

Eschatology: An Overview

(PowerPoint Program)

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The Six Loci of Historic Christian Systematic Theology

1. Theology: What the Bible Reveals about God
2. Anthropology: What the Bible Reveals about Mankind
3. Christology: What the Bible Reveals about Jesus Christ
4. Soteriology: What the Bible Reveals about Salvation (Also Called The Application of Christ's Redemption and Pneumatology, What the Bible Reveals about the Holy Spirit in Applying Christ's Redemption)
5. Ecclesiology: What the Bible Reveals about the Church
6. Eschatology: What the Bible Reveals about the Last Things or The End Times

The Six Loci of Historic Christian Systematic Theology: Biblical Derivation and Meaning of the Terms

1. **Theology** > θεός, *theos* → God + λόγος, *logos* → word, subject, message
2. **Anthropology** > ἄνθρωπος, *anthrōpos* → mankind + λόγος
3. **Christology** > Χριστός, *Christos* → Christ, the Anointed One + λόγος
4. **Soteriology** > σώζω, *sōzō* → save, keep safe, preserve, rescue, make well + λόγος; (cognate: σωτήρ, *sōtēr* → Savior, redeemer, deliverer, preserver).
Pneumatology > πνεῦμα, *pneuma* → Spirit (the Holy Spirit); wind, breath + λόγος
5. **Ecclesiology** > ἐκκλησία, *ekklēsia* → assembly, congregation, church > (ἐκ, *ek* → from, out of, away from + καλέω, *kaleō* → call, name, summon, invite → literally, [the ones] called out [by the Lord]) + λόγος
6. **Eschatology** > ἔσχατον, *eschaton* → last + λόγος

The Integration of the Six Loci of Historic Christian Systematic Theology

The Logic of the System and a Summary of the Six Main Doctrines of the Bible

1. **Theology:** Everything starts with God. Essential aspects of God include his triune being; that he is creator; owner; most holy, righteous, and just, such that nothing unholy ever enters his presence; steadfast love to the core of his being; and for his being completely perfect in every way.
2. **Anthropology:** God created humans perfect, even to a limited extent in his image, but the first ones disobeyed God; this sin, which has resulted in cosmic disharmony, so corrupted themselves and their posterity that we cannot come into God's presence and have eternal life without his help. In love, God gave his law to teach his will, his plan of restoration, and to restrain sin to prevent chaos in the now sinful and evil world. What's his plan?
3. **Christology:** Since God is love, he is unwilling to destroy sinful humans who bear his image, but to preserve his holiness, righteousness, and justice, he instituted his plan to have one perfect human being represent all others, fulfill all the law, and credit that righteousness to all people who believe in and follow him. To accomplish God's perfect will for human beings, that one righteous human also had to be divine; the only One who could fulfill all God's law is his only begotten Son, the Redeemer, Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, who did so in his First Coming to earth in his life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. The whole Bible focuses on Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus, and only Jesus (John 14:6), makes salvation, living forever in the presence of God, possible. How?
4. **Soteriology:** This explanation of salvation explains how the Third Person of the triune God, the Holy Spirit, applies the redemption and salvation Christ has provided to all individuals who believe in and follow Jesus.
5. **Ecclesiology:** This doctrine explains how God calls out, sets apart, brings together, and equips those whom he has redeemed in a new (i.e., renewed) covenant, the church, all those from every race and nation, to work together to most effectively bring to and implement the Good News of salvation throughout the whole world.
6. **Eschatology:** When the time is right in God's sight, he will bring the present age to a conclusion and restore his original plan in a new (i. e., renewed) heaven and new (renewed) earth. How he has already begun to do so, is seen in what the Bible reveals about the Last Things, or The End Times, including what occurs when we die and what occurs at the end of history, when Christ Jesus returns in his Second Coming.

What?! Why are we talking about eschatology at the beginning?

Systematic theology is supposed to be a logical progression.

1. Eschatology comes from the Greek word, ἔσχατον, transliterated *eschaton*, which means last. Why then are we beginning with eschatology, or at least part of it?
2. As theologians Anthony Hoekema and Jürgen Moltmann have observed, eschatology is at the core of Christian theology and the plan of God's redemption and renewal of his creation. In his classic text, *The Bible and the Future*, Hoekema writes, "PROPERLY TO UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY, WE must see it as an integral aspect of all of biblical revelation. Eschatology must not be thought of as something which is found only in, say, such Bible books as Daniel and Revelation, but as dominating and permeating the entire message of the Bible."
3. Hoekema then quotes Moltmann as follows: "From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium of the Christian faith as such, the key in which everything in it is set...Hence eschatology cannot really be only a part of Christian doctrine. Rather, the eschatological outlook is characteristic of all Christian proclamation, and of every Christian existence and of the whole Church." As we will see when we study the Biblical teaching of the church, the church is the major human means through which God is fulfilling his plan of redemption of his creation, a reality that has profound, extensive, and very practical implications and applications.

Theology: The Doctrine of God

Who is God; what is he like; and
what is he doing?

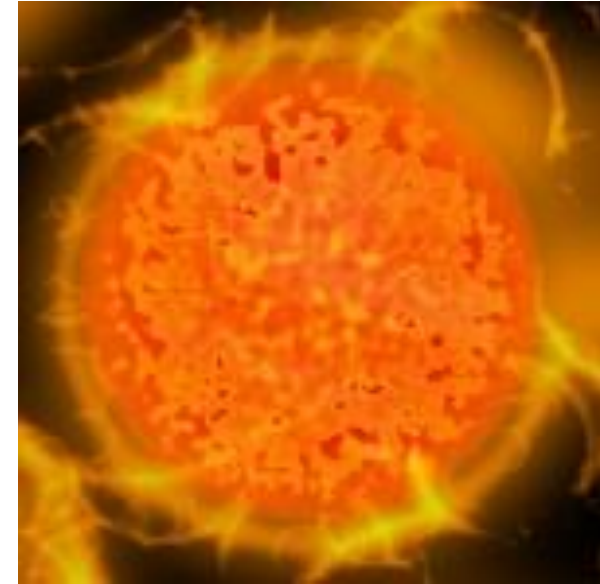
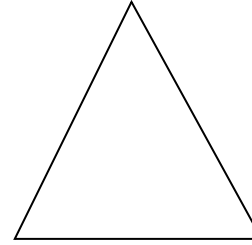
Theology: Who is God; what is he like; and what is he doing?

Theology is a study of all the Bible teaches about God, including who he is (e.g., triune, owner, sovereign, personal, transcendent and immanent), what he is like, and how he is involved with his creation and the goodness it had when he created it out of nothing. Theology includes what the Bible teaches about God's character, that while he is essentially love to the core of his being, that love issues forth in his other characteristics or attributes, including being Most Holy, righteous, and just. The Bible explains what those qualities of God's essence are like and their significance to his creation, including to us. This section comprises highlights, implications, and very practical applications of the Biblical doctrine of theology. The study of who God is and what he is like is the essential starting point of all theology. In order to make sense out of life and to understand Christianity, including the rest of the six main doctrines, we must know who God truly is, what he is like, and how he is engaged in his creation, especially with us human beings who alone bear his image and are the crown of his creation.

Theology: Who is God; what is he like; and what is he doing?

God Is Triune

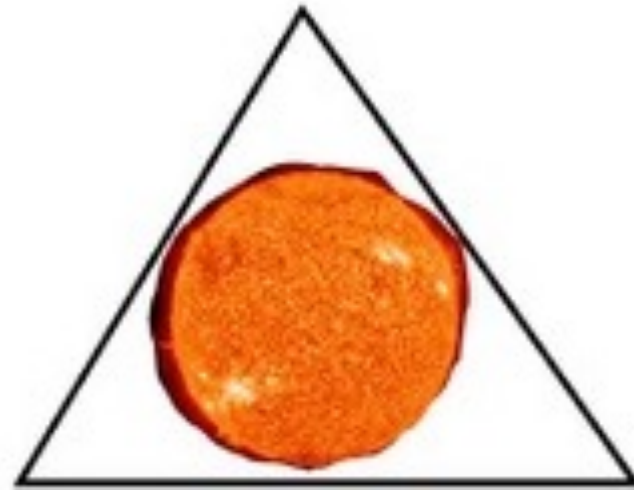
- In the triune God, three distinct Persons share one substance. God is one.
- All three Persons coexist at the same time and have for eternity but are one in essence.
- What phenomena and graphic descriptions exist to help us understand God's triune being?
- A point does occur where all three forms of water do coexist simultaneously in thermodynamic equilibrium at a singular temperature and pressure called the triple point, but not at atmospheric pressures we experience.
- Of all the symbols for the Trinity, the sun is one of the best, for it shows that it is reasonable for an entity to have three simultaneously distinct components that simultaneously share one substance. (Romans 1:20)



Theology: Who is God; what is he like; and what is he doing?

God Is Triune

- To avoid confusion, the sun symbol should be within the triangle.
- Students have mentioned other symbols that demonstrate the reasonableness of something being three and one at the same time including the following:
 - + Colors composed of the three primary colors.
 - + Light being composed of energy, heat, and pressure.
- **Question for Reflection and Discussion:**
Do any others come to your mind?

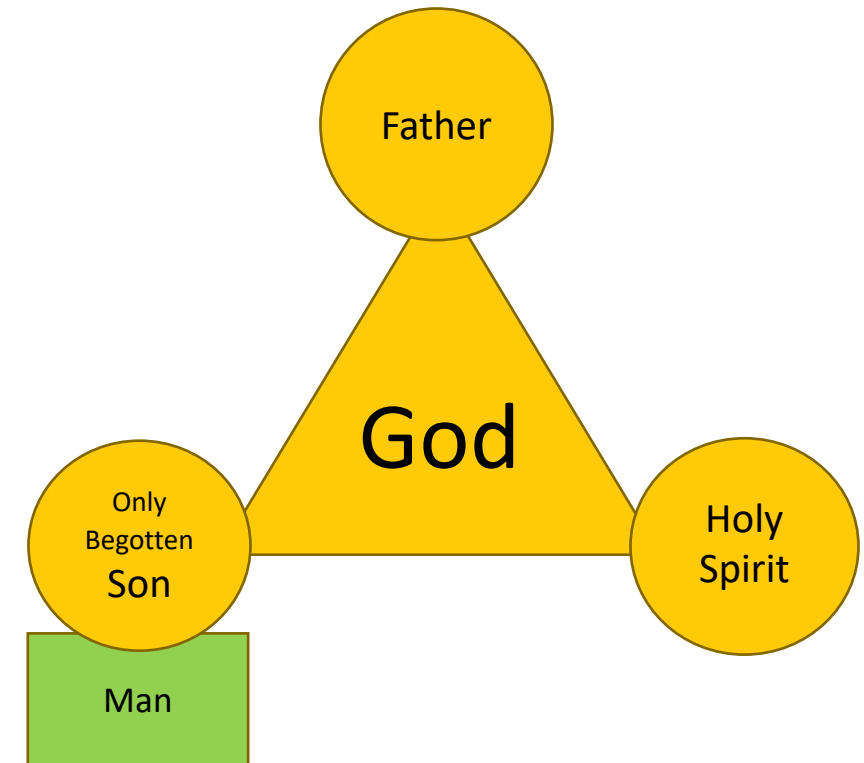


Christology: Who is Jesus Christ; what is he like; and what is he doing?

