

The End Times

INTRODUCTION

What is eschatology?

“The Study of Last Things”

Eschatology is an important area of doctrine, so we dare not ignore it. However, it is not the whole of theology and should not be studied at the neglect of other areas of doctrine. It has a practical application as well, but often this is not the focus.

Why are there some many different views when it comes to eschatology?

The answer to the first question has to do with the type of literature (genre) we are dealing with. The end times are described in both prophetic and **apocalyptic literature**. These are the two most difficult genres of Biblical literature! **The “stuff” of apocalyptic literature is presented in the form of visions and dreams, and the language is cryptic (having several meanings) and symbolic.** Most of the images in apocalyptic writings are forms of fantasy, like “a woman clothed with the sun” (Rev. 12:21) or “locusts with scorpion tails and human heads” (Rev. 9:10). These literary devices used make the real meaning (what the actual event and its players will be like) difficult to get at.

Prophetic literature is sometimes literal and sometime figurative. These create difficulty when we combine this genre with apocalyptic literature. Will the event described literally happen this way or is it merely figurative.

Additionally, there is the question of when. Will this prophesy be fulfilled now, in the near future, or in the very distant future.

So, the simple questions of who, what, when, and where are not so simple when we are talking about prophetic/apocalyptic literature!

Doesn't this show that the Bible is open to whatever interpretation some one has?

No! These genres are difficult, but not all genres are this tough. Many are literal and very straight forward.

THE BIG PICTURE: GENERAL ORDER OF EVENTS

So, how can we understand the sequence of eschatological events?

(SHOW SLIDE)

Here are the major events we will be talking about:

Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18) Latin: to seize. It is based on a Greek Word meaning “caught up.” The rapture is the catching or snatching up of believers to Christ in the air.

Tribulation

Millennium

Three Views on when the rapture will happen:

Post-tribulation: The Church will go through the tribulation. It will suffer much under the anti-Christ, but will be divinely preserved from the effects (Israel during the plagues)

Mid-tribulation: The Church will be raptured in the middle of the 7 year tribulation. It will suffer under the ant-Christ, but will be with Christ during the last 3 ½ years known as the “Great Tribulation.”

Pre-tribulation: Before the tribulation

My understanding: We want to make sense of all of Scripture. The difficulty is when we are describing the rapture, the conditions surrounding the event seem to differ.

1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 – 5:3 / Mathew 24:36-41

Compare: **Matthew 24:29-30**

The end times center around the second coming of Jesus. It is mentioned over 300 times in the NT, or once every 25 verses. One thing that we need to keep in mind is that, like the first coming, the second coming may not be a “one event” kind of thing, but rather a series of events.

The first coming was 33 years long, the majority of the significant events happening in the last three years. As we look at the Biblical passages for the second coming, it seems that this is the best way to make sense of the second coming.

Church not destined for wrath: **1 Thessalonians 5:9; Rev. 3:10**

B. The plan of the rapture

1. Jesus personally comes down from heaven (***4:16**)
 - G cd. have done it a lot of diff. ways
 - w/a loud command
 - voice of the archangel
2. Living Xians meet him in the air (***4:17a**)
 - how long will this take?
 - 1 Cor. 15:52 “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet....”**
 - (blink...blink...blink)

- can you imagine what this wd. be like?
- as xians meet Jesus in the air, chaos is happening on earth
- 3. We will be with the Lord forever (*17b)
 - from now on we'll never be where he's not
- 4. Judgement of believers (our works): **1 Corinthians 4:5**; Rev. 22:12

II. The Tribulation:

(Show timeline slide)

***Jeremiah 12:1**

-G's answer to the question: how long will the wicked prosper is... until now, the time of the tribulation. God's judgment of the wicked begins w/ the tribulation period as he begins to bring his wrath on a world that's rejected him

-G. **judges passively** by allowing the world to have the leader it wants: Anti-Christ

and **actively w/ the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments** described in the book of revelation.

A. The Big Picture of the Tribulation Period

1. summary of the whole trib. period

-3 groups: people who became xians during the tribulation, jewish people, followers of ac

-when ac comes to power, jews back in land, temple re-built

-sacs. re-started

-cov. bet. ac and jews (peace and protection)

-ac breaks cov. at 3 1/2 yr. point

-sets up abomination that causes desolation (

2. A one verse summary of the whole period (***dan. 9:27**)

-let's look at the parts of that verse which will give us a timeline of the trib.

