

Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology

With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God's
Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity

Lesson 8: Eschatology—The Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation
(Abridged Overview)

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

Abridged Overview for Class Lecture/Discussion

Note: Highlighted subjects are the minimum to be addressed in classes with time constraints.
Ask the class to read the overview prior to the class meeting.

Rev. Edward D. Seely, Th.M., Ph.D.

Remember where Eschatology fits
within systematic theology.

Review the logic of the loci in the next slides.

Before Looking at the Next Slide...

Let's say together the six loci of historic Christian systematic theology. To help us start, what is the necessary first one from whom the others come?

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 (This doctrine is also called **Pneumatology** and **The Application of Christ's Redemption**, What the Bible Reveals about the Holy Spirit, the key agent in applying Christ's redemption for our salvation.)
5. **Ecclesiology:** What the Bible Reveals about the Church
6. **Eschatology:** What the Bible Reveals about the Last Things or The End Times

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: Consummation.

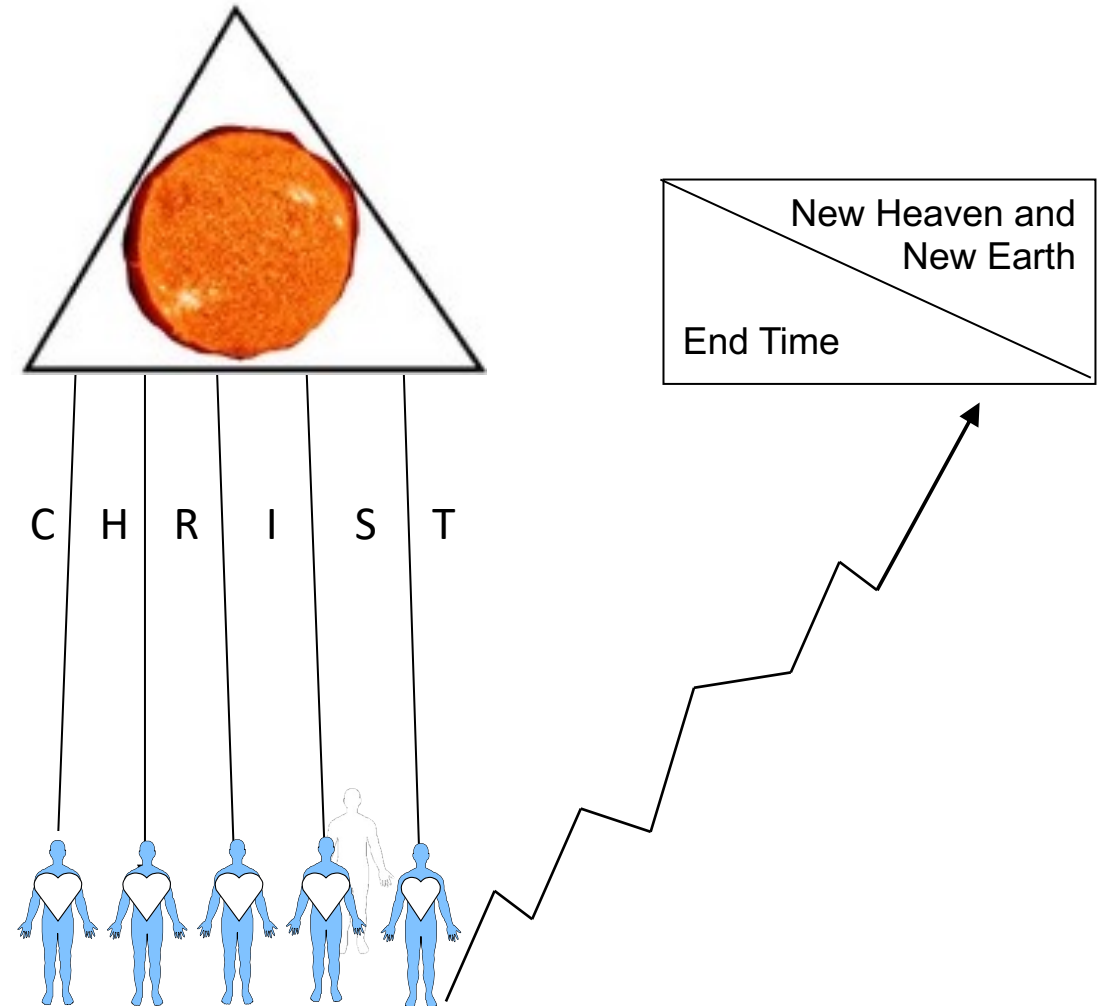
Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