Characteristics of Jesus Christ

- “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me [Christ], because the LORD has anointed me [Christ] to preach good news to the poor....” (Isaiah 61:1-2; See also Daniel 7:13)
- “He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:
¹⁸ ‘The Spirit [Holy Spirit] of the Lord [Father] is on me [Christ], because he has anointed me [Christ] to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,
¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.’
²⁰Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’” (Luke 4:16-21)
- “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,...” (Matthew 28:19)
- “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

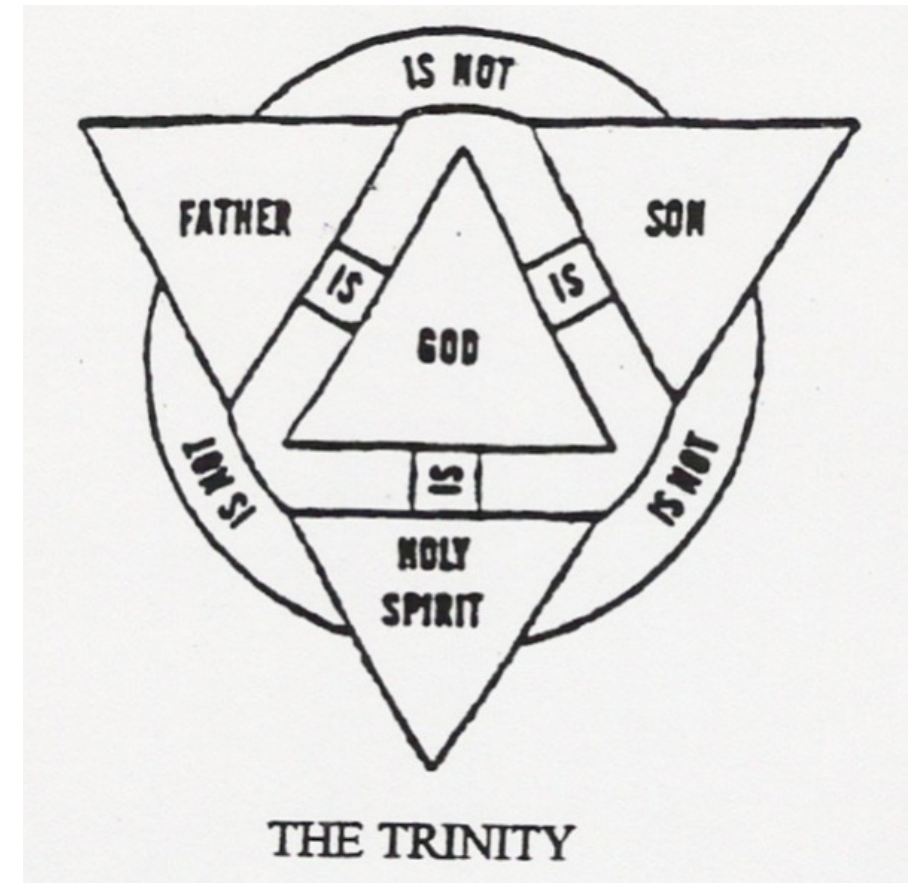


Theology: Who is God; what is he like; and what is he doing?

God Is Triune

- In addition to symbols from the natural order, that God has built into his creation to point to him (Romans 1:20), humans have made graphic symbols to try to visualize and understand the Biblical revelation of God as being three distinct Persons who share one substance, one essence.
- Here is one ancient symbol, referred to as the shield of the Holy Trinity, that has been found in medieval stained glass. The words, usually in Latin, read logically in any direction.

The Shield of the Holy Trinity



Theology: The Doctrine of God

Who is God; what is he like; and
what is he doing?

God's Incommunicable Characteristics

God's Incommunicable Characteristics

- Infinite (2 Chronicles 2:6; Psalm 113:4-6; Isaiah 55:11)
- Transcendent (2 Chronicles 2:6; Psalm 113:4-6; James 1:17a) and Immanent (Psalm 113:7-9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Matthew 28:20)
- Creator (Genesis 1:1 [בָּרָא (*bārā'*) create; i.e., without using preexisting elements. Throughout the Bible, God is the only subject of the verb בָּרָא (*bārā'*) (*ex nihilo*, out of nothing) = κτίζω (*ktizō*) Revelation 4:11. Humans make; only God creates.]; Colossians 1:16-17)
- Perfect, including totally good (Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 2:22:31; Psalm 18:30; Mark 10:18)
- Eternal (Psalm 90:2; 102:12; 25-28; Romans 1:20)
- Everywhere Present (2 Chronicles 2:6; Psalm 113:4-9; 139:7-12)
- Independent (Psalm 33:11; 115:3; John 5:26)
- Immutable, Unchangeable (Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17b)

Theology: The Doctrine of God

Who is God; what is he like; and
what is he doing?

God's Communicable Characteristics

God's Communicable Characteristics, Attributes

- A living being, spirit, personal and relational (Genesis 1:1-2; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 6:15b-16)
- Holy (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; Leviticus 19:2)
- Perfect (Deuteronomy 32:3-4; Zephaniah 3:5; Matthew 5:48)
- Goodness (Psalm 86:5; 100:5a; Mark 10:18)
- Love, including his grace, mercy, patience (Isaiah 54:8-10; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8, 19)
- Knowledge (Isaiah 46:10; 55:8-9; 1 John 3:20)
- Wisdom (Psalm 104:24; Jeremiah 10:11-12; Romans 11:33-36)
- Righteous, just (Deuteronomy 32:4; Jeremiah 9:24; Romans 12:17-21, esp. 19)
- True (2 Samuel 7: 28; Revelation 15:3; 16:7; 1 John 5:20)
- Faithful (Psalm 100:5b; 146:5-6; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Revelation 1:5)
- Sovereign, including Power, Owner, Freedom (Job 42:2; Isaiah 43:13; Ephesians 1:17-22a; Exodus 9:13-16; Genesis 31:6, 29; 49:3; Isaiah 40:29-31; Romans 1:20); Owner (Job 41:11b; Psalm 24:1-2; Exodus 6:7-8); Freedom (Psalm 115:3; Proverbs 21:1; Revelation 4:11 (receive [λαμβάνω (*lambanō*)] here better translated take, take hold of, or grasp: No one gives power to God!); Genesis 2:16-17; Psalm 119:45; Isaiah 61:1; Galatians 1:4; 5:1; Romans 8:21; Philippians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 10:29; 1 Peter 2:16)

Theology: The Doctrine of God

Who is God; what is he like; and
what is he doing?

Key Aspects of God's Other Work

Election and Predestination, God and the Good Angels, Theophanies, God versus the Evil Angels, Discerning God's Will, God's Providence, What Does It Mean to Fear God?

Anthropology: The Doctrine of Mankind

Who are we; what are we like; and
what are we doing?

Anthropology: Who are we; what are we really like in God's sight; and what are we doing?

Anthropology is a study of all the Bible teaches about mankind, including who we are and what we are like, that God created human beings in his image (and what that means) and that the first humans were made good, but that they disobeyed God, ignoring his warning of what would occur if they did not obey, resulting in a total corruption of human nature issuing in a disastrously destructive four-fold disharmony: between oneself and God; within oneself; with and among other human beings; and throughout God's creation, such that all creation groans in as in travail. (Romans 8:22) Thus, sinful mankind is separated from God who is most holy, but because God is also love to the core of his being, (1 John 4:8) he is unwilling to destroy the crown of his creation. How does he bring people into his holy presence without compromising his integrity or being unrighteous? We see how in our study of Christology. This section comprises highlights, implications, and very practical applications of the Biblical doctrine of anthropology.

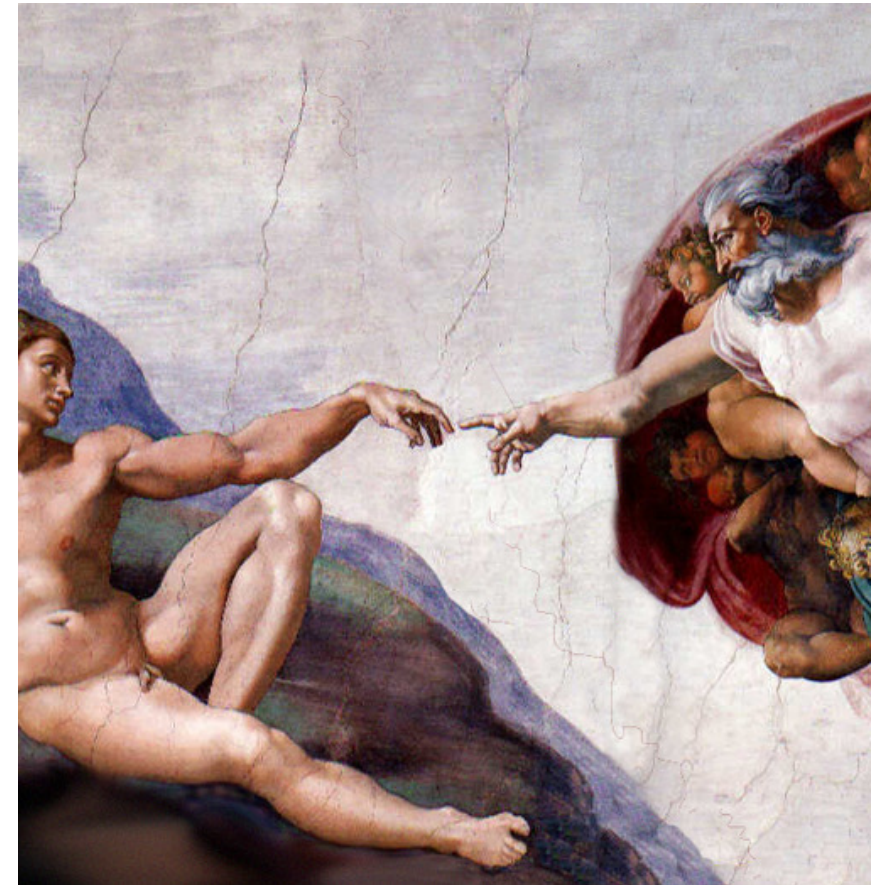
Anthropology: Who are we, and what are we really like in God's sight?

Characteristics of Mankind Made in God's Image

- “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’
²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
²⁸God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” (Genesis 1:26-28)

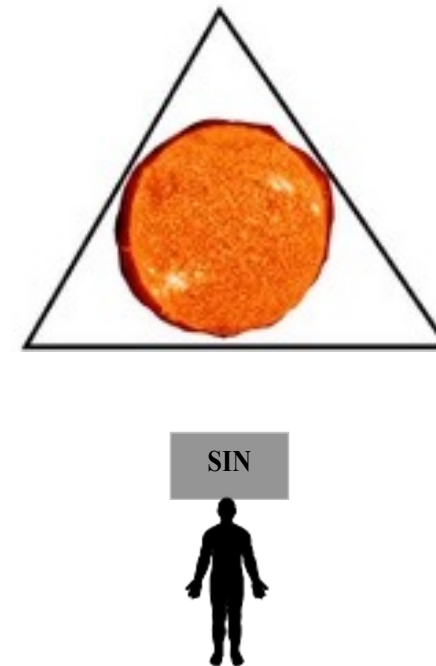
In his famous painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican in Rome, Michelangelo portrays the perfect relationship that man had at first when God created him.

Meaning and Practical Benefits



Anthropology: Who are we; what are we really like in God's sight; and what are we doing?

- God created mankind in his image and perfect.
- But humans sinned against God, disobeying his Word and his will.
- The disobedience, sin, corrupted human nature and puts a barrier between human beings and God.
- Unchanged we are unfit for, and unable to have, fellowship with God.



Anthropology: Who are we, and what are we really like in God's sight?

Characteristics of Mankind Made in God's Image

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Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Where did human beings come from?
 - a. The origin of mankind is in the counsel of God.
 - b. Mankind is an immediate creation of God, not development over eons.
 - c. Man was created perfect and at first lived in perfect harmony with God.
2. The nature of man taught in God's Word is significantly different from what is taught in secular philosophy.
 - a. Man's nature is a dichotomy—body and soul.
 - b. Note our special assignment, commanded.

Anthropology: Who are we; what are we like; and what are we doing?

The Impact of Sin on God's Creation

4. Sin caused disharmony throughout all creation, beginning between humans and God. Thus, sin is extremely serious; indeed, it is inexcusable, but it is not unforgivable, thanks be to our most holy yet also all-loving triune God, who has provided the only way for that forgiveness: by being credited with the righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith in him, thus reconciling us with God, which is the main focus of the Bible (Romans 4:16-25; John 14:6) and Christian theology.

+ "...in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans 8:20-23)

The Impact of Sin on God's Creation

4. a. Disharmony between man and God



Anthropology: Who are we; what are we like; and what are we doing?

The Impact of Sin on God's Creation

4. a. Sin caused disharmony between oneself and God.

1- "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden."

(Genesis 3:8)

2- "...be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.'" (Exodus 19:11-12)

The Impact of Sin on God's Creation

4. Sin is enormously destructive and has caused a four-fold cosmic disharmony

a. between oneself and God,

b. within human relationships,

c. within oneself, and

d. throughout all creation.

Anthropology: Who are we; what are we like; and what are we doing?

For an explanation of each of the characteristics see the corresponding essay on my Website, www.fromacorntooak12com also www.edwardseely.com.

Characteristics of Mankind—Made in God’s Image: Including God’s Communicable Characteristics

- A living being, spirit, personal and relational
- Holy
- Perfect and good
- Love, grace, mercy, patience (longsuffering)
- Knowledge
- Wisdom
- Righteous, just
- True, faithful
- Sovereign, powerful
- Freedom within limits

Characteristics of Mankind—Made in God’s Image: Common Terms in Theology

6. a. Comprehensive Sense (Natural):
Obscured but Not Lost by Sin
- 1) A spiritual being
 - 2) Immortal
 - 3) Capacity for love, fellowship
 - 4) Moral
 - 5) Rational
 - 6) Dominion over lower creation
 - 7) Freedom within limits

Here we have one of the Biblical bases for respecting and loving all human beings: every human being bears the image of God. We cannot “look down our noses” at, mistreat, hate, or be unloving toward any other human being—that person bears God’s image! (Cf. James 3:9-10)

Anthropology: Who are we; what are we like; and what are we doing?

