

# SESSION 12

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## ESCHATOLOGY

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{ > DOCTRINE OF END TIMES < }



## Reasons for Studying Prophecy

As complex as it is, the study of unfulfilled prophecy is rewarding to all who strive to understand its meaning (2 Tim. 3:16-17), for prophecy is a major part of the Holy Scriptures. The biblical prophecies reveal truths that God wants His people to know and that He uses to incite them to holy living and ministry (Deut. 29:29; Rom. 13:11-12; James 5:7-9; 2 Peter 3:11; 1 John 3:2-3). Reflection upon biblical prophecy has enlightened, challenged, and inspired hope in the hearts of God's people throughout history (cp. Gen 3:15, 20; Jude 14; Gen. 15:5-6; Heb. 11:10; Dan. 9:2; Luke 2:25; Rev. 22:20). Let us have an ear to hear what the Holy Spirit says to us through the prophecies of His Word. They speak of God's future program for mankind and of our place in it.

(Barackman, PCT, 440)

## XII. ESCHATOLOGY (Doctrine of End Times)

### A. Introduction

1. Definition of Eschatology :
  - a. "The study of the last things or of the future generally" (M. Erickson, Dictionary, 50).
  - b. "The doctrine of the last things. This includes all predictive Scriptures throughout the Bible whether they have been fulfilled in the past or are yet to be fulfilled" (Swindoll, 9).
2. Cautions in the study of Eschatology :
  - a. Beware of inordinate curiosity : there are boundaries (Acts 1:6-8).
  - b. Beware of undue certainty : there are gray areas (Lk. 9:43-45).
  - c. Beware of timid cowardice : there are convictions (2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Thess. 4:13<sup>a</sup>).
3. Broad areas of Eschatology
  - a. Personal eschatology
    - (1) Concerns physical death
    - (2) Concerns intermediate state
  - b. General eschatology
    - (1) Events concerning the return of Christ
    - (2) Events concerning the new heavens and earth

## The Three Eschatological "Deaths"

Kinds of Death	Commonality	Extent	Remedy
Physical Death	Separation of 2 things God intended to be joined (Genesis 3:2-3,19)	All mankind except Enoch, Elijah, believers alive at Christ's return	Resurrection
Spiritual Death	Same	All Mankind (Except Christ)	Gift of Eternal Life (Ro. 6:23)
Eternal Death	Same	All unbelievers (No exceptions)	None

Genesis 3:2-3, 19 (NASB)

*"The woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; <sup>3</sup> but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"*

*...<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face  
You will eat bread,  
Till you return to the ground,  
Because from it you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
And to dust you shall return."*

Romans 6:23 (NASB)

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

## B. Personal Eschatology

### 1. Physical death

a. "Three Eschatological 'Deaths'" see Chart, page 348, for overview.

b. The word "death" in the Scriptures

(1) To refer to "physical" death

(a) Separation of immaterial from material

Genesis 35:18-19

*"It came about as her soul was departing  
(for she died), that she named him*

*Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.*

*<sup>19</sup> So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath  
(that is, Bethlehem)."*

Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

*"Remember him—before the silver cord is severed,  
or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is  
shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well,*

*<sup>7</sup> and the dust returns to the ground it came from,  
and the spirit returns to God who gave it."*

(Also, cf. Lk. 23:46; Jn. 19:30; Acts 7:59)

(b) Departure from this life

Philippians 1:23-24

*"I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be  
with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup> but it is more  
necessary for you that I remain in the body."*

2 Timothy 4:6-7

*"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering,  
and the time has come for my departure. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the  
good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."*

(Also, cf. Lk. 9:31; 2 Pet. 1:13-15)

# Eternal Death

(Final State of the Unsaved)

## Their Habitation

After their judgment, the unsaved will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15) or hell (Matt. 10:28; 23:33), a place originally prepared for Satan and his angels (demons) (25:41). Hell is described as a place of fire (Mark 9:43; Rev. 20: 15), darkness (2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13), worms (Mark 9:48), and the awareness of God's absence (Matt. 7:23; 2 Thess. 1:9; cp. Matt. 27:46). Since the Beast, the False Prophet, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire before the dissolution of the present universe (Rev. 19:20, 20:10; 2 Peter 3: 10), hell must have existed before this event and will be divinely preserved from this universal dissolution.

## Their Experience

The unsaved in hell will experience various kinds of mental and sensuous torments, including unfulfilled desires, loneliness, hopelessness, and restlessness. There will be conscious suffering and torment (Rev. 14:10-11; Rom. 2:8-9), crying and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:42), stark loneliness (2 Thess. 1:9), shame and contempt (Dan. 12:2), utter ruin (Matt. 10:28), and the terror of endless darkness (Jude 13). There appears to be no social communication with others in hell. There will only be the terrible experience of God's perpetual wrath (Rev. 14:10-11; Rom. 9:22) and the sense of His utter abandonment (Matt. 7:23).

(Barackman, PCT, 475-76)

(2) To refer to "spiritual" death

- The condition of an unbeliever, due to sin, whereby he is separated ("dead") from God.
- Ephesians 2:1  
*"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,"*
- Ephesians 2:5  
*"... even when we were dead in our transgressions..."*

(3) To refer to "eternal" death

- Also known as the second death, the death that confirms one's eternal destiny (forever separation from God); for the unbelievers, first physical death, then eternal death.
- Revelation 20:13-15  
*"The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."*
- 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9  
*"He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup> They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power."*

Insight:

Some believe that unbelievers will not spend eternity in Hell but will be annihilated (reduced to nonexistence). Note the chart on the following page 352.

