

Doctrines 101

Lesson 7

Eschatology

PART I EXPLANATION

Introduction: The subject of the end times is no doubt the most fascinating study in the Bible because it is attempting to understand the future through the light of the Scriptures. There is a difficulty however, when it comes to determining the exact order and details of future events. While there are many facts that almost all of Christendom does agree on (such as a resurrection and a future judgment) there are great variances of opinion as to the timing of them. Because of this, the subject of Eschatology is not used as a test of fellowship amongst most Christians. The Bible teaches a liberty of conscience that every man needs to be fully persuaded in his own mind.

In order to discuss these various subjects it is necessary to understand the terminology that is used to describe the various positions. However, because it is a very complex subject, we are going to attempt to simplify the subject down to the basic terms. It is not feasible in such a brief study as this to investigate all of the factors that these different theological systems are built upon. Instead, we are going to look at three basic subjects in relation to the Lord's return: the millennium, the tribulation, and the final judgment. The relationship of these three concepts will basically determine how a person views end time events.

All Christians believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return again to this earth in fulfillment of the promises of Scripture (Acts 1:11). However, there is a great variance of opinion as to the timing of that return. The first major division regarding the timing of these events relates to the millennium. There are three primary positions regarding the millennium known as: pre-millennial, post-millennial, and a-millennial. Simply defined, a person who is pre-millennial believes that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return to this earth to establishing His kingdom here for a thousand years. A person who is post-millennial generally believes that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return after the millennium, after the world has been subdued by Christianity. A person who is a-millennial does not believe in a literal thousand year millennium but that it is a symbolic term referring to the gospel age and that Christ will return at an undisclosed time. Even within these different groups there is great variance of opinion regarding particular events but those are the basic positions regarding the millennium.

Though many godly men have held to the other positions, for this study we are going to focus upon the pre-millennial position. However, even amongst pre-millennialists there are many varieties of interpretations. The primary subject upon which they vary is the timing and relation of the Lord's return to the "tribulation period." The three primary beliefs are based on whether the Lord's return will be pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation.

The last subject is the final judgments. All Christians believe in a final judgment but disagree on their timing, location, or the subjects to be judged at them. The names given to these final judgments are the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment. Most people who are pre-millennial believe that these are separate judgments and that the saved will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ and that the unsaved at the Great White Throne Judgment. However, others believe that there is one universal judgment. With the number of positions on Eschatology we must study to determine what we personally believe the Bible teaches.

Definitions: *For English use the Webster's 1828 Dictionary and copy all appropriate definitions for each word. For the Greek and Hebrew use a Strong's Concordance and copy the definition. The Strong's number is in parenthesis.*

English: **Millennium (spelled millenium in the webster's 1828) -**

Tribulation -

Imminent -

Judgment-

Resurrection-

Greek: (5507) **chilioi** *khil'-ee-oy*

386. **anastasis** *an-as'-tas-is*

(968) **bema** *bay'-ma*

(2920) **krisis** *kree'-sis*

(1764) **enistemi** *en-is'-tay-mee*

Quotation:

“We are more sure to rise out of our graves than out of our beds.” Thomas Watson

“In the same condition that thy soul leaves thy body, shall thy body be found of thy soul. Thou canst not pass from thy death-bed a sinner, and appear at the great assizes a saint.” Unknown

“As God spake to the fish, and it cast up Jonah, commanded the earth, and it delivered up Jesus; so He will speak to all creatures, and they shall not detain one dust of our bodies.” Thomas Adams

“How certain thou art to die, thou knowest; how soon to die, thou knowest not. Measure not thy life with the longest; that were to piece it out with flattery. Thou canst name no living man, not the sickest, which thou art sure shall die before thee.” Thomas Adams

“That which a man spits against heaven, shall fall back on his own face.” Thomas Adams

“The farthest end of all our thoughts should be the thought of our ends.” Thomas Adams

“Christ hath told us He will come, but not when, that we might never put off our clothes, or put out the candle.”
William Gurnall

“Be not too curious in searching where God has not discovered or revealed. For example, there are great thoughts of

heart as to when God will deliver His people, and set His churches at liberty...this is to pry too much into the ark. Remember the text, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." Edmund Calamy

Confessions (Look up and read these articles)