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- Righteous, just
- True, faithful
- Sovereign
- Power
- Freedom within limits

Characteristics of Mankind—Made in God’s Image: Common Terms in Theology

6. b. Restricted Sense (Moral):
Lost by Sin but Restored in Christ
- 1) True knowledge (John 8:31-32; 14:6-7)
 - 2) Righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - 3) Holiness (1 Peter 2:5,9)

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Anthropology: Who are we; what are we like; and what are we doing?

Characteristics of Mankind

- “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5)
- “there is no one who does not sin.” (1 Kings 8:46)
- “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,...” (Romans 3:23)
- “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.” (Romans 7:18)
- “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.” (Romans 8:5-8)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- 2- DISCUSS: What practical implications and applications of this Biblical anthropology do you notice? Add the following if not mentioned.
- f- Maintaining this realistic Biblical perspective protects the whole society, including God's people, from harm due to an unrealistic anthropology. Since police are sinners too, monitor and correct problems, but don't eliminate the department.



Cartoon source: *Loveland Reporter-Herald*, 6/12/20, p. 4A

Anthropology: Who are we; what are we like; and what are we doing?

Other Characteristics of Mankind

- God created human beings male and female.
- The sinful human nature leads people to commit sins, acts of disobedience to God that harm themselves and others.
- One current example and major issue today is homosexuality, one aspect is transgenderism, which like all sins is progressive. Many transgender people, especially those who go to the extent of having surgery deeply regret having done so. Some even go farther. The photos on the right are of “Sally,” who was born male and still has, and always will have, the male XY chromosomes despite surgeries and female hormone treatments.
- Source of the photos:
<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/TS-II.html>

Practical Aspects of the Doctrine



Anthropology: What are some of the practical implications and applications of this doctrine?

The Doctrine of Mankind

- The progressive aspect of sin, especially sexual sin, is seen in this illustration of transgenderism, more scientifically accurately: transsexualism. (See LGBTQ+ papers on the [Current Issues](#) page of the [From Acorn to Oak 12](#) Website. Dissatisfied with his transposition from male to “female,” he dishonored God and tried to become an animal, not insignificantly a reptile; he dehumanized himself. Very sad.
- Photo source: <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/433724>
- Yet, hope exists if he'll turn to Christ Jesus.

Practical Aspects of the Doctrine



Christology: The Doctrine of Christ

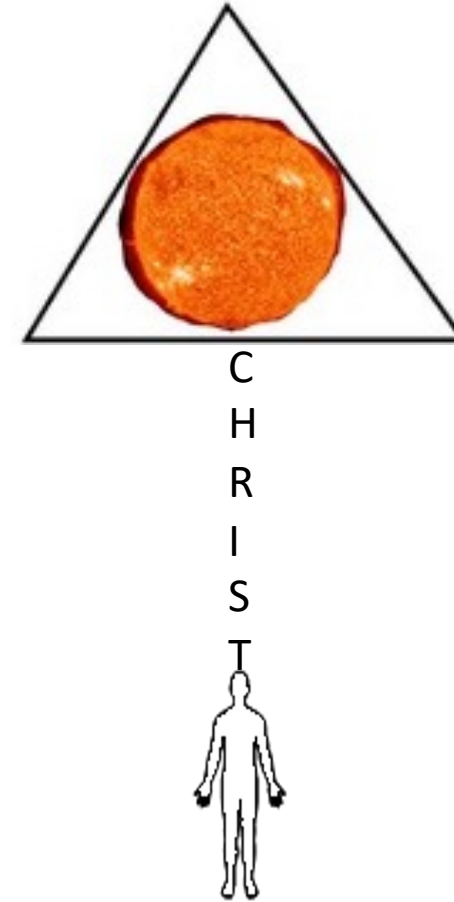
Who is Jesus Christ;
what is he like; and what is he doing?

Christology: Who is Jesus Christ; what is he like; and what is he doing?

Christology shows how the whole Bible is God's progressive plan of saving sinful human beings, made very good and in God's very image but who are now unworthy to be in his presence, and how that plan points to and is fulfilled in Christ Jesus of heaven and Nazareth. Christology engages all God's Word teaches about who Jesus Christ is (e.g., the only-begotten Son of the Father, thus the Second Person of the triune God, that he has two natures, being 100% human and at the same time 100% divine, thus with pure love coming from the core of his being); what he is like (e.g., that he did not sin and kept the entire law of God perfectly and that he loves and died for all people, but that his death is efficacious only for those who truly believe in him); what he came to do (e.g., how he is God's only provision for reconnecting humans with God who is most holy, that his righteousness is credited to those who believe in and follow him); that he was resurrected from the dead, giving assurance of our resurrection; that he now reigns; and that he is coming again to complete God's plan of redemption in him for all creation. In Christ we see how greatly God desires to be involved in our lives, because he loves us. In Christ God has provided the only means for our experiencing his most holy presence, while maintaining his righteousness and justice, which he provided at such great cost to himself in the most wonderful demonstration of love ever! Christ's sovereign power is sufficient to transform the life of any sinner; Christ's sovereign power can pull any human being out of any condition. Christ Jesus has defeated Satan and bound him so he is powerless to stop the spread of the Gospel through all nations and to all people, whom God wills to be in his Kingdom. Christ Jesus is Lord over all. Salvation is available to all who believe in and follow Jesus Christ. This section comprises highlights, implications, and very practical applications of the Biblical doctrine of Christology. Since the whole Bible is about God's creation and plan of redemption in Christ, each of the other loci of systematic theology also include information about Jesus Christ. In your study of Christ, be sure to see those sections as well.

Christology: Who is Jesus Christ; what is he like; and what is he doing?

- Because of God's great love for the humans who bear his image, he did not want to destroy them/us.
- But because he is holy, holy, holy and just, he could not allow sinful people to come into his presence and live with him.
- So at great cost to himself, he sent his only begotten Son to accept the punishment due to us for our sinfulness. (John 3:16)
- By faith in Christ, we are credited with Christ's righteousness, and the barrier of sin that separated us from God has been removed. (Romans 4)
- The human logo clothed in white symbolizes God's cleansing of his faithful followers in Christ (Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18; Revelation 3:4-6; 7:13-17).



Christology: Who is Jesus Christ; what is he like; and what is he doing?

The Saving Work of Jesus Christ



Meaning and Practical Benefits

6. Jesus' Exaltation Includes Four Key Aspects.

a. Jesus' Resurrection also means that

8) people in Christ are at peace with God.

a) "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split." (Matthew 27:50-51)

b) "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." (Romans 5:1-2)

c) Cleansed by Christ, human beings who believe in and follow him, now have access to fellowship with God, as Adam and Eve enjoyed before they sinned, after which they had to leave the presence of God (Genesis 3:23; cf. Exodus 24:1-2; 26:33; Leviticus 16:1-2; Hebrews 6:19-20; 9:6-8; 10:19-25; Ephesians 3:12), who is not only love but who is also holy, holy, holy and who will not allow sin and evil in his presence.

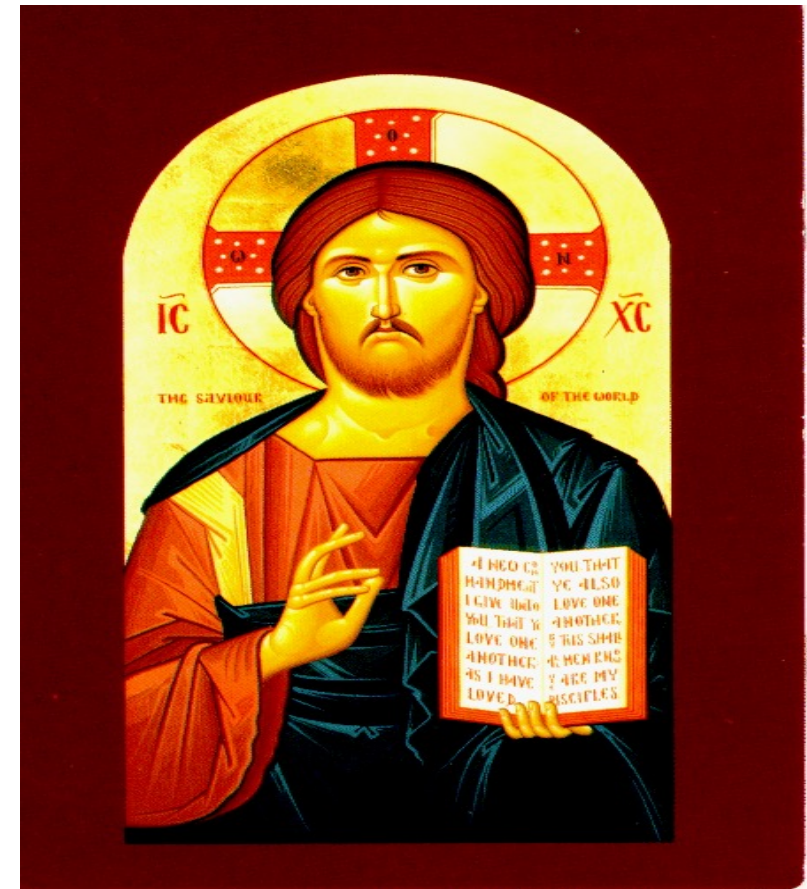
Christology: Who is Jesus Christ; what is he like; and what is he doing? Pantokrator

The Saving Work of Christ

- “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty [παντοκράτωρ (*pantokratōr*)].’” (Revelation 1:8)
- “...and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.” (Ephesians 1:19-23)
- “who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.” (1 Peter 3:22)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

6. Jesus' Exaltation Includes Four Key Aspects.
 - c. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God, the right hand being a figure in Scripture symbolizing power, and here also glory. See the next slide for an explanation of this icon.



Christology: Who is Jesus Christ; what is he like; and what is he doing? Pantokrator

The Greek word παντοκράτωρ (*pantokratōr*) means almighty, omnipotent. It comes from two Greek words, πᾶν (*pan*), meaning all, whole, every, each, everyone, everything and κράτος (*kratos*) strength, power, might, force, dominion, authority, rule, sovereignty. The word is used by Jesus to refer to himself in Revelation 1:8, and it is used to describe him in other Bible passages as well. The letters, IC and XC, to the left and right as one faces the icon of Jesus, are the first and last letters in the Greek spelling of his name, Jesus (IC) and Christ (XC). The letters thereby further indicate who the icon represents: Jesus Christ. His great power is also symbolized in his right hand, a Biblical symbol of power (most people being right-handed thus recognize the meaning). The first two fingers represent Jesus Christ as the second person of the Trinity, and the two fingers and thumb touching represent the whole Godhead, the Trinity. This icon of Christ Jesus, which appears in the dome over the sanctuary of the Eastern Orthodox churches, provides further beautiful symbolism pointing to the powerful teaching of God's Word, which the Lord is holding and which points to and in essence is he himself. (John 1:1ff.) The dome, representing heaven, indicates that the congregation is worshiping not only with the rest of the global church militant (e.g., Ephesians 6:10-18; *op cit* below, Ecclesiology) but also with the whole church triumphant who are with Christ Jesus, indeed with the triune God. (Revelation 4-5) We worship the Lord, under whom God has placed everything else. (Ephesians 1:19-23 et al.)

Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation
also called

Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
and
The Application of Redemption

Who is the Holy Spirit, and what does he do?
How is the redemption of Jesus Christ applied?

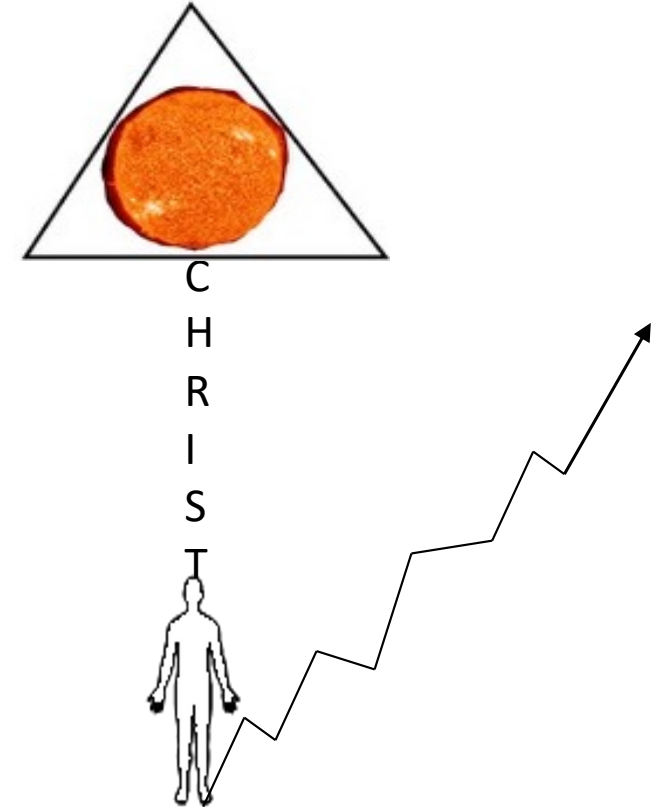
Soteriology: How is the redemption of Jesus Christ applied?