# Perspectives on Annihilationism

<b>Statement of View</b>	All people are created immortal, but those continuing in sin are completely annihilated, that is, reduced to nonexistence.	
<b>Proponents</b>	Arnobius, Edward Fudge, Clark H. Pinnock, Socinians, John R. W. Stott, B.B. Warfield, John Wenham	
<b>Tenets</b>	<p>There is a literal hell.</p> <p>Not everyone will be saved.</p> <p>There is only one class of future existence.</p> <p>Those who are not saved will be eliminated or annihilated. They will simply cease to exist.</p> <p>No one deserves eternal, conscious suffering.</p>	
<b>Arguments For</b>		<b>Arguments Against</b>
That God would allow eternal torment of His creatures is inconsistent with His love.		This view places too much emphasis on the material aspect of man.
Cessation of existence is implied in certain terms applied to the destiny of the wicked, such as destruction (Matt. 7:13; 10:28; 2 Thess. 1:9) and perishing (John 3:16).		There is no lexicographical or exegetical evidence to support the contention that such terms mean annihilation. The way such terms are used in Scripture reveals that they cannot mean annihilation.
The eternal punishment spoken of in Matthew 25:46 is just that, not everlasting but eternal.		In Matthew 25:46, the existence of believers and that of unbelievers is set in parallel. Both forms of existence are said to be eternal. The same word is used in both instances. If the passage speaks of everlasting life for the believer, it must also be speaking of everlasting punishment for the unbeliever. Otherwise there are two competing meanings of "eternal" in the same verse.
God alone has immortality. (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16).		God also confers immortality on holy angels and redeemed humanity. God alone has life and immortality in Himself (John 5:26), but this does not mean that He has not conferred endless existence as a natural endowment to His rational creatures. Scripture presents death as a punishment for sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12) rather than immortality as the reward for obedience.
Immortality is a special gift connected with redemption in Jesus Christ (Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:52-54; 2 Tim. 1:10).		Eternal life is a quality of life the wicked never experience. The term "eternal life" does not connote unending existence but refers to well-being in true fellowship with God (John 17:3).

(Taken from Charts, 139)



2. Intermediate state

a. Defined: that conscious human existence between death and the resurrection of the body.

b. Comments:

(1) It is a "state" not a place.

2 Corinthians 5:8

*"We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."*

Philippians 1:23

*"I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;"*

(2) It is an interim "state" experienced by both believers and unbelievers (cf. Lk. 16:19-31; note the two different states – yet prior to the resurrection).

John 5:28-29

*"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice<sup>29</sup> and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."*

c. Charted

See Chart, "Intermediate State of Man Between Death and Resurrection", page 354.



### C. General Eschatology

1. Described : the study of future events as they relate to the return of Christ and the future state (new heavens / new earth).

2. Assumptions :

a. God has a plan for the ages : to be glorified as the King of glory.

Psalm 24:1, 10

*"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; "...<sup>10</sup> Who is He, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty — He is the King of glory. Selah"*

Psalm 103:19

*"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all."*

b. God has progressively revealed His master program to undo the effects of sin (over creation, created beings) and extend His kingly authority / sovereignty over all.

c. God's restoration program (centered upon the King and His Kingdom) is revealed in Biblical covenants.

3. Biblical covenants

a. Defined : a covenant is a sovereign, binding contract or formal agreement between God and man whereby certain promises or obligations or conditions are set forth.

b. Types of covenants

(1) Conditional : a bilateral agreement contingent upon faithfulness to stated conditions ("if ... then").

(2) Unconditional : a unilateral agreement contingent upon God's power and faithfulness alone; note, however, that conditional blessings can be added in response to human obedience, but the covenant promise-fulfillment remains unconditional ("I will ...") and depends solely on God's work.

# Theological Covenants

"Covenant Theology is the system of theology that centers on God as a covenant-making God and sees in the history of creation two great covenants: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace" (Grenz, Pocket Dictionary, 32). Some covenant theologians add a third covenant, the covenant of redemption.

1. Covenant of Works: a binding agreement between God and Adam (the representative head of the human race) whereby God placed Adam on probation on behalf of the whole human race. The condition was that obedience would be rewarded with eternal life; disobedience would be punished with death.
2. Covenant of Grace: "God's offer of salvation through Christ's work to all who accept it" (Erickson, Dictionary, 38).
3. Covenant of Redemption: The agreement made between God the Father and God the Son whereby the Son would willingly give His life for the salvation of the human race.

Note : These covenants are theological deductions. They are not specifically mentioned in Scriptures.

## Biblical Covenants

1. Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12, 15, 17) : An unconditional covenant given by God to Abraham which contains personal promises to Abraham, national promises to his descendants, and universal promises to his spiritual heirs.
2. Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 30) : An elaboration of the Abrahamic Covenant whereby Israel, the offspring of Abraham, are promised a land in perpetuity.
3. Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7) : An elaboration of the Abrahamic Covenant, whereby the offspring of David would be preserved, the right to reign (throne) would be perpetuated, and the sphere of His sovereignty (kingdom) would be forever.
4. New Covenant (Jer. 31) : An elaboration of the Abrahamic Covenant, whereby the universal promises of spiritual regeneration are made certain.
5. Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 20) : A conditional covenant given by God to redeemed Israel, whereby the nation was to be God's own possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; it also provided a rule of conduct for the nation.

## D. Abrahamic Covenant (A.C.)

### 1. Characteristics :

#### a. It (A.C.) is to be literally fulfilled :

- (1) Past aspects (e.g. personal blessing to Abraham; a son as an heir) were fulfilled literally.

Genesis 13:2,14-15

*"Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold."...*

*"The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. <sup>15</sup> All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever."*

Genesis 21:1-2

*"Now the Lord was gracious to Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah what He had promised.*

*<sup>2</sup> Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him."*

- (2) Present aspects (e.g. nations blessed in Abraham) are being fulfilled literally.