New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith of 1833

Article XVII The Righteous and the Wicked Contrasted

Article XVIII Of the World to Come

London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

Chapter 31 Of the State of Man after Death and of the Resurrection of the Dead - paragraphs 1-3

Chapter 32 Of the Last Judgment - paragraphs 1-3

Spurgeon's Catechism

Questions:36-39

PART II EXPLORATION

Key Questions (*Answer in writing*)

1. Why is eschatology not used as a test of fellowship?
2. What are the three main subjects regarding the Lord's return?
3. What do all Christians believe about the future?
4. What are the differences between Pre-millennial, Post-millennial, and A-millennial?
5. What is the difference between Pre-Tribulation, Mid-Tribulation, and Post-Tribulation?
6. What are the two final judgments called?

7. Who takes part in the first resurrection?

8. Who is judged at the Great White Throne Judgment?

9. Explain why you believe there will be one or two final judgments.

10. Summarize article Chapter 32 paragraph 3 of the London confession in your own words.

Key Scriptures: (*Look up these verses and fill in the blanks*)

Matthew 24:21-22 Jesus called this time of destruction great _____ and that it will be so severe that if the days were not shortened there should no _____ be _____ but that for the elect's sake those days will be _____.

Matthew 24:27 The Lord's return is compared to _____.

Matthew 24:29-31 The Lord's return is said to be _____ the tribulation. He shall send his angels with a great sound of a _____ to _____ His _____.

Matthew 24:37 The Lord's return is compared to the days of _____ when they were _____ and _____ until the day Noah entered the ark and _____ until the flood came.

John 5:29 Jesus taught that there would be a resurrection of _____ and a resurrection of _____.

Acts 1:7 When the disciples asked if He was going to set up His kingdom immediately, He responded that it is not for you to _____ the _____ or the _____.

Acts 1:11 The angels promised the disciples that Christ would _____ in _____ as they saw Him leave.

Acts 24:15 Paul claimed that there would be a resurrection of the _____ both of the _____ and of the _____.

Romans 14:10-12 Paul told them that it was unnecessary to judge each other because we would all stand before the _____ of _____ and that every _____ shall _____ and every _____ to God and that _____ of us shall _____ of _____ to God.

II Corinthians 5:10 Paul reminded the saints that we must all _____ before the _____ of _____ to _____ according to our works whether _____ or _____.

I Thessalonians 5:2-4 The Lord's return comes as a _____ in the _____. Just as the people in Noah's day did not expect the flood coming so during this time they will be saying _____ and _____ until sudden _____ comes on them as _____ upon a _____ with _____ and they shall not _____ . We are warned ahead of time so that day should not _____ you as a _____ .

II Thessalonians 2:3 Paul told us that the Lord's return would not come until there is a _____ and that _____ of _____ be _____ .

II Timothy 4:1 Paul told Timothy that Jesus Christ would judge the _____ and the _____ at His _____ and His _____ .

Titus 2:13 Here the Lord's return is called the _____ and the Glorious _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ.

James 5:7-8 James reminds us to be _____ unto the _____ of the _____ for it is drawing _____ .

II Peter 3:10 Peter describes the Lord's return: that He would come as a _____ , that the _____ would _____ with a great _____ , that the elements would _____ , and the earth would be _____ up.

Revelation 20:4-5 Here those who did not worship the antichrist are said to reign with Christ for a _____ years. But the rest of the _____ lived not again until the _____ were _____. This is the _____ .

Revelation 20:11-14 Here John saw a _____ and the _____ stood before God and the dead were _____ every man

_____ to his _____. They are cast into the _____ of
_____ which is the _____.

Key Chapter(s) (*Read daily and summarize in your own words the meaning of the chapter*):

Revelation 20

II Thessalonians 2

PART III EXPECTATION

Memory verse: I Thessalonians 4:16

Personal Definition: (*Write a definition in your own words*)

Tribulation:

Millennium:

Personal Confession: (*Study the confessions and summarize them in your own words*)

Of Future things:

Meditation question: (*be prepared for discussion*)

Does the Bible teach that the return of Jesus Christ is imminent?

Extra Credit: Develop a general timeline of future events including: the millennium, the tribulation, the Lord's return, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Great White Throne Judgment, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.