Who is the Holy Spirit and what does he do?

Soteriology is a study of all the Bible teaches about how the redemption Christ provides, is applied to, and becomes operational in human beings. Soteriology explains the process of salvation (> Greek, σώζω [sōzō] → save), including the application of Christ's work in the lives of individual people by the operation of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the triune God (e.g., providing the regeneration, new birth in Christ that brings a human being out of spiritual death into eternal life and helping the believer grow in sanctification, i.e., becoming holy and maturing in Christ-likeness), and the Spirit's provision of specific gifts for and fruit of ministry that glorifies God and accomplishes his purposes. Part of what this means for those who've been struggling with sin is that they have a new nature; the old has gone, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17) including a new identity and freedom in the power of the risen and reigning Christ! This doesn't mean for any of us that we instantly become all we should be; sanctification is a life-long development in Christ-likeness. Belief in Christ Jesus as our Savior and Lord places us in a new position, holy to God, but we need to develop in that holy state in cooperation with the Holy Spirit in a life-long maturation process in Christ. Is it easy? Not always. Is it possible? Yes with God's help! He helps us directly through his Holy Spirit, who intercedes for us with God the Father, and also through his church. This section comprises highlights, implications, and very practical applications of the Biblical doctrine of Soteriology. Since the Holy Spirit is actively involved in the other loci of systematic theology be sure to see those sections as well, in particular the section in Theology pertaining to the Trinity.

Soteriology: How is the redemption of Jesus Christ applied? Who is the Holy Spirit and what does he do?

- This fourth doctrine, the fourth main theme in God's plan of redemption, taught in the Bible is called by three different terms:
 1. Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation
 2. Pneumatology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit
 3. The application of Christ's redemption
- All three terms are accurate, for all describe the work of the Holy Spirit, the main agent in the process of making Christ's redemptive work operative in the lives of human beings.



Soteriology: How is the redemption of Jesus Christ applied?

Who is the Holy Spirit and what does he do?

The Doctrine of Salvation

- ““Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.”” (Isaiah 42:1)
- “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’
¹⁵Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John consented.
¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.
¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:13-17)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

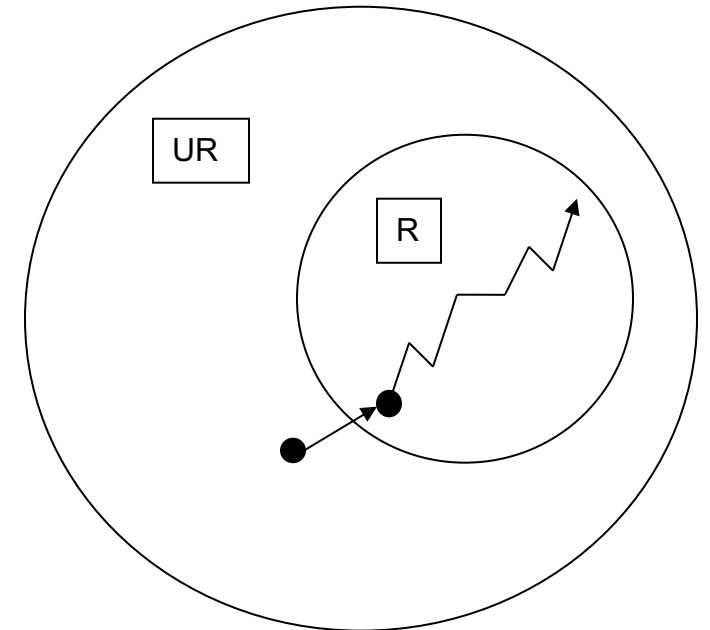


The dove represents the Holy Spirit. The trefoil orb indicates the Holy Spirit is part of the triune God. (Cf. Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 3:16-17)

Soteriology: How is the redemption of Jesus Christ applied? Who is the Holy Spirit and what does he do? Regeneration, Justification, and Sanctification

The large circle represents the world's population. When a person has been regenerated, or given the new nature by the operation of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3; Titus 3:5), faith is made possible. This faith is what justifies a person in God's sight. (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17) God declares the person is just (justified) or righteous in his sight.

Justification moves the believer from the realm of those who are unregenerated (UR in the graphic) to a new state or relationship with God. The justified person becomes part of God's covenant community (those who are regenerated, having received the new nature, i.e., been born again, represented in the graphic by R), existing within the world but not part of the world.



Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church

What or who is the church, and
What is its purpose?

Ecclesiology: What or who is the church, and what is it for?

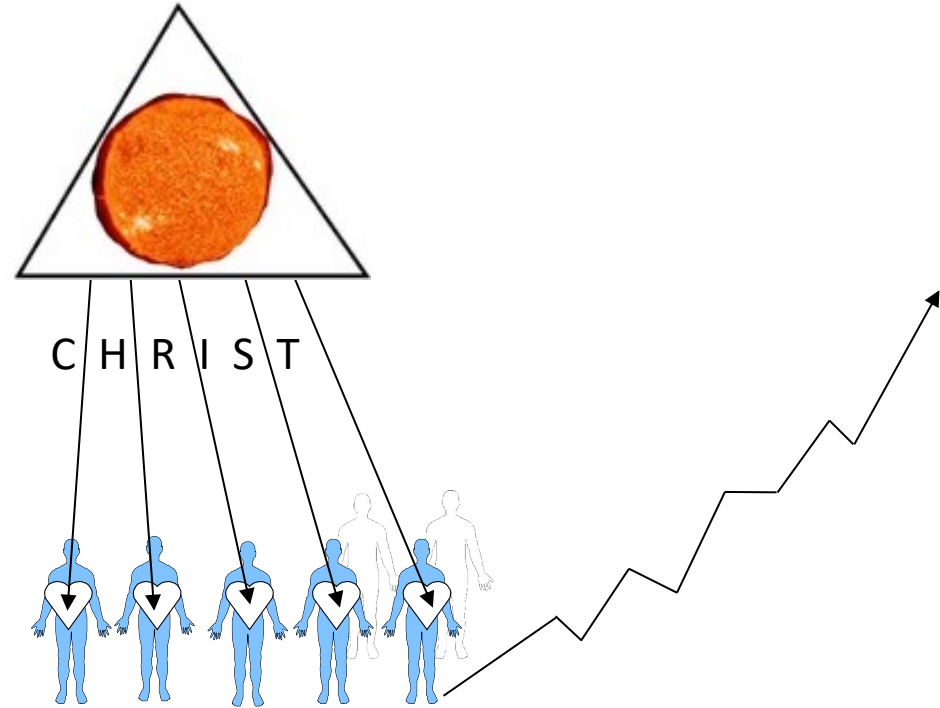
Ecclesiology is the study of all the Bible teaches about the church (> Greek: ἐκκλησία, *ekklēsia* → assembly, congregation, church > [ἐκ, *ek* → from, out of, away from + καλέω, *kaleō* → call, name, summon, invite → literally, {the ones} called out [by the Lord]), those saved individuals who are called out by God to be holy, i.e., separated to him, and gathered together as his church. The church is those whom God will employ as the main means through whom he will work to accomplish his redemption of his creation. The church is both an organism, the body of Christ consisting of his believers united in and called to serve God, and an organization, as the many individuals organize to accomplish with planned purpose what they could not do individually. Through Holy Spirit-guided worship, learning, and nurture the church grows more Christ-like and serves the Lord ever more effectively in the mission God has given it to bring the Good News of redemption and reconciliation with God to every nation, tribe, people, and language, for it is God's will that all come into his Kingdom. (Revelation 7:7; 1 Timothy 2:4) This section comprises highlights, implications, and very practical applications of the Biblical doctrine of Ecclesiology.

Ecclesiology: What or who is the church, and what is it for?

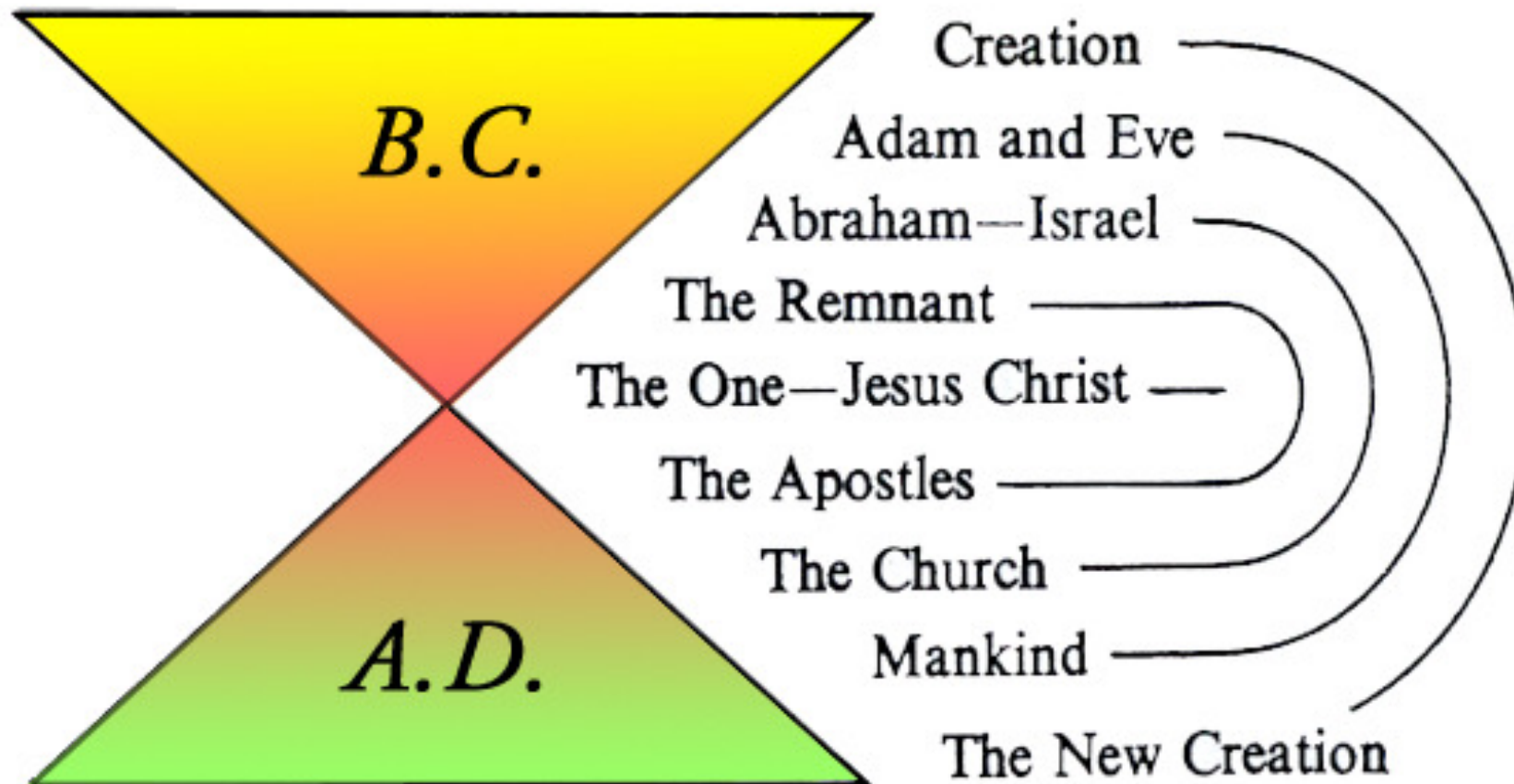
The church is the primary means through whom God is working to accomplish his redemptive purposes and is especially helpful in discerning the will of God. He has given us the Bible through both the Old Testament church and the New Testament church, though since the end of the first century A.D., he is no longer giving any new revelation. He not only helps us directly through the Holy Spirit and his Word but also indirectly through others. Involving others, he primarily uses fellow believers whom the Bible calls the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:12; Colossians 1:18,24) to guide us.

