the dead
 - As Jesus was raised, so shall we be raised! Our end is NOT as a disembodied spirit. Instead, we will receive glorified and transformed – but still physical – bodies (see 1 Corinthians 15)
 - Our perfect fellowship with God!
- ❖ “Secondary” matters
 - The “intermediate state,” hell, and heaven

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Alternatives to the Christian consensus

- ❖ Immortality of souls?
 - The bodily resurrection of all God's people is one of the least-disputed of all Christian beliefs among denominations, theologians, and the creeds.
 - Unfortunately, belief in immortal souls to the exclusion of the resurrection of the body is the common, default belief in "folk" Christianity.
- ❖ Reincarnation?
 - This has never been a part of Christian belief
- ❖ We live on only in the impact we've made in the world and in people?
 - Instead, we will live in eternity with God, in a new heavens and earth, with resurrected, transformed, "trans-physical" bodies.
- ❖ *All these lie outside the Great Tradition!*

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Other ways we can go wrong

- ❖ It would be a mistake to believe that we can eliminate suffering, bring wholeness to humanity, or create a utopia on our own.
 - Our hope lies in God, not in ourselves.
 - The 20th-century put the lie to the claim that all humanity really needs is moral progress. We need God!
- ❖ The apocalyptic images in Hal Lindsey and *Left Behind* do not bring us hope and they are not biblical.
 - The book of Revelation was written to encourage Christians, not terrify them!
- ❖ Our hope is bound up with the hope of all creation. We bear responsibility for the future. God works through us. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be the light to the world – not to disappear while the world faces a holocaust beyond all imagining.

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