Eschatology focuses on the fourth of the four main themes of the Bible: creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. It 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 former referring to a human being's own personal end (specifically what occurs when he or she dies) and the latter, 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 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 other eschatological Bible passages and hope for the persecuted church



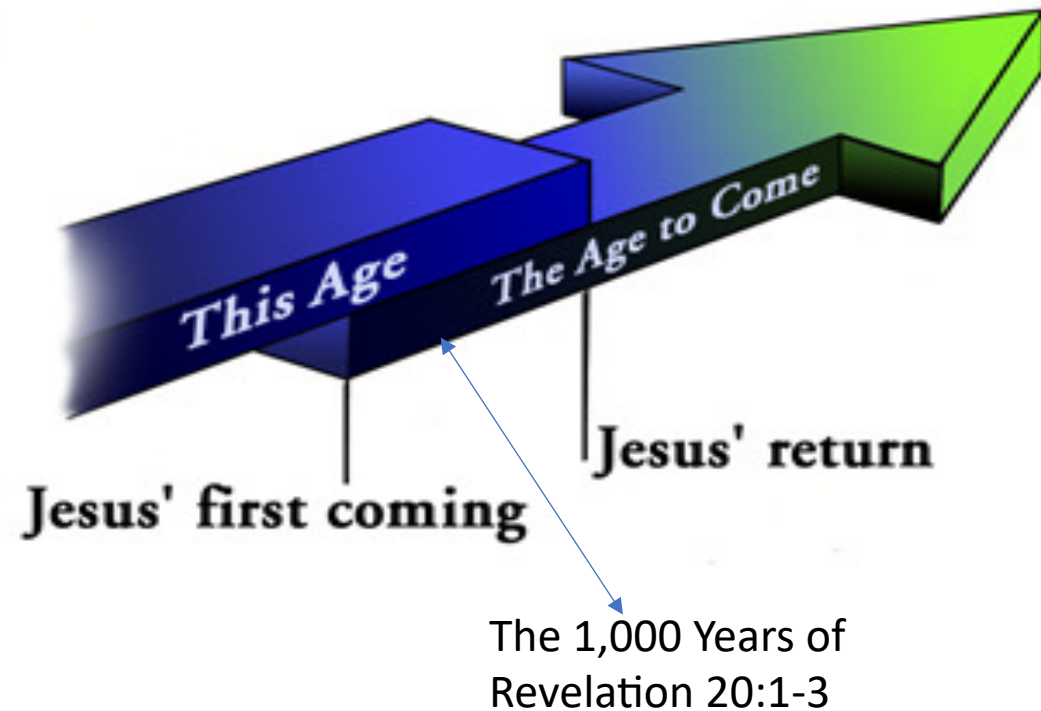
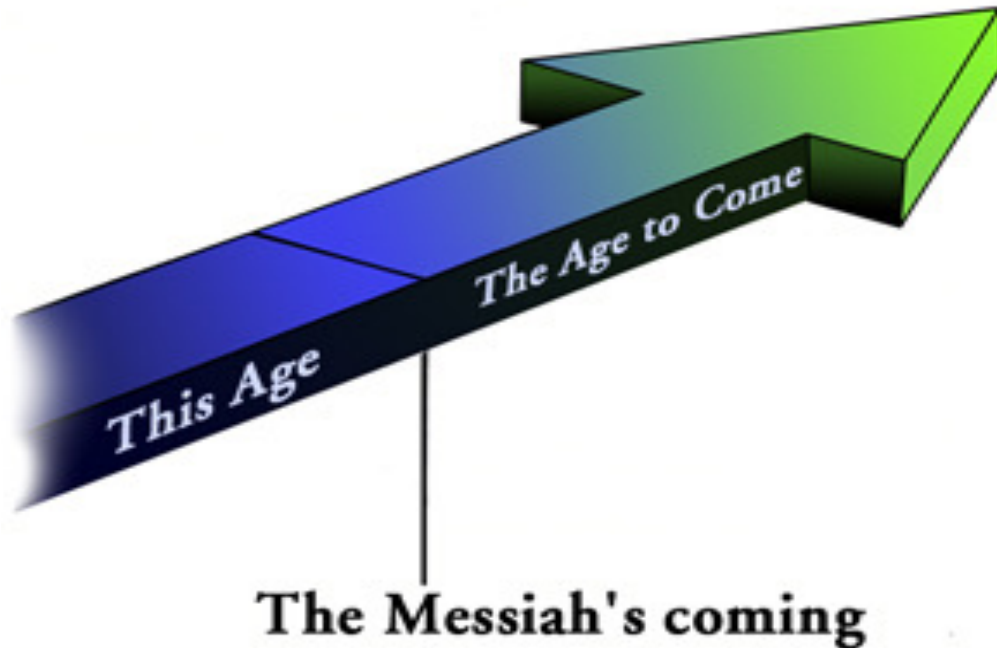
Eschatology: What will occur at the end—the end of my life and the end of history?