Ecclesiology: What or who is the church, and what is it for?

- In order to accomplish more corporately than could be done individually, God calls his saved people who are being sanctified to work together in a great global mission, to be the main means through whom he will accomplish his plan of redeeming his creation through Christ Jesus.
- Four important distinctions about the church should be remembered.
 1. The church is the visible manifestation of the covenant God made with Abraham.
 2. The church is both militant and triumphant.
 3. The church is both visible and invisible.
 4. The church is both an organism and an organization.



The Hourglass View of Biblical Theology: God's Plan of Redemption in Jesus Christ



The Hourglass View of Biblical Theology: God's Plan of Redemption in Jesus Christ

This vertical and graphic timeline is called the hourglass view of Biblical history and theology, which is shown in the accompanying [Bible Digest PowerPoint program](#) with its [notebook](#), a course designed to teach an overview of the Bible. The hourglass illustration has enabled many to understand and remember the overview of the Bible's message. As Arnold B. Rhoades has well-written in his book, *The Mighty Acts of God*, "Jesus Christ is the focal point of biblical history and of the Christian's personal history. The Christian takes his stand with Christ at the crossroads of history, and looks backward from Christ to creation and forward from Christ to the New Creation....The hourglass representation, therefore, begins at the broad base of creation and moves in ever narrowing fashion to the human family; to the Covenant People; to the preserved remnant; and to Jesus Christ, the One in whom the purpose of God is fulfilled. Then out from the One the story moves in ever expanding fashion to the Apostles; to the church; to mankind; and finally to the broad base of the New Creation.

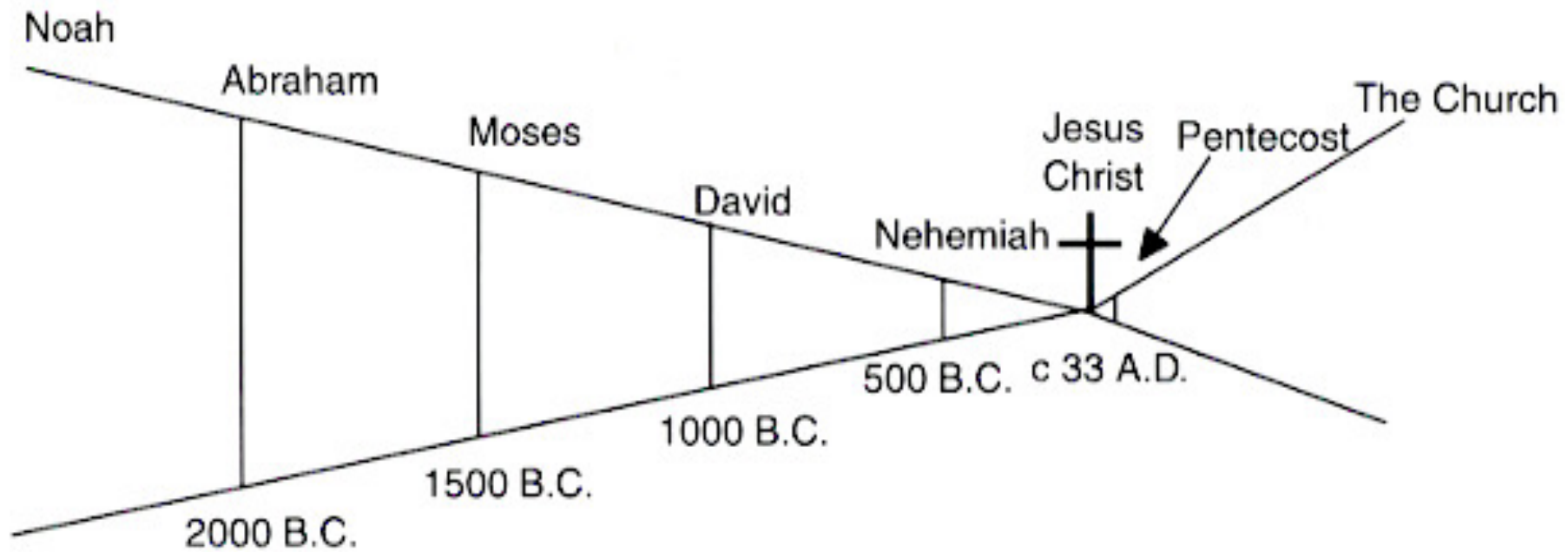
Continued...

An Overview of the Overview

“The parallels between the events B.C. and the events A.D. are not accidental. As God created in the beginning and his creation was good, so he will create a new heaven and a new earth. As there was a beginning, so will there be an end; and it will not be a dead-end but a new beginning. All evil will be put down and God will reign forever. As the story of Adam and Eve clearly shows the involvement of all men in the problem of evil, so the gospel is directed to all men, for their predicament is essentially the same in every generation. As God called into being a special people, Israel, as the instrument of his saving purpose, so he called into being the New Israel (the Christian church) as the Body of Christ. As there was a remnant within Old Israel, so there was a remnant that received Jesus as the promised Messiah and Savior and became the nucleus of the expanding church. Jesus Christ is the One who is the key to the whole story of salvation.” (Arnold B. Rhodes, *The Mighty Acts of God* [Richmond, VA: The CLC Press, 1964], pp. 19-20. The male pronouns of course are, as throughout the Bible and history until recent times, used generically to include females as well as males.)

The timeline on the following slide is an adaptation of the hourglass view of Biblical history and theology. The hourglass illustration helps to understand and remember the overview of the Bible’s message within its historical framework.

An Overview of the Overview



Ecclesiology: What or who is the church, and what is it for?

Doctrine of the Church

- “...Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand....And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.” (Nehemiah 8:2-3)
- “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb...And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’
All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They...worshiped God, saying: ‘Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!’” (Revelation 7:9-12)

As seen throughout the Bible and this video the church has always been for all ages and nations. This almost three hour worship service is at the Chikuluti CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian) in Malawi. Their worship is in the Chichewa language.

Meaning and Practical Benefits



View at: <https://youtu.be/nMAHqs5SB5Q>

Eschatology: The Doctrine of the Last Things

What will occur at the end—the end of my life, and the end of history?

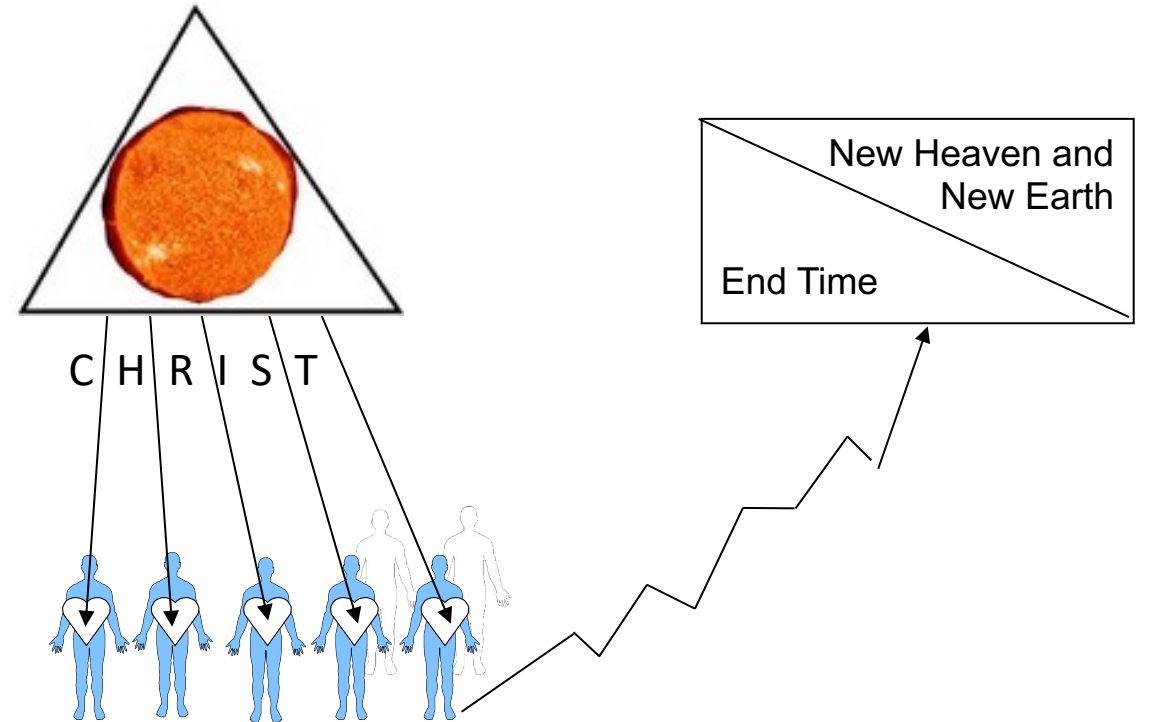
Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

- **Eschatology** informs us of all the Bible teaches about the end (> Greek: ἔσχατον, *eschaton* → last), involving several main categories, including inaugurated and future, individual and corporate/cosmic, i.e., the latter referring to a human being's own personal end (specifically what occurs when he or she dies) and the end of history (specifically what occurs at the end of time when Jesus returns in his Second Coming)? This subject is important for many reasons, including first of all because it's part of God's Word and that a key aspect of this doctrine for everyone is hope. A study of the Biblical teaching in eschatology is primarily about the great hope we have in Christ, and it's not entirely a future hope but one that is already being experienced in part, resulting in what theologian Anthony Hoekema calls "an inaugurated eschatology," indicating that some aspects of the Kingdom of God (cf. Luke 17:21) and the end times are already here, blessings currently being enjoyed by the redeemed community in Christ, but not yet in their fullest, the completion of which is yet to come. This section comprises highlights, implications, and very practical applications of the Biblical doctrine of Eschatology, which already begins with certainty beginning in the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 3:15; Psalm 22, e.g., v. 31, all fulfilled in Christ). Our hope is thus a realized expectation, which will be fully experienced when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ returns.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

As we saw earlier, the whole Bible is about eschatology, pointing to, implementing, and explaining God's great plan of redemption in Christ Jesus. Three main aspects of the Biblical teaching about eschatology are:

1. Inaugurated eschatology and cosmic warfare
2. Future eschatology: Individual and corporate/cosmic
3. Interpretation of eschatological Bible passages and hope for the persecuted church

