

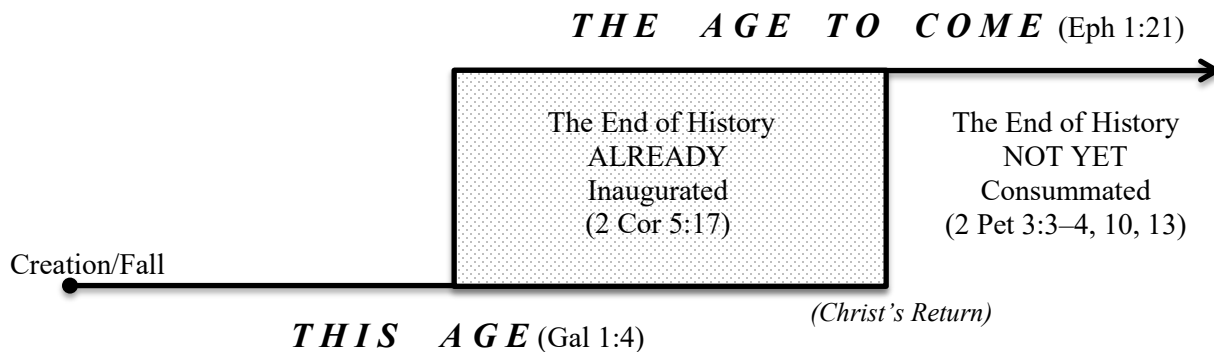
THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

**Wednesday Night Series on Eschatology
Westminster Presbyterian Church**

“So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God . . . ¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest . . . ” (Heb 4:9, 11).

I. Review and Introduction

- A. From the Greek term *eschatos* [‘last’], *eschatology* refers to the “doctrine of the last things.”
- B. Biblical eschatology does not refer to a mere appendix to history, but to God’s goal for creation from the very beginning: God’s glory revealed in an *unbreakable* bond of fellowship with a holy people in a holy place under an obedient covenant representative!
- C. Biblical eschatology frames and defines the work of Christ after the fall, as he inaugurated the “latter days” (Old Testament prophets) or “the age to come” (apostle Paul) in his life, death and resurrection.



- D. Christians walk by faith *in Christ* until His return, when they will be forever *with Christ*. This means that the Christian life involves *following* Christ in persevering faith until His glory (and ours) is visibly revealed (cf. Rom 8:16–17; 1 Pet 1:21)

II. Hebrews 3:7–4:11

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ ¹¹ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’ ” [Ps 95:7–11]

¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵ As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” [Ps 95:7]

¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

⁴ Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to

have failed to reach it. ² For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. ³ For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” [Ps 95:11] although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” [Gen 2:2] ⁵ And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.” [Ps 95:11]

⁶ Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷ again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” [Ps 95:7]

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. ⁹ So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰ for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

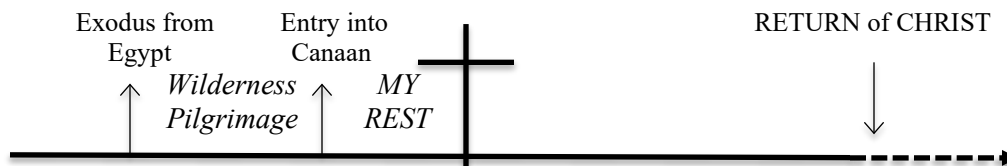
III. Three Commands for Pilgrim Christians

A. “Remember Old Testament Israel—with Tears!”

1. In Ps 95:7–11, David remembers God’s rebuke to Israel in the wilderness (see Num 14:21–23) and knows that the land of Canaan was pointing to a greater “rest” to come!

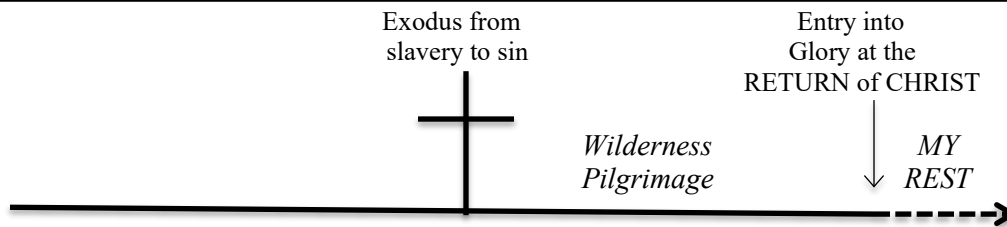
“Wilderness” vs. “My Rest” for Old Testament Israel:

Ps 95:10, 11 – “. . . for forty years I loathed that generation . . . Therefore I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’”



“Wilderness” vs. “My Rest” for the New Testament Church:

Heb 4:1 – “. . . while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it...



B. “Look to God’s (Creational) Rest—with Joy!”

1. We are to strive to enter the “rest” into which God entered on the 7th day of creation (cf. Gen 2:2). Just as God rested from his “very good” labors, so did Christ, and so, too, will we in Christ!

C. “Press on to the End—with Perseverance!”

IV. Conclusion