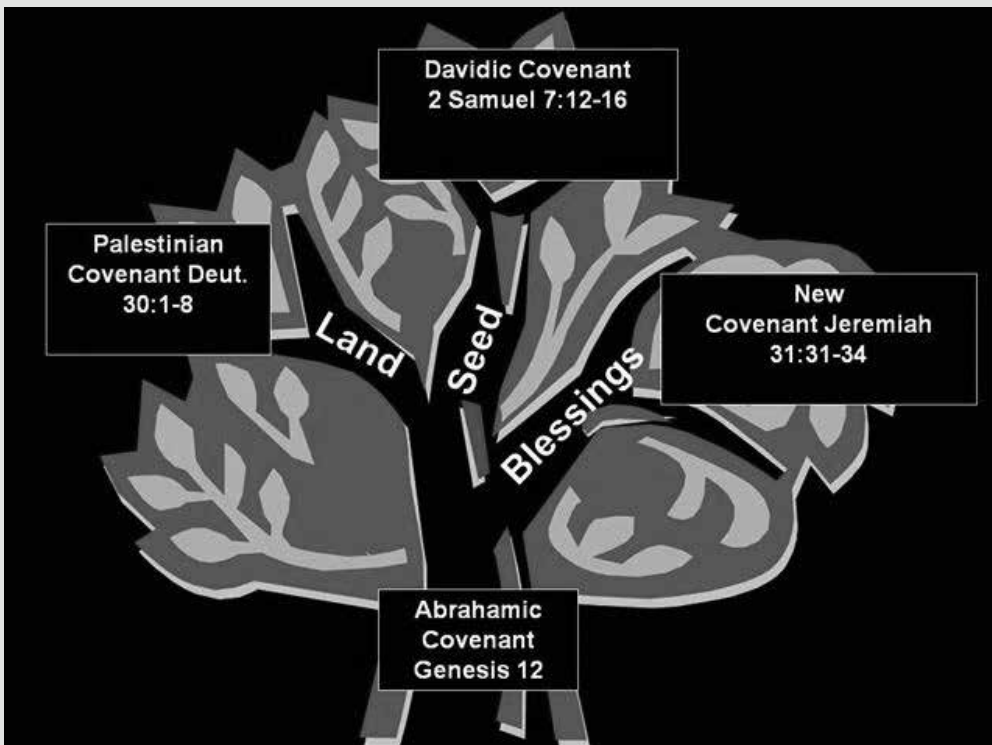
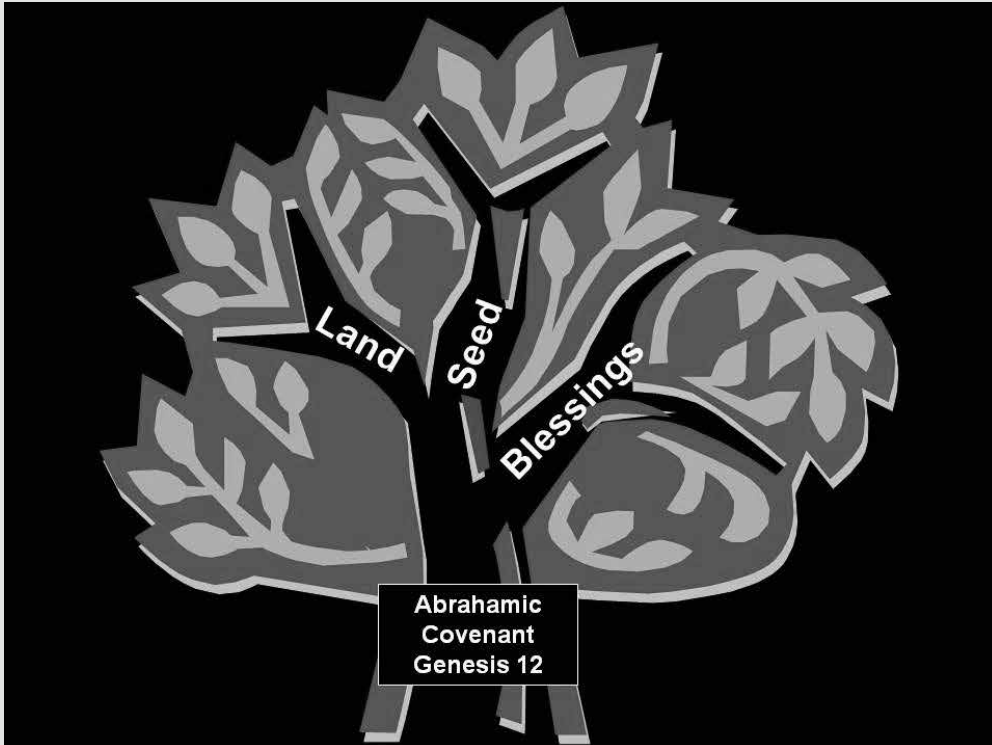
Galatians 3:7-8

*"Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'"*

- (3) Future aspects (prophecies, yet future) will be fulfilled literally (this is the study of eschatology – end times).

# Abrahamic Covenant

(Two Visual Pictures)



b. It (A.C.) is eternal :

Genesis 17:7, 13, 19

*"I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ...<sup>13</sup> Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.*

*...<sup>19</sup> Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."*

Psalm 105:8-11

*"He remembers His covenant forever, the word He commanded, for a thousand generations, <sup>9</sup> the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath He swore to Isaac. <sup>10</sup> He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: <sup>11</sup> 'To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit.'"*

c. It (A.C.) is unconditional :

(1) In the beginning, it is demonstrated with "I will" affirmations.