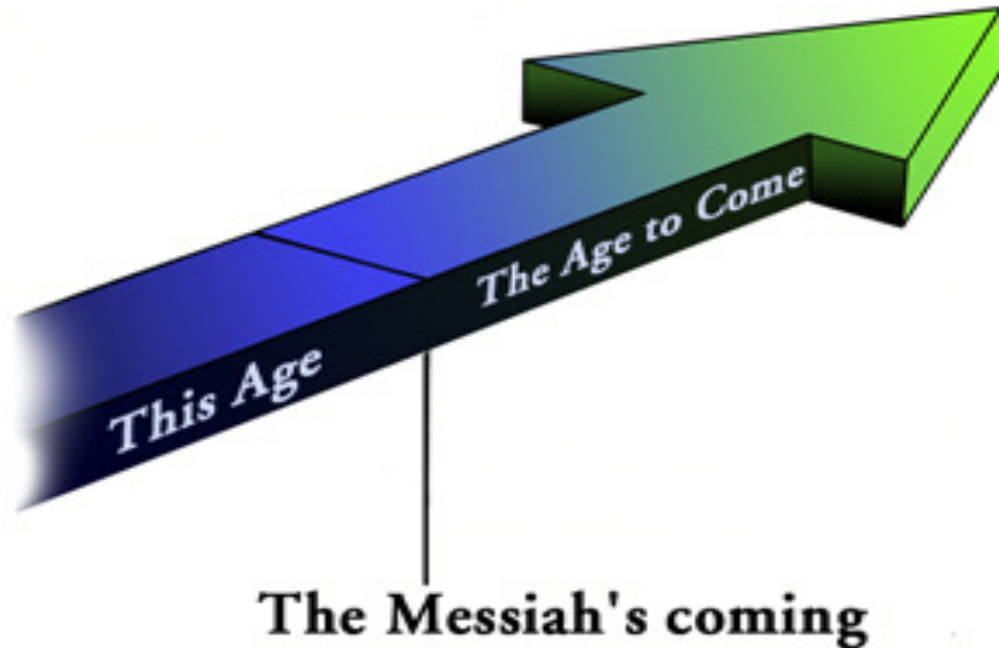


Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

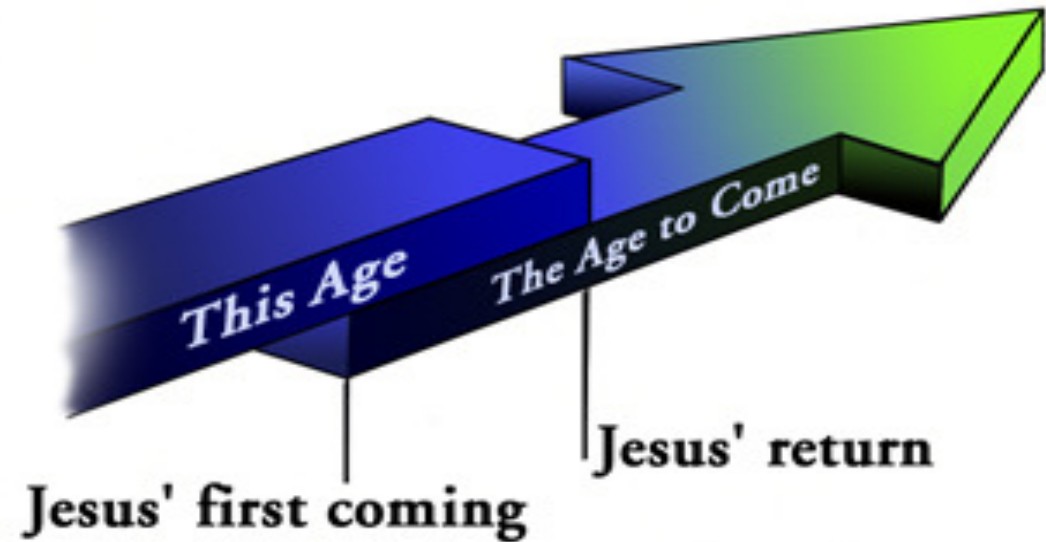
1. As theologians Anthony Hoekema and Jürgen Moltmann have observed, eschatology is at the core of Christian theology and the plan of God's redemption and renewal of his creation. In his classic text, *The Bible and the Future*, Hoekema writes, "PROPERLY TO UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY, WE must see it as an integral aspect of all of biblical revelation. Eschatology must not be thought of as something which is found only in, say, such Bible books as Daniel and Revelation, but as dominating and permeating the entire message of the Bible."
2. Hoekema then quotes Moltmann as follows: "From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium of the Christian faith as such, the key in which everything in it is set...Hence eschatology cannot really be only a part of Christian doctrine. Rather, the eschatological outlook is characteristic of all Christian proclamation, and of every Christian existence and of the whole Church." As we saw when we studied the Biblical teaching of the church, the church is the major human means through which God is fulfilling his plan of redemption of his creation, a reality that has profound, extensive, and very practical implications and applications.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Old Testament View



New Testament Additional Revelation



Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Anthony Hoekema well explains the reality depicted in the preceding diagram. “With characteristic prophetic perspective, the Old Testament [OT] prophets intermingled items relating to the first coming of Christ with items relating to Christ’s second coming. Not until New Testament [NT] times would it be revealed that what was thought of in [OT] days as one coming of the Messiah would be fulfilled in two stages: a first and a second coming. What was therefore not clear to the [OT] prophets was made clear in the [NT] era.” (12)... “The coming of Jesus Christ into the world is specifically interpreted in the [NT] as the fulfillment of [OT] prophecy.” [E.g., Matthew 1:20-23; 5:17] (p. 15)... “[NT] writers are conscious that they are already living in the last days. This is specifically stated by Peter...(Acts 2:16-17).” (p. 16) “Since, however, there remain many eschatological events that have not yet been realized, and since the [NT] clearly speaks of a future as well as a present eschatology, I prefer to speak of ‘inaugurated’ rather than ‘realized’ eschatology.” (p. 17)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Hoekema continues: *“In the [NT] we also find that the realization that what the [OT] writers seemed to depict as one movement must now be recognized as involving two stages: the present Messianic age and the age of the future. Or, to put this into different words, the [NT] believer, while conscious that he was now living in the new age predicted by the prophets, realized that this new age, ushered in by the coming of Jesus Christ, was perceived as bearing in its womb another age to come.”* (18) “We find a most interesting illustration of the juxtaposition of the two ages in the [NT] use of the expressions ‘the last days.’ and ‘the last day.’...When the expression is found in the singular...('the last day'), it never refers to the present age but always to the age to come, usually to the Day of Judgment or the day of resurrection....(John 5:39)...According to the [NT] writers...we are in ‘the last days’ now, but ‘the last day’ is still to come.” (19)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Hoekema continues, “Because God is the Lord of history, history has meaning and direction. We may not always be able to discern God’s purpose in history, but that there is such a purpose is a cardinal aspect of our faith. The supreme revelation of God’s purpose in history is, needless to say, the coming of Jesus Christ into the world....Christ is the center of history.... [Oscar] Cullmann goes on to say that the primary difference between the [OT] understanding of history and that of the [NT] is that the midpoint of history has moved from the future to the past. For the [NT] believer the coming of Christ is that midpoint, and he is therefore conscious of living between the midpoint of history and its culmination—the Parousia [Second Coming] of Jesus Christ. This implies that the coming of Christ was the single most important event of human history.” (28-29)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,²¹ nor will people say, “Here it is,” or “There it is,” because the kingdom of God is within you.’” (Luke 17:20-21)
- ““My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one.” (John 10:27-30)
- “Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.’” (John 18:36)
- See also Revelation 12-20, esp. 20:1-2.

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology and cosmic warfare
 - d. The kingdom of God
 - 1) The kingdom of God in the Bible refers to the rule of God in the hearts and minds of those who believe in him.
 - 2) The kingdom of God in the New Testament is presented as here but not yet, i.e., it has been inaugurated by Christ, but it is not yet here in its fullest.
 - 3) It is yet to be completed, and it will when Christ returns.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

¹¹And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (Romans 13:11-14)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology and cosmic warfare
 - e. A tension exists between the already and the not yet: Due to Christ’s First Coming, the kingdom of God is here, but it is not yet in its completeness; that will occur at Jesus’ second coming.
 - 1) The Greek word for time in Romans 13:11, *καῖρός* (*kairos*), means a fixed time, a special season, specifically the present era, the end time, the culmination of history before Jesus’ second advent. The NT typically expresses a sense of urgency in this period of time, e.g., “the hour has come,” “the night is nearly over,” “the day [of Jesus’ Second Coming, which ushers in the consummation of the kingdom] is almost here.” We must prepare and remain prepared for Jesus’ arrival, a serious, very important, matter to not take lightly, especially for His people whom he has called to serve Him in the extension and nurture of His kingdom. This awareness is to motivate Godly living.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- ²³Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved.” (Romans 8:23-24a)
- ¹¹And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (Romans 13:11-14)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology and cosmic warfare
 - e. A tension exists between the already and the not yet: Due to Christ’s First Coming, the kingdom of God is here, but it is not yet in its completeness; that will occur at Jesus’ Second Coming.
- 2) Walter W. Wessel well explains that the term, “our salvation is nearer now,” means the “full realization of salvation at the second coming of Jesus Christ (see 8:23; Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 1:15).” Wessel adds that Christians have always “regarded the death and resurrection of Christ as the crucial events of history that began the last days [the final era of history]. Since the next great event in God’s redemptive plan is the second coming of Jesus Christ, ‘the night,’ no matter how long chronologically it may last, is ‘nearly over.’” (*NIV Study Bible*)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matthew 10:28-31)
- “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” (James 2:26)
- “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
- “We are of good courage then, and are well pleased rather, to be away from home out of the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8; EDS translation)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

- a. Individual eschatology addresses the end of this phase of one's life.
 - 1) The Lord helps his faithful followers prepare for physical death.
 - a) He works through His Word and the Holy Spirit in the sanctification process, so that as we age, we are ready for “coming home” to be with the triune God and all his people forever in His eternal service and presence!
 - b) As we grow in our love for the Lord through daily reading his Word, obeying Him (see, e.g., John 14:21), and communing with Him in prayer, knowing what He has prepared for us in heaven (John 14:2-3), who would want to remain here, when we have done all He has asked us to do here? We have no need to worry. (Philippians 4:6-9; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
 - c) God gives to those of us who believe in and follow (truly trying to obey and repenting when we sin) Jesus Christ an ongoing courage, confidence, and assurance that enables us to not worry about physical death but to fix our eyes on what it means: to be at home with the Lord!

Looking Forward to Being at Home with the Lord

In 2 Corinthians 5:8, the first word, and therefore in Greek grammar emphasized, is *θαρροῦμεν* (*tharrhousmen*), which means “We are of good courage,” the verb also meaning confident. Therefore, we need not worry, in particular in this passage about the end of this phase of life or any of the next, eternity. On the contrary we in Christ Jesus rather look forward to what is ahead. This need to not worry also precludes other negative reactions, e.g., anger, anxiety, fear, lashing out, dread, despair, depression, stress. Also, the verb is in the indicative mood, thus making an assertion; in the present tense; and in the active voice; which means this testimony of courage and confidence is present now and ongoing. It’s not something we said once or twice some time ago and now disavow, doubt, or ignore. It’s not occasional, fleeting, and ephemeral; it’s durative, continuous, and lasting. The great Biblical scholar, R. C. H. Lenski, rightly insists that this is the main point. Thus, we can live courageously and confidently with a worldview, that shapes our understanding of daily events, which enables us to see everything in the broad perspective of eternity. (Recall 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.) What occurs each day is not all that is! Not even close! Moreover, the best is yet to come!

We’re here for a while with a vitally important calling from God that lasts right to the end: to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people who don’t have this perspective, who are absorbed in bleakness or in other aspects of unreality, and who have no hope. (Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13) Our lives have meaning, value, and purpose! The context helps us understand what and why Paul adds, “and are well pleased [*εὐδοκοῦμεν* (*eudokousmen*, favor, prefer—this verb also assertively indicative present active)] rather to be away from home [*ἐκδημῆσαι* (*ekdēmēsai*, for important meaning see below)] out of the body and to be at home [*ἐνδημῆσαι* (*endēmēsai*, see also below)] with the Lord.” Now walking by faith and not by sight (v. 7), we long (v. 2) to see and be with the Lord and the great heavenly realities in the home Jesus has gone ahead to prepare for us. (John 14:2) Paul indicates that this great wish will take place quickly when it occurs. How? With the verb forms he uses.

Looking Forward to Being at Home with the Lord

The verbs, ἐκδημῆσαι (ekdēmēsai), to be away from home, and ἐνδημῆσαι (endēmēsai), to be at home, are both infinitives in the aorist (a past) tense, and in the active voice, representing the subject as acting. The aorist infinitive active expresses a simple, single, momentary and immediate action. When the Lord brings his followers home to be with him this passage will take place instantly. Our travel to be with the Lord face to face will be instantaneous, meaning we don't have to worry about our journey taking hundreds or thousands of years; or being done again (we die only once [Hebrews 9:27], thus also ruling out any concept of reincarnation, which is nothing like resurrection); or any harm coming to us; or getting lost on the way; or having any detours, such as Purgatory (the Greek here and lack of proof elsewhere in the 66 canonical books of most Protestants' Bible, do not support such a concept). Further, recall what Jesus said to the repentant thief on the cross: "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) Jesus neither implied nor stated that his declaration to the repentant thief applied to him only and not to other believers as well. In addition, we will not be alone: The trip into glory is done in an instant, and always keep in mind God's Word, e.g., Jesus promising, "I will be with you always," (Matthew 28:20) and God assuring Joshua, "Never will I leave you nor forsake you," which the writer of Hebrews applies also to the church. (13:5) The terms, always and never, in these two texts negate any idea of the Lord being absent at some point. We're never alone; God is with us—Immanuel—always and forever!

Obviously, what Paul is talking about here is the Biblical, Christian, view of death, one's personal eschaton, a subject most people, especially non-Christians, try to avoid thinking about at all costs, some of which are tragic. Not at all so for followers of Christ Jesus!

Looking Forward to Being at Home with the Lord

We see here another important aspect of this Biblical, Christian, worldview is the understanding that the home in which we live is a “home away from home.” Both Paul (e.g., vss. 1, 4) and Peter (e.g., 2 Peter 1:13) refer to our present body as a tent and only a temporary home. As long as we are in the tent, we are away from our lasting, permanent, and glorious home with the Lord, indeed with our triune God, and with all God’s other people, including with our loved ones in Christ.