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 and restoration 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, whose exceptionally insightful Biblical analysis has informed much of what I present in this section on eschatology mostly but not only from his excellent book, *The Bible and the Future*, 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.” (*The Bible and the Future*, p. 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] (15)... “[NT] writers are conscious that they are already living in the last days. This is specifically stated by Peter...(Acts 2:16-17).” (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.” (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)

God’s revelation in the Bible that is rooted in Christ and worked out through his church is the only religion in which this work occurs in and through history, including involving other well-documented actual nations. The official literature of all other religions consists only of the ruminations of their founder’s thoughts.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Cursed are you...¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Genesis 3:14,15)
- “The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶and said, ‘I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you...¹⁸and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.’” (Genesis 22:15–18)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. **Inaugurated eschatology**, a term introduced by theologian Anthony Hoekema in *The Bible and the Future*, refers to God’s Word in the Bible that some aspects of the end time have already begun due to what Christ Jesus accomplished in his first coming. An integral part of this worldview we must properly understand to function effectively in serving the Lord in this age, that we need to know about, protect ourselves from, and engage, is the cosmic warfare going on all around us, and help others to do the same.
 - a. The Old Testament (OT) eschatological perspective begins at the very time of God’s judgment of Adam and Eve, and the serpent already in Genesis 3, with this powerful revelation of God’s plan of redemption in Jesus Christ and the vanquishing of Satan in what is called the protoevangelium, literally the first [proclamation of the] Gospel of Christ. Only partially understood in the OT, it is fully understood in the light of the New Testament (NT) revelation.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Cursed are you...¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Genesis 3:14,15)
- “The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶and said, ‘I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you...¹⁸and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.’” (Genesis 22:15–18)
- “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.” (Genesis 49:10)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to some aspects of the end time that have already begun due to what Christ Jesus accomplished in his first coming.
 - a. The OT eschatological perspective begins with the protoevangelium, the first [account of the] Gospel, of Christ and includes the following.
 - 1) First is the expectation of a coming redeemer. Hoekema observes, “...in [Genesis 3:15] God reveals, as in a nutshell, all of his saving purpose with his people. The further history of redemption will be an unfolding of the contents of this mother promise. From this point on, all of [OT] revelation, looks forward, and eagerly awaits the promised redeemer.
 - a) This coming redeemer, described in Genesis 3:15... as the seed of the woman is designated as the seed of Abraham in Genesis 22:18....
 - b) Genesis 49:10 further specifies that the redeemer shall be a descendant of the tribe of Judah.” (P.5)
 - c) The rest of the OT incrementally reveals more about the coming Messiah.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. (Psalm 145:1)
- ““In the time of those [coming] kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.” (Daniel 2:44–45)
- ““In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13–14)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to aspects of the end time that have already begun.
 - a. The OT eschatological perspective includes the following.
 - 1) First is the expectation of a coming redeemer. (See also our earlier study of [Theology](#).)
 - 2) A second part of the OT eschatology is seen in the subject of the kingship of God, a major motif, or concept, throughout the Bible. (Review [Theology](#).)