(cf. Gen. 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:13-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21)

(2) Later during national apostasy, it is affirmed again as unconditional.

Jeremiah 31:35-37

*"This is what the Lord says, He who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar — the Lord Almighty is His name:*

*<sup>36</sup> 'Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,' declares the Lord, 'will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.'<sup>37</sup> This is what the Lord says: 'Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done.' declares the Lord."*

# The Kingdom: Unifying Theme of Old Testament Theology

(Some Important Highlights)

Mediator	Mediatorial Rule
Adam	Mediated the theocratic kingdom rule over creation. Man was to obey God and subdue nature and animal life.
Noah	Mediated the theocratic kingdom through the administration of justice. Noah instituted capital punishment as a recognition of the sanctity of life.
Abraham	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Father of a nation through whom God would one day administer His rule over the world.</li> <li>2. Received the Abrahamic covenant which promised: (a) Land (b) Posterity (c) Blessing.</li> </ol>
Moses and Israel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God's will was revealed through the Mosaic Law. God was King; Israel, the subjects; and the Mosaic Law the constitution of the theocratic kingdom.</li> <li>2. Israel mediates God's truth to the nations through the Mosaic Law.</li> </ol>
David	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. David mediated God's rule on earth in the Davidic era (ca. 1010-970 B.C.).</li> <li>2. Received the Davidic Covenant which, in anticipating Messiah's kingdom promised: (a) A Dynasty (b) A Kingdom (c) A Throne (d) An Everlasting Rule.</li> </ol>
Prophets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When the kings apostatized, God raised up prophets as mediators of His theocratic kingdom.</li> <li>2. The prophets had a twofold message: (a) They exhorted the people to obey the Mosaic Law in the theocratic kingdom; (b) They prophesied concerning the final form of the kingdom, Messiah's millennial rule.</li> <li>3. Isaiah saw a suffering Messiah as foundational to the future kingdom reign of Messiah.</li> <li>4. Jeremiah announced the New Covenant—it is the basis whereby God will bless Israel in the future. The New Covenant anticipates Israel as a regenerated people in the future kingdom.</li> <li>5. Ezekiel envisioned a restored worship in the future kingdom.</li> <li>6. Daniel saw Messiah destroying all earthly kingdoms and establishing the millennial kingdom.</li> </ol>

(From Enns, *Moody Handbook*, 34)



2. Provisions :

- a. The A.C. contains "personal promises" to Abraham (fulfilled in his life and following).
- b. The A.C. contains "national promises" to Abraham's descendants.

(1) The land in perpetuity

Genesis 17:8

*"The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."*

(cf. Gen. 15:18-21 for boundaries; closest historical fulfillment so far – see 1 Kgs 4:21)

(2) The nation to be great

Genesis 12:2

*"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing."*

Genesis 15:5

*"He took him outside and said, 'Look up at the heavens and count the stars —if indeed you can count them.' Then He said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.'"*

- c. The A.C. contains "universal promises" to Abraham's spiritual heirs.