What great comfort that reality provides! As I mention in an essay and a brief video on the [Marriage page of my Website](#), since my precious wife of 48 ½ years, Carol, died, now many years ago, I miss her greatly and long to be with the Lord and with her again. I have times of sadness each day, but the Lord immediately pulls me out of those difficulties and redirects my attention to what he has called me to do while I am yet here. (Cf. Philippians 1:23) When the time is right in his sight, I’ll be with him face to face and with Carol again—he’s bringing me through this challenging time well, and he’s doing so for all his faithful followers who are maturing in Christ. (See sanctification, *op cit.*)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matthew 10:28-31)
- “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” (James 2:26)
- “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

- a. Individual eschatology addresses the end of this phase of one's life.
 - 1) The Lord helps his faithful followers prepare for physical death.
 - a) He works through His Word and the Holy Spirit in the sanctification process, so that as we age, we are ready for “coming home”!
 - b) As we grow in our love for the Lord through daily reading his Word, obeying Him (see, e.g., John 21:14), and communing with Him in prayer, knowing what He has prepared for us in heaven (John 14:2-3), we have no need to worry. (Philippians 4:6-9; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
 - c) God gives to those of us who believe in and follow, including obeying, Jesus Christ an ongoing courage and confidence that enables us to not worry about physical death.
 - 2) Physical death
 - a) Humans are immortal; the person is a whole being, body and spirit/soul.
 - b) A temporary separation of the body and the spirit/soul exists in the intermediate state. (Matthew 10:28-31; Luke 12:4; John 12:25; Ecclesiastes 12:7; James 2:26)
 - c) Physical death never means annihilation, a concept not taught in God's Word.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
²²If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.” (Philippians 1:21-24)
- “Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷We live by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.” (2 Corinthians 5:6-9)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

- a. Individual eschatology answers the question, “What will occur at the end of this phase of my life, i.e., when I die?” First, one then enters the intermediate state.

3) The intermediate state refers to the period of a person’s life between his or her death until Jesus’ Second Coming to earth for the final judgment, after which the person enters heaven or hell.

- a) Scripture indicates that believers in and followers of Christ Jesus enjoy a conscious life with the Lord beginning immediately after they die. (See also Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; Revelation 6:9.)
- b) When we die, believers in and followers of Christ Jesus are immediately in paradise with the Lord. (Luke 23:39-43)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Since believers in and followers of Christ are immediately in paradise with the Lord, the intermediate state, which immediately begins at death, is the beginning of the glorification of the children of God, the entering into glory where the Lord's faithful will enjoy being with him, indeed with the triune God, forever! We must keep in mind, however, that the intermediate state is not a separate entity between physical death and the coming of the new heaven and the new earth. It's distinct but not separate.

As Anthony Hoekema writes, "The Bible does not have an independent doctrine of the intermediate state. Its teaching on the is state is never to be separated from its teaching on the resurrection of the body and the renewal of the earth. Therefore, as Berkouwer points out, the believer should have, not a 'twofold expectation' of the future, but a 'single expectation.' We look forward to an external, glorious existence with Christ after death, an existence which will culminate in the resurrection. Intermediate state and resurrection are therefore to be thought of as two aspects of a unitary expectation." (*The Bible and the Future*, p. 108)

The intermediate state is the first part of our eternal glorification, but it is incomplete, awaiting our resurrection bodies and the new heaven and the new earth that will come following the final judgment at Jesus Christ's Second Coming. That will be the second and eternal part of our glorification and the completion of God's marvelous plan of redemption in Christ Jesus.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’
40 But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don't you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence?’
41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.’
42 Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’
43 Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’” (Luke 23:39-43)
- “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...” (Revelation 21:1)
- “We live by faith, not by sight. 8We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:7-8)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology
 - a. Individual eschatology answers the question, “What will occur at the end of this phase of my life?”
 - 3) The intermediate state refers to the stage of life between death and Jesus’ Second Coming to earth for the final judgment.
 - a) Scripture indicates that believers in and followers of Christ enjoy a conscious life with the Lord beginning immediately after they die. (See also Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; Revelation 6:9.)
 - b) They are immediately in paradise, a synonym for “the first heaven” (Revelation 21:1), that part of the intermediate state for believers in Christ. (See the texts in the left column.) In the original Greek of 2 Corinthians 5:8, the verbs “to be away” and “at home” are both infinitive aorist active, meaning a once-for-all momentary occurrence. Thus, at the moment of death Paul explains we will be at home with the Lord.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’
⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don't you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence?’
⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.’
⁴² Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’
⁴³ Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’” (Luke 23:39-43)
- “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” (Romans 8:17)
- “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” (Romans 8:29-30)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology
 - a. Individual eschatology answers the question, “What will occur at the end of this phase of my life?”
 - 3) The intermediate state refers to the stage of life between death and Jesus' Second Coming to earth for the final judgment.
 - c) Those whose faith is in Christ are glorified. In his commentary on Romans 8:17, Lenski explains, “We join in Christ's suffering ‘in order that we may also be glorified with him,’ aorist [verb tense] to indicate the one act, and passive [voice of the verb] because God will glorify us as he glorified Christ. We are to become partakers of his glory. This includes both the body and the soul, the soul when we die, the body at the last day.” (p. 528)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- ²⁵ “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ (Luke 16:25-26)
- ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes— who are they, and where did they come from?” ... And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. ¹⁶ Never again will they hunger...thirst...¹⁷ For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd;...And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:13-17)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology
 - a. Individual eschatology answers the question, “What will occur at the end of this phase of my life?”
 - 3)d) Can those who are in heaven in the intermediate state communicate with or at least perceive what is occurring with loved ones yet here on earth? The Bible texts about the present heaven reveal a great chasm that prevents interaction between those on earth and in heaven.
 - 1- In Revelation 7:14, the Greek for “they who have come out (NIV)” is ἐρχόμενοι (*erchomenoi*), a present tense participle, thus “are coming” (cf. NASB, come), which, together with the context, indicates those in Christ who continue to enter the intermediate state, heaven, prior to the new heaven and the new earth. We see that they are protected from all, even from unintentional, hurt and harm by those of us yet in this sinful age.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- ²⁵ “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ (Luke 16:25-26)
- ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes— who are they, and where did they come from?” ... And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. ¹⁶ Never again will they hunger...thirst...¹⁷ For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd;...And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:13-17)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

- a. Individual eschatology answers the question, “What will occur at the end of this phase of my life?”

3)d) Can those who are in heaven in the intermediate state communicate with or at least perceive what is occurring with loved ones yet here on earth? The Bible texts about the present heaven reveal a great chasm that prevents interaction with those in heaven.

2- However, it is comforting to recall that we can always ask God to let a loved one know what we would like him or her to know. God, who knows best, will do so if it would be good for our loved one to know, or wait for the best time and then tell him or her, and/or let us do so (and it will all be good, since we won't remember the bad in glory [cf. Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17]) when we reunite with our loved one when God calls us home. I find comfort in each way with the assurance God always knows and does what is best; he never makes a mistake! It will all be perfect!

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “ ‘Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.’” (Leviticus 19:31)
- “When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.” (Isaiah 8:19-20)
- “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’” (Luke 16:25–26; see vss. 19-31)
- See also 1 Samuel 28 and Isaiah 65:4.

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

- a. Individual eschatology answers the question, “What will occur at the end of this phase of my life?”

3)d) Can those who are in heaven in the intermediate state communicate with or at least perceive what is going on with loved ones yet here on earth? The Bible texts about the present heaven reveal a great chasm that prevents interaction with those in heaven.

3- We are also to never ask our departed loved ones or other ancestors for help. Nor are we to fear ancestors coming back to harm us. The Bible is clear throughout that ancestors should **never** be worshiped. We are to **only** worship God! The triune God is our only and greatest help. We honor our ancestors (Exodus 20:12; Mark 10:19; Ephesians 6:2—the command does not say only while they are here on earth) by speaking as well of them as possible, not disparaging them, and doing the good they taught us, but not now ever asking them for their help.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

What can Christians say about the phenomenon of “Near Death Experiences”?

Researchers have reported several thousand of what are being called “near death experiences” or NDEs. They are also referred to as out of body experiences. The majority of these NDEs have been beautiful, but not all: many have been very negative and terrifying. Some of these phenomena and/or their claims have been shown to be not credible. However, some have demonstrated a certain degree of credibility. Typically, NDEs involve the person’s spirit hovering nearby his or her body and observing resuscitation attempts, such as a blind woman who saw one of the physicians drop his pen and shortly pick it up by a window near where she was observing. Later, when the doctor heard her say she saw the attempts to revive her, he tried to explain it away, until she told him about the pen.

Some of those who have had such experiences have claimed to go to heaven. How do we understand and respond to such claims?

As we’ve seen, there is “a great chasm” between heaven and hell (Luke 16:26), and those in heaven are in glory where there is no sadness (cf., e.g., Revelation 7:13-17). Moreover, where God is there is no sin; sinful people, who have not been cleansed by the blood of Christ and are not his faithful followers living in obedience to him, cannot enter heaven. (John 14:6) Faithful people who claim to have been in heaven have either been given a vision or a dream, as others in the Bible, but have not in their NDE actually been in heaven. God does not bring people to heaven and then return them to earth.

Further, the term “near death experience” is quite accurate, since these people are not completely dead, where they have gone to either heaven or hell, from which, Biblically, there is no return. Those having an NDE, have had a key bodily function stop, such as no heartbeat for a short time, but full and complete death has not occurred. Hence, when they revive, they have experienced resuscitation not resurrection; they still have their original body, not the resurrection body (*op cit*); what occurred to them is more like Lazarus’ body than Jesus’ body, Jesus being the only one resurrected until he returns in his Second Coming.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “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.” (Matthew 24:30)
- 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.’” (Acts 1:11)
- But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Philippians 3:20-21)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology
 - 1) The expectation of Jesus’ second coming includes many mentions of it in the Bible. Anthony Hoekema writes, “...the faith of the N.T. church is dominated by this expectation. Every book of the N.T. points us to the return of Christ and urges us to live in such a way as to be always ready for that return.”
 - a) Jesus referred to his second coming (Matthew 24:30; 25:19; 26:64; John 14:3)
 - b) Angels mentioned it at Jesus’ ascension (Acts 1:11)
 - c) Many references to it occur in the Paul’s letters and in Hebrews. (Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 10; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

Matthew 24:14

Romans 11:25, 26a

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

2) The signs of the times

a) Great events preceding the Jesus' Second Coming:

1- The calling of the Gentiles: The Gospel of God's kingdom must be preached to all nations before Christ returns.
(Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10; Romans 11:25)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- Romans 11:26
- 2 Corinthians 3:15, 16
- Matthew 24:9-13; 21, 22

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- 2. Future Eschatology
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology
 - 2) The signs of the times
 - a) Great events preceding the Jesus' Second Coming:
 - 2- The conversion of the full number of Israel (2 Corinthians 3:15; Romans 11:25-29)
 - 3- The Great Apostasy and Tribulation (Matthew 24:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:3, 4)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9
- 1 John 2:18a, 22
- ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (2 Peter 3:10-13)
- Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (Revelation 21:1; cf. 24-27)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

2) The signs of the times

a) Great events preceding Jesus' Second Coming:

4- Coming of the antichrist (1 John 4:3; 1 John 2:18a, 22; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

5- Signs and wonders (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25-26; 2 Peter 3:10,12) Using apocalyptic language with its symbolism, the destruction of the elements by fire (a symbol of judgment), likely refers to the elimination of evil. The good will remain. Note the Greek in 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1, *καίνος* (*kainos*), which means new in nature or quality, i.e., renewed, rather than brand new. In Revelation 21 see also verses 24-27. Peter and John would have used another word, *νέος* (*neos*), if they meant brand new.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

Matthew 24:44

Philippians 3:20

Titus 2:13

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

4) The nature of Jesus' Second Coming

- a) The time of his coming: (Matthew 24:36)
- b) In his body (Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7)
- c) Will be unexpected and be a surprise (Matthew 24:37-44; 25:1-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; Revelation 3:3)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

“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.” (Matthew 24:30)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

4) The nature of Jesus' Second Coming

c) Will be unexpected and be a surprise (Matthew 24:37-44; 25:1-12;

1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; Revelation 3:3)

d) A glorious and triumphant coming (Matthew 24:30;

2 Thessalonians 1:7;
1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:6;
2 Thessalonians 1:10)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- Matthew 25:31-33
- “For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:40)
- Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-58

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- 2. Future Eschatology
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology
 - 5) The purpose of Jesus' Second Coming: to introduce the future age through two major events:
 - a) The resurrection
 - b) The final judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, John 5:25-29; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:3-16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:12)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

6) A critique of dispensational premillennialism

a) See EC Slides 982-987.

b) See “[Dispensationalists and Dispensational Premillennialism.](#)”

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

7) The millennium of Revelation

20

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

Exodus 3:6; Daniel 12:2; Luke 20:37;
John 5:29; John 6:40; Romans 8:11;
1 Corinthians 15:35; 22, 23;
1 Thessalonians 4:16

Jesus' resurrection body: Luke 24:36-49;
John 20:19-29

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

8) The resurrection of the body will take place at Jesus' Second Coming.

a) Our resurrection body will be like Jesus' resurrection body with an amazing and presently unknown chemistry and physiological constitution.