 - a) Though the term, kingdom of God, does not appear in the OT, the concept of God as king is revealed. Due to human sin, God’s kingship, his rule, was only partially accepted and followed among his people.
 - b) Rather than seeing God’s rule in their hearts and minds, Israel looked more to a political rule. Notice even Jesus’ disciples’ question to him in Acts 1:6.
 - c) OT prophets foresaw the day when God’s rule would be universal, not just within Israel.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.” (Psalm 145:1)
- “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.” (Genesis 17:4-7)
- “‘The time is coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.’” (Jeremiah 31:31)
- “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:26-29)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to aspects of the end time that have already begun.
 - a. The OT eschatological perspective includes the following.
 - 3) A third aspect of OT eschatology is the major motif of the covenant and God's introduction of the new covenant through the Prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34), including the meaning of the special word for new (*kainos*) to designate this important dimension of the new covenant and other related entities, such as the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), and the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1). Very significantly, *kainos* signifies substantial and extensive renewing but with continuity. (Review [Anthropology](#), [Ecclesiology](#), and see more below.)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- ““In those days, at that time,’ declares the LORD, ‘search will be made for Israel’s guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare.’” (Jeremiah 50:20)
- “““For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”” (Ezekiel 36:24–27)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to aspects of the end time that have already begun.
 - a. The OT eschatological perspective includes the following.
 - 4) Fourth, we see the restoration of Israel but not what is presented in a relatively new theology called dispensationalism (*op cit.*) The Biblical restoration is a restoration of the purified remnant, the members of the covenant who have remained faithful to the LORD. (Cf., e.g., Jeremiah 50:20)
 - a) Recall the hermeneutical (*op cit.*) principle of prophetic foreshortening (*op cit.*, [Theology](#)), more commonly referred to as near and far fulfillment, where a prophecy applies both to a situation soon to occur and to an event much farther in the future. Ezekiel (e.g., 36:24-27) speaks in the context of the return of the remnant from exile but with a reference to future fulfillment in the new covenant in Christ.
 - b) Notice the references to Soteriology, e.g., regeneration (new heart, new spirit), the work of the Holy Spirit, and baptism, which come in the new covenant in and through Jesus Christ.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “He said to them, ‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.’⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.⁴⁶ He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’” (Luke 24:44–47)
- “...he will crush your [Satan’s] head, and you will strike his heel.” (Genesis 3:15; cf. Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 3:21; John 16:33)
- “...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.’²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:²³ ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’—which means, ‘God with us.’” (Matthew 1:20–23)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to aspects of the end time that have already begun, but the full and final completion of God’s plan is yet to come and will occur when the time is right in God’s sight.
 - a. The NT emphasizes and explains that, and how, the coming of Jesus Christ fulfills OT prophecy.
 - b. Scholars have identified over 300 OT Messianic prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. (*op cit.*) In addition to those in the left column, Hoekema cites several others, some of which are the following: Jesus the Christ’s birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2/Matthew 2:5-6; rejection by his people (Isaiah 53:3/John 1:11); triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9/Matthew 21:4-5); being sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12/Matthew 26:15); being pierced on the cross (Zechariah 12:10/John 19:34); none of his bones were to be broken (Psalm 34:20/John 19:33); his resurrection (Psalm 16:10/Acts 2:24-32); and his ascension (Psalm 68:18/Acts 1:9).