Genesis 12:3

*"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

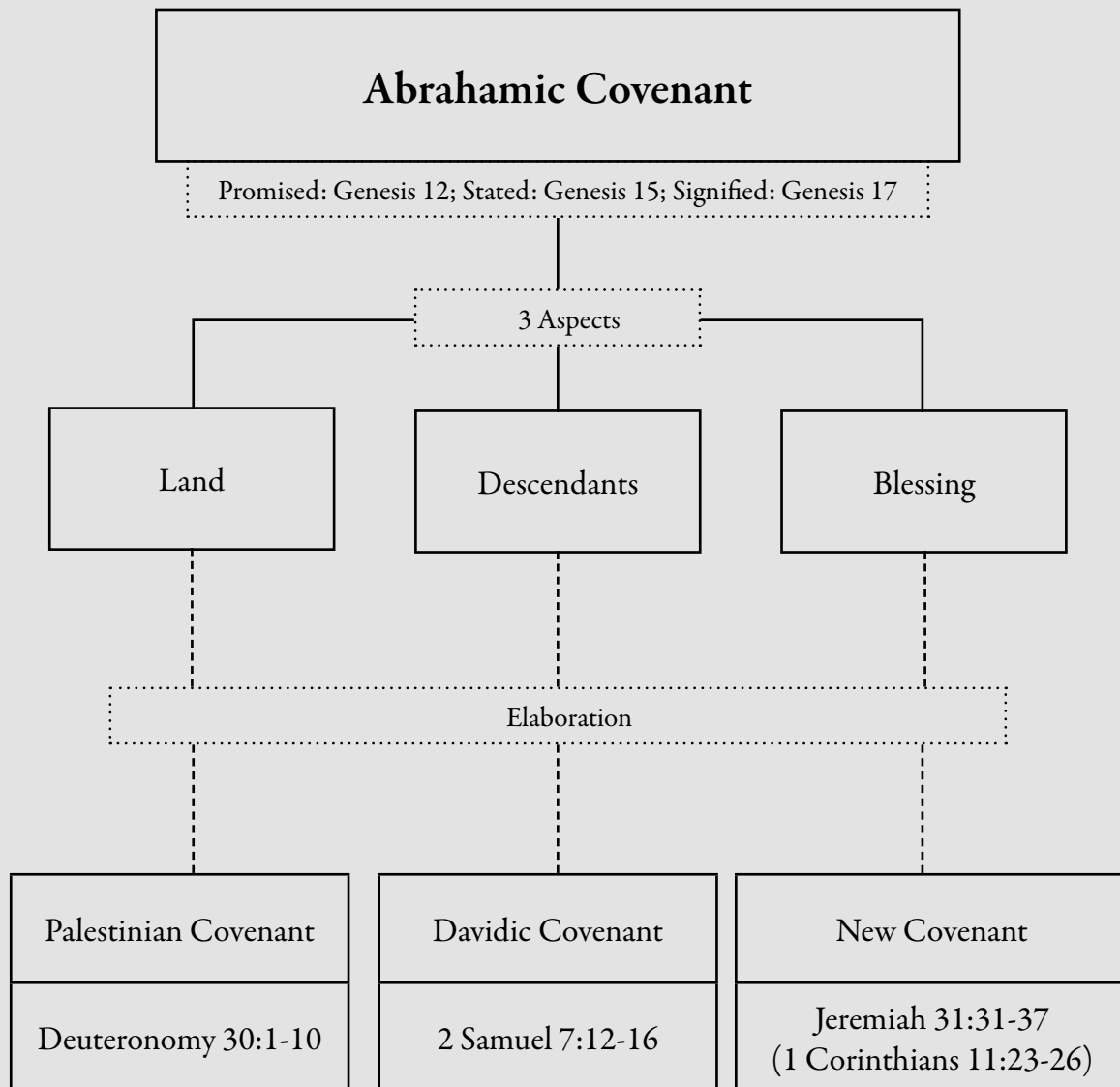
Galatians 3:7-9

*"Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." <sup>9</sup> So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."*

Galatians 3:14

*"He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."*

## One Suggested Way to See the Relationships of the Biblical Covenants:



3. Elaboration :

The Abrahamic Covenant provides the foundation upon which further covenants elaborate the basic promises. (Note the simple diagram on page 358 and also 362)

E. Three Primary Systems (Views) of "Last Things"

1. Developed (by each in their approach to prophetic literature)

- a. Through use of the Literal Method of Interpretation
- b. Through use of the Allegorical Method of Interpretation

2. Described

a. Literal method : plain, normal, literal approach

- (1) "A 'literal' interpretation means the understanding which any person of normal intelligence would get, without any special spiritual gifts and without any 'code' or 'key'" (LaSor quoted in B. Ramm, Hermeneutics, 10).
- (2) "If a person does not interpret the plain statements of prophecy literally, there is no rule by which any consensus of meaning can be established; the existence of a wide diversity of interpretations shows the failure of their approach" (Walvoord quoted in N. Geisler, Systematic Theology, 4:415).

# "Revelation : Mysterious & Fascinating"

(A Dispensational Approach)

– Craig Blasing –

Many people today find the book of Revelation both mysterious and fascinating. It's mysterious because it's filled with visions composed of strange and striking imagery. What is one supposed to make of all that? Hearing that there are differing interpretations of what already seems strange, some lose heart at the outset and prefer to avoid the book altogether. However, its mysteriousness is also fascinating and beckons the reader not to turn aside. Furthermore, features of the book—such as its name, Apocalypse, and its climactic conflict, Armageddon—have entered into public imagination and discourse, so that it cannot be entirely avoided.

But there is a more important reason why believers need to pay attention to the book of Revelation. Revelation is the last communication given by Jesus to the churches. It explicitly concerns His coming. As such, we must not only give attention to it, but also heed the Lord's instruction. If we do, the book specifically promises us a blessing (Rev. 1:3).

I'm going to suggest in this brief essay something that might seem shocking: the book of Revelation is not as hard to understand as many people say. I don't mean that everything in it is perfectly clear. I admit that there are mysteries and difficulties that challenge even the most accomplished scholar.

However, the overall structure of the book is not difficult to see, and keeping some basic rules in mind will help us navigate the visionary imagery.

I am taking what may generally be called a dispensational approach to the book of Revelation. Let me briefly explain. Dispensationalism is a way of interpreting the Bible that recognizes a "Future, National Israel" in the plan and purpose of God. This Future, National Israel is not simply another name for the church, any more than the United States, Mexico or Chad are alternative names for the church. Israel is a political, national and ethnically Jewish reality in Scripture. The church is a multi-ethnic, trans-national, corporate body of believers who are united to Jesus and to one another by the Holy Spirit. Members of the church are also members of political states, like the U.S. and present-day Israel. But, church and state are not the same.

The Bible tells us that God has a plan for the national, political order of human existence. At the center of that plan is a Future, National Israel. This plan, however, has mostly been "on hold" since the ascension of Jesus. Its complete fulfillment awaits His future coming. At that time, as Peter explained in Acts 3:20-21, "all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets" will be fulfilled. In the meantime, the Lord has been forming His church out of individual Jewish and Gentile believers, uniting them to Himself and to each other by the Holy Spirit (note Acts 1:6-8).

(continued, page 366)

- b. Allegorical method : literal and spiritually symbolic approach
  - (1) Conservative evangelicals who embrace this method of interpretation usually apply the literal approach to narratives and history, but use the allegorical when it comes to prophetic passages.
  - (2) The allegorical method
    - (a) It is selectively literal.
    - (b) It seeks a deeper, spiritual meaning.
    - (c) It seeks additional meaning beyond the meaning of the human author (often argue that God is also the author and His meaning is often deeper, broader than the human author).
    - (d) It finds truth beneath the text (truth is not in the inspired human author's literal, grammatical statements but in a deeper meaning).

### 3. Discussed (the 3 Primary Systems)

- a. Postmillennialism
  - (1) Definition : Second Coming of Christ is after the Millennium.
  - (2) Description : The latter Church Age (the last 1000 years or so at the end) will be an era and peace of prosperity brought about by the effects of the gospel and the work of the church; then Christ will come followed by general resurrection and judgment and eternity future.
  - (3) Method of Interpretation : mostly allegorical with respect to unfulfilled prophecy.