*AC enters a cov. w/ Israel for a "seven" a period of 7 yrs. which is how long the trib. will last (Vs. 9:24 "Seventy units of seven")

*in the middle or at the 3 1/2 yr. mark he breaks it and stops temple sacrifices

*he will set up an image of himself to be worshipped by all

-the desolation is the jews fleeing b/c he's desecrated the temple

*G will eventually judge ac, this happens at the end of the 7 yr. period

-Jesus says the same thing as daniel (***matt. 24:15-16**)

-trans: that's the summary of the trib. period. now, I want to look at 2 snapshots of the trib. that really struck me as I've been studying this stuff.

B. Details of the tribulation period

Details of the tribulation are described in the book of revelation and they are described in the terms of a book with **Seven Seals (Rev 6)**

The book is described in Rev. 5:1-5 and is the title deed to the Kingdom. It contains the prophecies related to the final judgment and the establishment of Christ's rule on earth.

Content of the seals: (First four are the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse)

1. Cold War
2. Open war
3. Famine which accompanies war (normally buy 8 quarts for a denarius)
4. Slaughter of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the earth's population
5. Martyred saints asking for justice
6. Disturbance in heaven and on earth

(First half of the tribulation - show chart)

The second part of the tribulation is described by seventh seal, which is the trumpet judgments. The seventh trumpet judgment contains the bowl judgments.

The trumpet judgements: Rev. 8

1. 1/3 of vegetation burned up
2. 1/3 of sea life destroyed
3. 1/3 of fresh water ruined
4. 1/3 of heavens effected (1/3 of sun, moon, stars are darkened)
5. Men hurt by locusts with bite of scorpions
6. Invasion of army of from the East of 200,000,000 men; kills 1/3 of the men; no repentance

7th Trumpet (7 bowls): (Rev. 16)

1. Sores upon men who follow the beast (AC)
2. sea turned to blood so all sea life died
3. Fresh water turned to blood
4. Scorching heat of the sun
5. Pains and sores on kingdom of beast
6. Gathering of nations for Armageddon
7. Amazing physical events: Earthquake, mountains and islands are swallowed up, cities split into parts, 100 lb hailstones.

III. The Second Coming:

Introduction:

-you've just experienced

-why was that hard (pause)?

-there's someone else who doesn't like injustice... Jesus Christ

-in his second coming, Jesus wipes out injustice of AC.

-contrast bet. 1st and 2nd coming

-savior- lord

-baby- warrior

-humiliation- exaltation

-wicked men judged him- he judges wicked men (john macarthur)

-grace- justice

-to save- to judge

-servant- king

-(***rev. 19:11-16**)

B. Jesus is a Conquering Warrior

-this is why he's pictured on a white horse (*11)

-his eyes (*12)

-different, Lazarus' death, the multitudes, little children

-hebs. 4:13 makes clear he sees it all "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

-katie covering her eyes

-people think they can do that w/ G

-but, he sees every act/ attitude of the heart

-he judges w/ full information & perfect justice

-he strikes down the nations (*15)

-sword=symbolic

-creation speaks= life, here speaks= death

-you'll be there to see this (*14)

-not to fight, that's all Jesus. only he is portrayed as armed. you will be there b/c you'll reign w/ him after it's all over. rev. 19:8 "Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)"

C. Jesus is Lord

-he has many crowns (*12)

-satan and AC are pictured w/ crowns

-now Jesus has them

-"unassailable sovereignty"

-he has a name that no one knows (*12). what is it?...I don't know.

-he is other- he is transcendent

-he is so great, you can't fully understand him

-<there will always be more Jesus than I can fully understand.>

-most fitting...his essence. (*16)

-it's in all capitals

-the theme of revelation, whole bible, get this and you've got the xian life.

-that's who he is. it doesn't matter who people think he is.