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Jesus replied, ‘Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. ⁶Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.’” (Matthew 11:4–6)
- “say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.’ ⁵Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.” (Isaiah 35:4–6)
- “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.” (1 Corinthians 15:3–8)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to aspects of the end time that have already begun, but the full and final completion of God’s plan is yet to come and will occur when the time is right in God’s sight.
 - b. The New Testament (NT) eschatological perspective includes the following.
 - 1) First, observe the NT emphasis that the main eschatological event prophesied in the OT, the coming and work of the Messiah, has now taken place, and the NT presents proof in the form of factual evidence, citing Jesus’ miraculous deeds.
 - c) In reply to John’s (the Baptist’s) question as to whether Jesus is the promised Messiah, Jesus sent John’s disciples back to him with the charge to simply tell John what they have actually seen the Lord do, precisely as predicted. (Cf. Matthew 11:4-6 with Isaiah 35:4-6) Paul cites eye witnesses, “most of whom are still living,” implying: go talk with them.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’” (Acts 1:10-11)
- “...just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, ²⁸so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” (Hebrews 9:27–28)
- “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹²instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds.” (Titus 2:11-14 NASB)

Meaning and Other Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to aspects of the end time that have already begun, but the full and final completion of God’s plan is yet to come and will occur when the time is right in God’s sight.
 - b. The New Testament (NT) eschatological perspective includes the following.
 - 2) Second, the NT shows that what the OT portrayed pertaining to the end time as one phenomenon, God’s further revelation indicates it involves two stages: the first coming of Christ and his second coming.
 - 3) Third, the relationship between the two end time, eschatological, stages (the present age that began with Christ’s first coming and the second that will take place at his second coming) include that the blessings of the present age are what Hoekema calls a pledge and a guarantee of greater blessings to come. For example, Christ’s first coming establishes the certainty of his second coming, e.g., the angels’ rhetorical question in Acts 1:10-11.
 - + In Titus 2:11-14, the Greek words for appeared and appearing are both from the same verb, which, Hoekema notes “denote an actual, visible manifestation. As Christ appeared in the past, this passage teaches, so he will appear again in the future.” (20)

Biblical Eschatology: Hope (A Realized Expectation Based on Jesus' Accomplishments in His First and Second Comings)

What Biblical Christianity offers, that we long for and which no other religion can provide, is Hope. Biblical hope is a realized expectation, because it is already here in part but not yet completely fulfilled.

Hoekema explains: "What is unique about New Testament eschatology, therefore, is that it expects a future consummation of God's purposes based on Christ's victory in the past. George Ladd makes this point: 'Its [the church's] witness to God's victory in the future is based on a victory already achieved in history. It proclaims not merely hope, but a hope based on events in history and its own experience.'

"Oscar Cullmann uses a well-known figure: the Christian believer lives between D-day and V-day. D-day was the first coming of Christ, when the enemy was decisively defeated; V-day is the Second coming of Christ, when the enemy shall totally and finally surrender. 'The hope of the final victory is so much the more vivid because of the unshakably firm conviction that the battle that decides the victory has already taken place.'

"[Hendrikus Berkhof adds:] 'In short, in the New Testament the future is the unfolding and completion of that which already exists in Christ and the Spirit and which will be carried through triumphantly in spite of sin, suffering, and death.' He makes the point that the 'Christian hopes for far greater blessings in the future, not because he now has so little, but because he already has so much....That is why hope is regularly found in connection with faith and love, which are both possessions.'" (21)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸“For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.”