A dispensational approach to the book of Revelation interprets political, national and ethnic features in its visions consistently with this expectation of a renewal of the political and national plan of God. Revelation speaks of judgment on nations and rulers followed by the coming of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom on Earth.

There are some differences among dispensationalists as to whether the church and kingdom programs are fulfilled as two different people groups or as two dimensions of one redeemed humanity. The former are sometimes referred to as traditional dispensationalists, the latter as progressive dispensationalists. Either way, however, leads to a more "natural, plain or literal" reading of the national and political features in the book of Revelation, especially its description of the future political rule of Christ after His coming. This is why a dispensational reading of Revelation is sometimes said to be a "literal" reading of the book. However, this can be confusing because no one disputes the fact that Revelation's visions are filled with metaphorical imagery. The point is that the national and political program of the Kingdom of God, which Jesus will fulfill at His coming, is not itself a metaphor, but the literal fulfillment of Old and New Testament prophecy.

Three principles should guide us as we proceed to interpret Revelation. First, identify links between the imagery, words, patterns and themes in Revelation with the rest of canonical Scripture, especially the Old Testament prophets, the prophecies of Jesus and His apostles. The book of Revelation is filled with allusions to earlier Scripture. One of the reasons Revelation seems so strange to modern readers is that they really do not know their Bible. The more familiar one is with the rest of Scripture, the more familiar Revelation will appear to be. Second, follow the literary structure of the book. There are structural markers that are not difficult to recognize, and they are key to its overall interpretation. Third, it's OK to leave some mysteries and enigmas unresolved. Don't let that hinder you, however, from learning all you can.

I do need to mention two passages that are often highlighted by dispensationalists. First, there is a promise in Rev. 3:10 in which the Lord told the church at Philadelphia that He would keep them from "the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world." Most understand this "hour of trial" as the coming tribulation, which is the subject of much of the main body of the book. This promise is consistent with the idea of a pretribulation rapture, that is a rapture of the church occurring before or at the onset of the tribulation (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11).

I would also point out that in Rev. 20:1-10, we find the millennial Kingdom of Christ. A dispensational approach is premillennial because such a view not only fits with the expectation of Scripture generally that Christ will come with His kingdom, but the grammatical and literary structure of this portion of Scripture is unambiguous about two bodily resurrections of the dead separated by 1,000 years during which the devil is imprisoned and resurrected saints reign on Earth with Christ!

The book of Revelation offers an amazing synthesis, elaborating and expanding upon earlier biblical prophecies of Christ's coming, the judgments of God and the glories of the future Kingdom. One not only comes to know in a better way the pattern of biblical prophecy, but also the person, power, glory and authority of the Lord who is coming. All of this fills the content of what Scripture calls our Hope, the basis for steadfastness and endurance in our present walk with Him. For we know, as surely as Revelation tells us, He is coming! And, when He comes, everything changes!

b. Amillennialism

- (1) Definition : Second Coming of Christ occurs at the end of the Church Age (there is no literal millennium – only symbolic or spiritual).
- (2) Description : the Church Age will end at a time of trouble, then Christ will return; there will be resurrection and judgment, then eternity future.
- (3) Method of Interpretation : mostly allegorical or spiritual as most promises made to national Israel are now fulfilled spiritually in the Church; the Church "replaces" Israel of the OT (Replacement Theology).

c. Premillennialism

- (1) Definition : the Second Coming of Christ will occur before the literal Millennium (1000 year reign of Christ on earth).
- (2) Description : the Church Age ends at the Rapture or at the Second Coming of Christ; Christ establishes the Millennium over which He rules and reigns for a 1000 years, followed by resurrections and judgments (of the unsaved), then eternity future.
- (3) Method of Interpretation : consistent use of the literal, grammatical, historical approach even in the area of unfulfilled prophecies.

# "Two Key Prophetic Books in the Scriptures"

Daniel	
Chapters	Subject
1	Person of Daniel
2 - 7	Prophecies: Gentile Nations ("times of the Gentiles")
8 - 12	Prophecies: Israel & the Gentile Nations

"Revelation"		
Theme : "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (Rev. 1:19. . . Outline of Book)		
Chapter 1	Chapters 2-3	Chapters 4-22
"What you have seen"	"What is now"	"What will take place later"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Salutation</li> <li>• The Vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Letters to 7 Churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tribulation 4 _____ 19</li> <li>Millennium _____ 20</li> <li>Eternal State 21 _____ 22</li> </ul>



- (4) Disagreement : Premillennialists disagree on the time of the secret Rapture; 4 major views are as follows:
- (a) Pretribulation (the Rapture ends the Church Age and precedes the Tribulation).
  - (b) Midtribulation (the Rapture occurs at the mid-point of the Tribulation).
  - (c) Posttribulation (the Rapture occurs at the end of the Tribulation and just prior to the Second Coming of Christ to earth).
  - (d) Partial (the Rapture precedes the beginning of the Tribulation and then occurs throughout the Tribulation for those who are spiritually prepared and ready).