1- It will be physical and can be touched (Luke 24:37-40), and eat substantive food (Luke 24:41-42), but it can go through locked doors (John 20:26-29), though no locks will be needed in the new heaven and the new earth.

2- It will be recognizable (cf. Luke 24:30-31)

3- It will be whole and complete, e.g., no need for eye glasses, crutches, or wheelchairs and no withered arms or prostheses.

b) The bodies of all will be resurrected prior to the final judgment.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things



Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

9) The final judgment (2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 20:12), which will be rendered by Christ Jesus, will be gracious and merciful while at the same time being completely just and fair.

Notice this picture of an olive wood statue of Jesus carrying a sheep, symbolizing his pastoral love, and also a spear, not a staff, symbolizing judgment this time. The first time (in his First Coming), he said he had not come to judge but to save. Now (at his Second Coming), he is here for the promised judgment for which he said he would return.

FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

1. How can we explain to others why Jesus' judgment/justice and love fit together?
2. Do you notice any other Biblical teaching about Jesus that is depicted in this statue? If so, what do you observe?
3. What Biblical teaching about Jesus do you see depicted in this portrayal of his face?

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

Jesus' resurrection body (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29)

See R. C. H. Lenski on Matthew 25:34 in the light of Jeremiah 31:34/Hebrews 10:17 and the major motif of memory (in the Hebrew mind, an entity exists only as long as it is remembered:

- “In the final judgment (Matt. 25:34) not a single sin is mentioned in connection with a single believer; but look at those who did not believe—all their sins are there.”
- “...if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

See R. C. H. Lenski commentary on 1 Corinthians 6:2-3.

See NIVSB note on 2 Corinthians 5:9-10.

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

9) The final judgment (2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 20:12), which will be rendered by Christ Jesus, will be gracious and merciful while at the same time being completely just and fair.

a) We will have to give account for our sins, including for every careless word we utter. (Matthew 12:36) Further, unlike when have to give account to authorities now here on earth, we will not be able to get away with making excuses for wrongdoing. (Cf. Acts 19:23-41, esp. v. 40). While we can sometimes “get away with” excuses now, by such means as deception, telling half truths, and blaming others, as some U. S. Capitol rioters did (one saying, “They made me do it. In that riot at the Capitol, I just became overwhelmed in the moment and couldn’t help myself; I was powerless to do anything.”), that won’t work with Jesus who is all-knowing.

b) We can face the final judgment without worry. Contrary to other religions, including cults and sects such as Seventh Day Adventism with its doctrine of the investigative judgment (*op cit.*), Romans 10:9 and other Bible texts give us clear assurance of what God requires. See also the recurring statement throughout the whole letter of 1 John “that you may know.” Cf. Hebrews 11:1.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

Jesus' resurrection body (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29)

See R. C. H. Lenski commentary on 1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

10) Christ's believers will participate with him in the judgment. (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)

Christology: Who is Jesus Christ; what is he like; and what is he doing?

Jesus' Second Coming

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'”
(Matthew 25:31-34)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- Jesus' separation of the sheep and the goats and final judgment will be victory and vindication for us who have believed in and followed him, having remained faithful in spite of enduring scorn, ridicule, put downs, and other, much worse, forms of persecution.
- Keeping this coming victory and vindication in mind during such times of abuse, is another way God provides great comfort and encouragement.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (Matthew 25:46)
- “God ‘will give to each person according to what he has done.’ ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.” (Romans 2:6-8)
- “...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

10) The Final State

- a) Eternal punishment
(Matthew 25:46; Romans 2:6-8; 2 Thessalonians 1:9)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

“⁵He [(Greek) sitting] on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’”
(Revelation 21:1-5)

- “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” (Romans 8:17)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology

10) The Final State

b) The new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1-5; 24-27), including all Christ’s people sharing in his glory with him in eternal life in God’s service and presence forever!

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.” (Revelation 21:24-27)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology
 - 10) The Final State
 - b) The new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1-5; 24-27)
 - 1- We see several indications of a continuity of the present with the new heaven and the new earth.
 - a- Compare Isaiah 60 with Revelation 21:1-5 and 24-27.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Then I saw a new (*kainos*) heaven and a new (*kainos*) earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He [(Greek) sitting] on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’” (Revelation 21:1a and b, 4, 5)
- “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.” (Revelation 21:24-27)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology 10), b), 1-

b- As we saw above in our study of the covenant, the Greek word translated new in Revelation 21:1 and 5 is also *καίνος* (*kainos*), which means new in nature or quality, i.e., renewed, **not** new in time or origin, *νέος* (*neos*), i.e., brand new. The new heaven and the new earth will be God's perfect creation restored and more, without the sin, evil, and corruption that Adam's and Eve's disobedience brought to God's original creation and that we are now enduring until Christ returns.

c- Thus, as we reconnect with spouse, family, other loved ones and friends, we will remember and cherish the good in the previous part of our relationship with them in this age, but we will not remember our sins and other unpleasant aspects of our time together in this first phase of life. And there is more:

d- The continuity denoted by *kainos* has powerful implications for both phases of life as explained by Anthony A. Hoekema.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Having explained the significance of the word, *kainos*, as mentioned on the previous slide, Anthony Hoekema, in his excellent book, *The Bible and the Future*, states that in Revelation 21:3 with no sin on the new (*kainos*) earth the dwelling place of God will be with his people, thus the new (*kainos*) heaven and new (*kainos*) earth will be united, “Since,” Hoekema continues, “where God dwells, there heaven is, we conclude that in the life to come heaven and earth will no longer be separated, as they are now, but will be merged. Believers will therefore continue to be in heaven as they continue to live on the new earth.” (Pp. 284-285)

He then makes this encouraging and compelling application:

“The doctrine of the new earth should give us hope, courage, and optimism in a day of widespread despair. Though evil is rampant in this world, it is comforting to know that Christ has won the final victory. Whereas ecologists often picture the future of this earth in gloomy terms, it is encouraging to know that some day God will create a glorious new earth on which the ecological problems which now plague us will no longer exist. This does not imply that we need do nothing about these problems, but it does mean that we work for solutions to these problems, not with a feeling of despair, but in the confidence of hope.

“...there will be continuity as well as discontinuity between this age and the next, and between this earth and the new earth. This point is extremely important. As citizens of God’s kingdom, we may not just write off the present earth as a total loss, or rejoice in its deterioration. We must indeed be working for a better world now. Our efforts to bring the kingdom of Christ into fuller manifestation are of eternal significance. Our Christian life today, our struggles against sin—both individual and institutional—our mission work, our attempt to develop and promote a distinctively Christian culture, have value not only for this world but even for the world to come.

Continued...

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

“As we live on this earth, we are preparing for life on God’s new earth. Through our kingdom service the building materials for that new earth are now being gathered. Bibles are being translated, peoples are being evangelized, believers are being renewed, and cultures are being transformed. Only eternity will reveal the full significance of what has been done for Christ here.

“At the beginning of history God created the heavens and the earth. At the end of history we see the new heavens and the new earth, which will far surpass in splendor all that we have seen before. At the center of history is the Lamb that was slain, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Someday we shall cast all our crowns before him, ‘lost in wonder, love, and praise.’” (Pp. 286-287)

- Notice the application for our work urging Christians to engage the public square, in particular the importance, rationale, encouragement, and eternal outcomes of our doing so. *Our work now has eternal significance! God will not only remember and reward but use the good work we do here in this first phase of our lives on the original earth but also in the new heaven and the new earth.*
- How’s that for a solid basis for establishing an unshakable sense of self-worth?! At this writing the four top problems people face are stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Think about how this Biblical worldview would lift the spirits of those who are struggling with these as well as the other problems of this age and give them great hope! Consider the implications for teaching, preaching, pastoral care, and [serving God in the public square](#).

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Then I saw a new (*kainos*) heaven and a new (*kainos*) earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He [(Greek) sitting] on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’” (Revelation 21:1a and b, 4, 5)
- “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.” (Revelation 21:24-27)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology

- b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology 10), b), 1-
- d- Thus, the continuity denoted by *kainos* with its powerful implications for both phases of life—on the first earth now and in the new (*kainos*) earth and new (*kainos*) heaven—as explained by Hoekema, gives great meaning and hope to our lives, for those of us who believe in and follow Christ!
- e- Pertaining to the resurrection, we see Biblical evidence of continuity, as Herman Bavinck explains on the next slide.

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Pertaining to the resurrection, Bavinck insightfully observes,

“In that resurrection the unity of the person, both according to soul and body, is preserved... [However], many teach the immortality of the soul only in the sense that the spirit of man lives on, but without any preservation of the unity of his consciousness. But this is to forfeit immortality altogether, for if self-awareness and memory are completely broken off at death, the person who lives on is no longer the same as the one who lived on earth.”

This self-consciousness of the human being, however, includes the possession of a body as well as a soul. The body is not a prison of the spirit, but belongs to the essence of man. That is why it is redeemed just as well as the soul by Christ, the perfect Savior. The whole man was created after the image of God and the whole man was corrupted; hence the whole man is redeemed from sin and death by Christ, is recreated after God's image, and is ushered into His kingdom. But the body which the believers receive at the resurrection corresponds to the earthly body, not in external form, in accidental characteristics, in material quantity, but only in essence. It is not a natural, but a physical body. It is raised above sexual life (Matt. 22:30), above the need for food and drink (1 Cor. 6:13). It is immortal, incorruptible, spiritualized, and glorified (1 Cor. 15:42-44), and it is conformed to the body of Christ as it was after His resurrection (Phil. 3:21).” (563)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “And he [God] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.” (Ephesians 1:9-10)
- “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (Colossians 1:19-20)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology
 - 2- We thus see history moving toward a purpose, as Hoekema writes, “toward the goal of a finally restored and glorified universe. This does not mean we can always see exactly how every historical event is related to the goal of history....”

“It does mean, however, that as we read the headlines, listen to the news, and read the news-magazines we are to believe that the God of history is always in control, and that history is moving steadily toward its goal.”
 - 3- Therefore, again, **do not be afraid!** (Cf. John 14:1, 27)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

“God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear,...” (Psalm 46:1-2a)

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him...

³ and he will delight in the fear of the Lord...

⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the
earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.” (Isaiah 11:1-9)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- In the meantime, “God is a very present help in the time of trouble...” directly in the lives of those involved and through his church, the body of Christ. What good news!
- Christ’s First Coming is the greatest demonstration of God’s goodness and his true love which is just and righteous, (Isaiah 11:1-3a; John 3:16)
- and his Second Coming will eternally eliminate evil from the lives of his people. The theodicy question is not only answered; it is resolved! (Isaiah 11:3b-9; Revelation 21)

Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’” (Revelation 21:1-4)
- “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.” (Revelation 21:24-26)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- What a huge joy it is to know that our greatest blessings are still to come including being in God’s presence and service with our loved ones in Christ, together with all God’s other people, forever!
- With this great comfort we shape our worldview and the perspective in which we view everything in this phase of life, all of which gives us great hope—Biblical hope never being a fanciful wish but always rather—a realized expectation firmly on our faith’s strong basis in the risen and reigning Christ Jesus, faith being “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)
- This wonderful revelation of God’s will and plan for his people’s future frees us from fear of death and other worries. Contrary to most people, who cannot think about their death and what follows, we believers in and followers of Jesus Christ can make early distributions ourselves and plans such as a will, or even a living trust, so our family knows our wishes and precisely what to do when we die. The transition all goes smoothly and relieves them of a burden in managing the final distribution of our estate and the proper completion of our responsibilities.

Notes

1. For more information on each of the six Biblical doctrines in historic Christian systematic theology introduced above, see the corresponding sections of the following resources:
 - a. [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—For Now and Eternity](#) (PowerPoint Program)
 - b. Related essays on the [Christian Theology](#) page of the Website, From Acorn to Oak 12
 - c. [Bible Digest PPT](#) on the [Christian Education](#) page
3. Dr. Edward D. Seely has two secure Websites: <https://fromacorntooak12.com/> or edwardseely.com and <https://seelyedward.academia.edu/>. All resources are free on both Websites.

Resources

Sources of the photos, paintings, and graphics are all from books and curricula used for educational purposes. I also wish to thank Marilou Grant for her work on graphics configuration and Jeffrey Lemke for video editing.

I've taught this course in abbreviated sessions for many years internationally in local churches, pastors' seminars, seminaries, and in other instructional contexts. This PowerPoint presentation is offered free of charge.