²⁹“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man’s design and skill. ³⁰In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:24-31)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology refers to aspects of the end time that have already begun, but the full and final completion of God’s plan is yet to come when the time is right in his sight.
 - c. The meaning of history is a key question every generation encounters. God’s Word answers that question best. We view history in the light of the reign of Christ, which gives meaning, hope, and guidance to our lives and frees us from the fear most, if not all, have who look at human existence only from a secular perspective, the views of which are contrary to the Bible, e.g., the cyclical view that history is constantly repeating itself and going nowhere and the atheistic existentialist view that history is only a meaningless succession of events with no pattern or goal.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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.²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.³⁰ I 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 involves the cosmic warfare in which we're engaged. (Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 12-20)
 - 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

“And 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 involves the cosmic warfare in which we're engaged. (Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 12-20)
 - 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, *καιρός* (*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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “...this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy....²¹And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”” (Acts 2:16-21)
- “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD....” (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

1. Inaugurated eschatology involves the blessings that come from Christ’s first coming, which began the end time, and also the challenges of the cosmic warfare in which we’re engaged. We cannot forget either and certainly not both.
 - f. The OT indicates the Holy Spirit is involved in eschatology in the following important ways.
 - 1) OT prophets revealed God’s Word that the Holy Spirit would prepare the way for the arrival of the eschatological end time by certain signs, e.g., as Peter explained at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21) his quote of Joel 2:28-32.
 - 2) The prophets revealed that the Spirit would rest upon the Messiah to come. (Isaiah 11:1-2; 42:1; 61:1-2)

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

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” (Romans 8:11)
- “So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)
- “we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed [μεταμορφούμεθα (metamorphoumetha), present tense which indicates a continuing process] into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- 1.f.8)b)2- Hoekema explains the relationship of the Holy Spirit and our spiritual body well. “By ‘spiritual body’ Paul does not mean a body which is nonmaterial, but rather a body which will be completely under the control of the Holy Spirit...therefore, the Holy Spirit is not only active in bringing about the resurrection of the body, but also will continue to sustain and direct the resurrection body after the resurrection has occurred.” (66)
- 9) Hoekema adds another important point: Since 2 Corinthians 3:18 reveals that “the Spirit is already at work in us now, transforming us into the image of Christ, it follows that this progressive renewal is a kind of anticipation of the resurrection of the body. The Holy Spirit is thus the connecting link between the present body and the resurrection body....

In conclusion we may say that in the possession of the Spirit we who are in Christ have a foretaste of the blessings of the age to come, and a pledge and guarantee of the resurrection of the body. Yet we have only the firstfruits. We look forward to the final consummation of the kingdom of God, when we shall enjoy these blessings to the full [and forever!].” (66-67)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹So 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 reveals the end for individuals and the world.
 - 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 *θαῤροῦμεν* (*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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹So 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: the end for individuals and the world
 - 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) Observe three key aspects of physical death.
 - a) Humans are immortal; the person is a whole being, body and spirit/soul. See [Anthropology](#).
 - 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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 explains what God’s Word reveals about what takes place at the end of each individual’s life and, corporately, at the end of the present world.
 - a. Individual eschatology answers the question, “What will occur at the end of this phase of my life, i.e., when I die?” First, he or she 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 begins instantly at death, is the beginning of the full 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 is distinct but not separate.

As Anthony Hoekema writes, "The Bible does not have an independent doctrine of the intermediate state. Its teaching on this 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, the consummation, 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’
⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don't you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence?’
⁴¹We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.’
⁴²Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’
⁴³Jesus 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 reveals the end for individuals and the world.
 - 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 our 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 very 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’
⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don't you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence?’
⁴¹We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.’
⁴²Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’
⁴³Jesus 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 reveals the end for individuals and of the world.
 - 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 our 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.” (528)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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. ²⁶And 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)
- “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. ¹⁵Therefore, “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. ¹⁶Never again will they hunger...thirst...¹⁷For 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 reveals the end for individuals and of the world.
 - 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 reveal a great chasm between heaven and all elsewhere that prevents interaction between those on earth and in heaven.
 - 1- Also, 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 and always will be 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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. ²⁶And 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)
- “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. ¹⁵Therefore, “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. ¹⁶Never again will they hunger...thirst...¹⁷For 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: the end for individuals and the world
 - 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 reveal a great chasm between heaven and all elsewhere 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “ ‘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? ²⁰To 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. ²⁶And 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 reveals the end for individuals and the world.
 - 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 reveal a great chasm between heaven and all elsewhere that prevents interaction with those in heaven. The glory of God and the others in heaven will not be destroyed by our sin.
 - 3- We are also to never ask our departed loved ones or other ancestors for help. Nor are we to fear ancestors coming back or doing anything else to harm us. The Bible is clear throughout every page, that ancestors should **never** be worshiped. We are to **only** worship our triune God! The triune God is our only trustworthy and all-sufficient 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.