Comparison: Three Primary Systems			
	Pre-Millennial	Amillennial	Postmillennial
Literal Millennium	Yes	No	No
Resurr. before Millen.	One	None	None
1000 years of Rev. 20	Future	Present	Present
Resurrection(s)	Two	One	One
Literal approach: Prophecy	Yes	No	No
Unconditional OT Covenants	Yes	No	No
Distinct, between Israel & Church	Many	None	None
Messianic Kingdom	Future	Present	Present
Rapture/Second Coming	Separate events	Same event	Same event
Binding of Satan	In future (in 1000)	In present (curtailed)	In present (curtailed)
Moral Progress (society)	Not inevitable	Not inevitable	Inevitable
Final Judgment	Two events	One event	One event

Geisler (4:550)

## Interpretations of Revelation

	1-3	4-19	20-22
<b>Preterist</b>	Historic churches	Symbolic of contemporary conditions	Symbolic of heaven and victory
<b>Idealist</b>	Historic churches	Symbolic of conflict of good and evil	Victory of good
<b>Historicist</b>	Historic churches	Symbolic of events of history; fall of Rome, Mohammedanism, Papacy, Reformation	Final judgment, Millennium (?), Eternal State
<b>Futurist</b>	Historic churches and/or seven stages of church history	Future tribulation; concentrated judgments on apostate church and on antichrist; coming of Christ	Millennial kingdom; Judgment of wicked dead; Eternal State

## Theological Perspectives on Revelation

	1-3	4-19	20-22
<b>Postmillennial</b>	Historical churches	Generally historicist	Victory of Christianity over the world
<b>Amillennial</b>	Historical churches	Generally historicist	Coming of Christ; Judgment; Eternal State
<b>Premillennial</b>	Historical churches; representative of historical stages (?)	Generally futurist	Literal millennial reign; Judgment of Great White Throne; New Jerusalem
<b>Apocalyptic</b>	Historic churches	Generally preterist	Symbolic of heaven and victory

N.B.

This Workbook will follow the viewpoint of the Pretribulational, Premillennial position. Other views are generally referenced in this session and the student is encouraged to study the issues of eschatology carefully. What follows is the author's developed convictions.

F. Pretribulational, Premillennial Order of End Times

1. Rapture

a. Defined : the catching up of believers to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:17; Grk. "harpazō"; Lat. "rapio" which means seize or catch up – from rapio we get the English, rapture)

b. Described (Biblically)

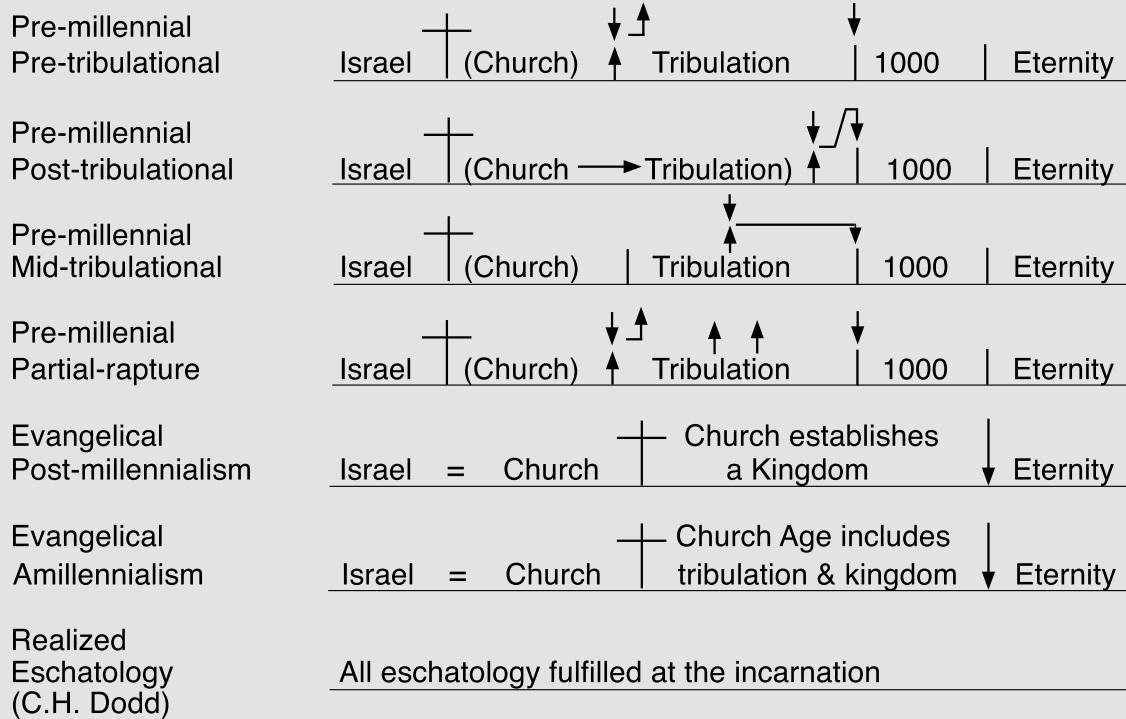
(1) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

*"Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."*

(2) 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

*"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — <sup>52</sup> in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."*

# Divergent Evangelical Views of Major Unfilled Prophecies



<sup>1</sup> The charts of this handout are summarizations of key material found in Robert P. Lightner, Prophecy in the Ring, pp. 32-58. The ideas of this section have been modified in chart form.

(3) John 14:1-3

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*

(4) Revelation 3:10

*"Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."*

## 2. Tribulation

a. Defined : an unprecedented time of global suffering that precedes the Second Coming of Christ; it can be described as the "seventieth seven" of Daniel 9:24-27; it will test earth dwellers and also prepare national Israel for repentance.

b. Described (Biblically)

(1) Matthew 24:21

*"For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."*

(2) Revelation 6:15-17

*"Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. <sup>16</sup> They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup> For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

(continued, page 375)

# Comparison of John 14:1-3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

(Rapture Passages)

John 14:1-3

*"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

*"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."*

JOHN 14:1-3	1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-17
(1) "Troubled"	(13) "grieve"
(1) "Believe"	(14) "believe"
(1) "God...me"	(14) "Jesus, God"
(2) "have told you"	(15) "say to you"
(3) "come again"	(15) "coming of the Lord"
(3) "receive you"	(17) "caught up"
(3) "to Myself"	(17) "to meet the Lord"
(3) "be where I am"	(17) "always be with the Lord"

