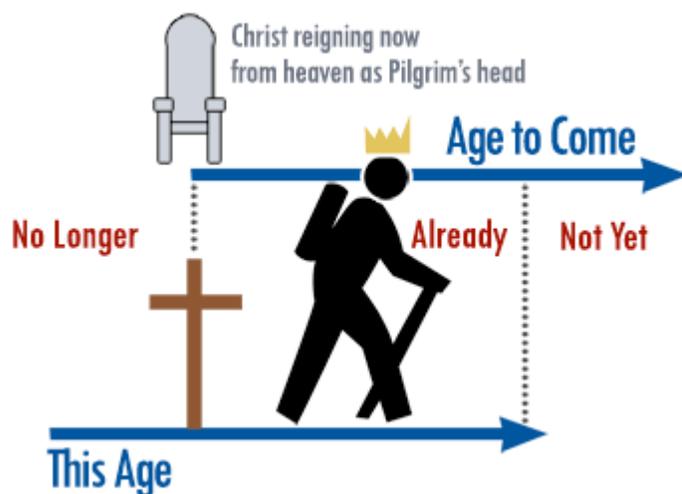


## Pilgrims Between Two Ages by Nollie Malabuyo December 2005

The expression “two ages” is derived from the teaching of Christ and the apostles about “**this age**” and “**the age to come.**” The Lord Jesus Christ himself mentions these two ages. In Luke 18:29-30, for example, he says that those who sacrifice everything for the sake of his kingdom will “receive many times as much *in this age* and, *in the age to come*, eternal life.”<sup>1</sup> The apostle Paul also teaches that after his resurrection, Christ presently sits at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, ruling the universe for the believer's sake, “not only *in this age* but also *in the age to come*” (Eph. 1:20-21).

We know that we live in this “present evil age” (Gal. 1:4), but what about the age to come – when is it coming? Or has it already come? Again, Jesus and the apostles declare that this age to come is not entirely a future era. Jesus equates the phrase “kingdom of God” (or “kingdom of heaven”) with the “age to come.” And he taught that this kingdom of God was *ushered in* when he first came into the world 2,000 years ago, saying in Luke 17:21, “Behold, the kingdom of God *is* in the midst of you,” and again in Matt. 12:28, “The kingdom of God *has come upon you.*” Paul taught that we are now in the age to come, saying, “*the end of the ages has come*” upon us (1 Cor. 10:11). Heb. 9:26 also taught that Christ “has appeared once for all at *the end of the ages* to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

In this present age, believers are already blessed by God in Christ “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:3), namely, election, adoption, redemption, inheritance of the heavenly city, and the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:4-14). And in his resurrection and ascension, Christ entered into the age to come. This means that since believers are in union with Christ through faith, they are also raised up and seated with Him in the heavenlies where he is now ruling (Eph. 2:6). Already, they “have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22). This *overlap of the ages* is illustrated in the following diagram:<sup>2</sup>



The diagram above shows that the church presently exists with her Head – Christ – in heaven, a reality belonging to the age to come (Col 1:18). At the same time, she sojourns with her feet in this world, a reality belonging to this age (Heb 11:9).<sup>3</sup> And while living in this dark vale of tears and in this age of sin and death, she shares in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3:10). But she is also “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13), when tears, death, mourning, crying, and pain will forever pass away (Rev. 21:4).

Knowing our present status as “strangers and exiles on the earth” (Heb. 11:13), believers continue as sojourners and pilgrims “traveling through this wilderness,”<sup>4</sup> making every effort to “renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives *in the present age*” (Tit. 2:12). And as we continue our pilgrimage from this dark, broken world to our glorious city of Light (Rev. 21:23), we strive to be guided by the Word of God as “a light to my path” (Psa. 119:105).

<sup>1</sup> *Italics* in Scripture quotations are added for emphasis only.

<sup>2</sup> The diagram is a modification of Geerhardus Vos' diagram in *The Pauline Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1979), 38.

<sup>3</sup> “The Two Ages and Redemptive History,” *Biblical Theology and Redemptive Historical Hermeneutics*, [http://www.two-age.org/beliefs\\_index/two-age.htm](http://www.two-age.org/beliefs_index/two-age.htm).

<sup>4</sup> From “Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing,” a hymn by John Fawcett (1740-1817).