- relativistic students
- (D. What this description of Jesus does in me)
 - dave: why this impacts me so much.
 - recognized for who he is... Lord
 - phil. 2:10-11 “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - the world acts like he’s not
 - good will win over evil
- trans: now in the next 5 minutes, I’m going to tell you about the rest of eternity, so hang in there! (***timeline**)
 - we’ve covered: rapture, trib., second coming
 - now I’m going to give you a jet tour of
 - X’s reign on earth
 - final rebellion, final judgment
 - eternity

IV. The Thousand Year Kingdom of Christ (The Millennium)

- general description:
 - ends AC’s evil kingdom, sets up his
 - picture one leader, not AC, but Jesus Christ
 - paradise regained
 - peace, justice, righteousness

A. Satan Bound

- b/c Christ’s thousand year kingdom on earth is characterized by peace, justice, and righteousness, satan is removed
- satan and all his deception and destructive influence is taken out of the picture
- God sends an angel to bind satan and throw him into the abyss
- let’s look at it in scripture (***rev. 20:2**)
- trans: now, are you ready for this, I believe you and I are going to reign w/ X during this 1000 year period!

B. The Saints Reign with Christ

- that’s right, believers from ot, nt, and tribulation periods will all be on the earth reigning w/ X
- let me show you why I think that’s true (***rev. 20:6**)
- (**read first part, “stop”**), later in revelation it says that the second death is hell. Q: who are the people who hell has no power over? all believers. (**read the rest of the verse**)
- that thrills me: this world is so messed up right now, to see this world run right, w/ our lord in charge, and we get to reign w/ him, that’s awesome
- trans: at the end of the 1000 yrs., there’s a last rebellion

V. Final Rebellion:

A. Satan Leads Rebellion

-there will be some in the 1000 yr. kingdom who only feign allegiance to X outwardly, but inwardly their hearts are far from him. **so, G allows satan to be loosed to allow these people to follow who they really want to, and then he judges them. (*rev. 20:7-9)**

-this is a final proof that the environment is not man's problem, it's his heart

B. Satan Judged

is that satan himself is judged (*rev. 20:10)

-satan is on borrowed time. his day is coming where he will be judged by God for all the evil and damage that he has caused.

VI. Final Judgment (of Unbelievers):

Final judgment of unbelievers, this is what's called "the great white throne judgment"

-it's hard to even read you guys (*rev. 20:11,15)

-how it impacts me

-it gives me compassion for people

-drives me to talk to people

-not optional

-cure to cancer, wd. run and give it to shaun and everybody else

-trans: now let's look at a description of heaven (*rev. 21:3-4)

VII. Eternity:

-we will live w/ God right in our presence for eternity

-there will be no more pain

-how this impacts me

-it gives me hope

-pain & suffering over

-no prophecy= no hope

-handle life now b/c I know G's promises for the future

-shaun

-his response has inspired me

-his courage, strength

-<sooner or later I'll be in heaven w/ God and no matter when it happens, he'll be glorified.>

-why has been able to respond this way?

-he has hope for his future

-trans: as we wrap up I want to challenge you guys w/ a few things in light of the truths we've just looked at

Conclusion:

-I'd like you to bow your heads and close your eyes. I have 3 questions I'd like you to reflect on, and then I'm going to give you an opp. to respond to each in prayer.

challenges:

1. there may be some of you here who are not sure about your future, you're not sure that if you died tonight you'd go to heaven, if you're in that place, you can settle that issue right now.

-(prayer): "dear Jesus, I know who you are: you are king of kings and lord of lords. and I know who I am, I'm one who has done things that are wrong. I've sinned against others and you. but, I also know that in your first coming you came as savior to die on a cross to provide forgiveness for sins. Jesus, I want to receive your forgiveness. please forgive my sins and come into my life to become my savior and Lord."

-if you prayed that would you slip your hand up so I can see it. feel free to come up and talk to me after.

2. I want you to think about the fact that X is king of kings and lord of lords? he is Lord of history, we've just seen his plan for the future, and it's guaranteed to happen. he's not just lord of history, he is lord of your life. here's my challenge, are you living like he is lord of your life? (pause). I want to challenge all of us right now to agree w/ Jesus in prayer that he is lord of our lives.

-"Jesus, you are king of kings and lord of lords. I want to live in light of that truth. I yield control of my life to you right now to go anywhere, do anything, and say anything you want me to say. You are lord of my life."

3. in light of the reality that people who don't know X are headed for an eternity apart from God, to a place the bible calls the lake of fire, commit yourself to looking for any opportunity to share your faith.

-"Lord, we pray that you would give us a heart for people who don't know you. give us so much compassion for people that we look to share you w/ people whenever we have the opportunity."

-thanks you guys.