(3) Jeremiah 30:7

*"How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it."*

### 3. Second Coming

a. Defined : the visible return of Christ to the earth whereby He will establish His literal, Davidic throne and initiate the Millennium.

b. Described (Biblically)

(1) Acts 1:11

*"Men of Galilee, they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.'"*

(2) Matthew 24:30

*"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."*

(3) Revelation 1:7

*"Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen."*

(4) Luke 17:24

*"For the Son of Man in His day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other."*

(5) Zechariah 14:4, 9

*"On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south..."*

*<sup>9</sup> The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and His name the only name."*

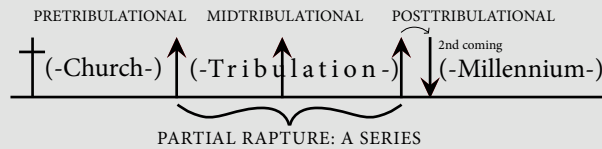
"It is possible to overemphasize variations between major evangelical views on the Millennium and forget two facts :  
(1) They are all within the boundaries of evangelicalism (2) They all believe in the Second Coming,"

N. Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 4:552)

# Views of Prophecy

## THE RAPTURE

Four Views of the Time of the Rapture: (↑ INDICATES THE RAPTURE)



## DIFFERENCES - THE RAPTURE AND THE 2<sup>ND</sup> COMING

### The Rapture

KEY VERSES : JOHN 14:1-3; 1 COR. 15:50-54;  
1 THESS. 4:13-17

1. Imminent. No "signs" precede.
2. Removal of believers, both living and dead.
3. Saints are "caught up."
4. Christ comes to claim His bride.
5. Brings a message of comfort and hope.
6. A mystery: not revealed in the Old Testament.
7. Apparently the judgment seat of Christ follows.
8. Creation unchanged. Earthly curse remains.
9. Sudden: instantly occurs. Involves believers only.
10. Expectation of the church.

### The Second Coming

KEY VERSES : ZECH. 14:1-11; MATT. 24:29-44;  
REV. 19:11-21

1. Not imminent. Preceded by "signs".
2. The appearance of the Son of God.
3. Christ returns with the saints.
4. Christ returns with His bride.
5. Brings a message of judgment.
6. No mystery: clearly revealed in both testaments.
7. Israel and the Gentiles are judged (sheep & goats).
8. Creation changed. Earthly curse removed.
9. Comes as a result of worldwide military campaign.  
Involves the world.
10. Expectation of believing Israel.



c. Three important facts on the Second Coming :

- (1) Christ's return is literal and physical.
- (2) Christ's return is visible and public.
- (3) Christ's return is glorious and awe-inspiring.

4. Millennium

a. Defined : the literal 1000 year reign of Christ (Messiah) on earth in fulfillment of Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenants made to Abraham and his descendants.

b. Described (Biblically)

(1) Isaiah 9:6-7

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."*

(2) Luke 1:32-33

*"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, <sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end."*

(3) Revelation 20:4-6

*"I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."*

# "The Millennium vs. The Eternal State"

(from Geisler, ST, 560)

	<b>Millennium</b>	<b>New Heaven And New Earth</b>
<b>Terminus</b>	At end of Christ's reign	No end
<b>Evil</b>	Present	Not present
<b>Death</b>	Death occurs	No death occurs
<b>Location</b>	On earth	In heaven and on earth
<b>Final Judgment</b>	Not yet occurred	Completed
<b>Constituents</b>	Saved and unsaved	Saved only
<b>Satan</b>	Not yet finally judged	Finally judged

## 5. Judgments and Resurrections

a. The Scriptures do not speak of one solitary judgment; by implication, there are at least two resurrections.

b. Judgments

See "Chart of Judgments", page 380.

c. Resurrections

(1) Of the Just

Luke 14:14

*"and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*

John 5:28-29

*"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice<sup>29</sup> and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."*

(a) Dead in Christ : raised at Rapture (1Thess. 4:16)

(b) Saved Dead of the Tribulation (Rev. 20:4)

(c) OT saints : at either the Rapture or the Second Coming (Dan. 12:2)

## Chart of Judgments

Judgment	Time	Place	Persons	Basis	Results	Scripture
Believer's Works	Between Rapture and Second Coming	Bēma of Christ	Believers in Christ	Works and walk of the Christian life	Rewards or loss of rewards	1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10
Old Testament Saints	End of Tribulation/ Second Coming		Believers in Old Testament Times	Faith in God	Rewards	Dan. 12:1-3
Tribulation Saints	End of Tribulation/ Second Coming		Believers of Tribulation period	Faith in and faithfulness to Christ	Reign with Christ in the Millennium	Rev. 20:4-6
Living Jews	End of Tribulation/ Second Coming	Wilderness	Jews who survive the Tribulation	Faith in Christ	Believers enter kingdom; rebels are purged	Ezek. 20:34-38
Living Gentiles	End of Tribulation/ Second Coming	Valley of Jehoshaphat	Gentiles who survive the Tribulation	Faith in Christ as proved by works	Believers enter kingdom; other to the lake of fire	Joel 3:1-2; Matt. 25:31-46
Satan and Fallen Angels	End of Millennium		Satan and those angels who follow him	Allegiance to Satan's counterfeit system	Lake of fire	Matt. 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10
Unsaved People	End of Millennium	Before the Great White Throne	Unbelievers of all time	Rejection of God	Lake of fire	Rev. 20:11-15

(Ryrie, BT, 516)

(2) Of the Unjust

This judgment of the unbelieving dead will occur at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Revelation 20:11-15

*"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."*

6. Eternal State

- a. For the saved : new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21-22)
- b. For the unsaved : eternal torment

*"He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.  
<sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen"*  
(Revelation 22:20-21 NASB)