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Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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, ²¹who, 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 reveals the end for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 1) The expectation of Jesus’ second coming includes many references to it throughout the whole Bible. Anthony Hoekema writes, “The expectation of Christ’s Second Advent is a most important aspect of New Testament eschatology—so much so, in fact, that the faith of the New Testament church is dominated by this expectation. Every book of the New Testament points us to the return of Christ and urges us to live in such a way as to be always ready for that return.” (109)
 - 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 Paul’s letters and in Hebrews. (Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16; 2 Thessalonians 1:17,10; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28)

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Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)
- “...²⁵I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’ ²⁸As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.” (Romans 11:17–29)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 2) In his first coming, Jesus identified signs of the times that would indicate the end of this age and that his second coming was drawing closer, great events that will precede his second coming.
 - a) 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)

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- “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’” (Romans 11:26-27)
- “Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” (2 Corinthians 3:15-16)
- “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹²Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come....²¹then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²²If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.” (Matthew 24:9-13;21,22)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 2) In his first advent, Jesus revealed signs of the times, great events that would indicate the coming end of this age and Jesus’ second advent.
 - b) **“All Israel will be saved,”** i.e., **“all God’s true Israel,** all of it that really deserves the name, will be saved,” as Lenski exegetes Romans 11:26-27 and the context. (719) This conversion of true Israel will occur after the conversion of the full number of Gentiles. (Romans 11:25-29; 2 Corinthians 3:15)
 - c) There will be **a great apostasy and tribulation.** (Matthew 24:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:3-4)

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Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ¹⁰and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10)
- “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. ⁴You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (1 John 4:3-4)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 2) Jesus revealed signs, great events, that will precede his second coming:
 - d) The arrival of one called the antichrist will occur. Be on the lookout for him, and be very careful, but don’t worry. He is dangerous, but he is not a peer of, and is no match for, the Lord Jesus Christ who is always with us. (Matthew 28:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; 1 John 4:3)

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Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” (Matthew 24:29; cf. Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25-26)
- “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. ¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as 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. ¹³But 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 reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 2) Jesus revealed signs, great events, that will precede his second coming:
 - e) **Signs and wonders will appear.** (Matthew 24:29; cf. 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), most likely refers to the elimination of all evil, i.e., purifying the earth, the refiner’s fire. The good will remain. Notice the Greek in 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1, *καινός* (*kainos*), meaning new in nature or in 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*), which means new in time or in origin, if they meant brand new. God values his creation, its history, and its continuity; he’s restoring it, not destroying it and making a brand new, unrelated, world. Christ suffered, died, and rose to cleanse save his own original [creation](#) that he loves, which already exists.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Matthew 24:36)
- “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ²He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.” (Revelation 20:1-3)
- “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)
- “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (Matthew 24:44)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
- 3) The Word of God does reveal several aspects of the nature of Jesus’ second coming.
 - a) The time of his coming is known only to God the Father. (Matthew 24:36)
 - 1- Unbiblical concepts concerning the time of Jesus’ second coming recur. Therefore, disregard and pay no attention to those who claim to know and predict when Jesus will come again. (Cf. Matthew 24:23-26)
 - 2- Biblically-based concepts concerning Jesus’ second coming involve the three main interpretations of the 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation 20:2-3.

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

Three main interpretations of the meaning of the term millennium, referred to but not used, in Revelation 20:2-3, have emerged since the apostle John wrote those words, the only passage in the Bible that refers to a 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ. The word, millennium itself, does not appear anywhere in the Bible.

a- **Amillennialism** (< a [not] + Latin *mille* [thousand]), the view espoused in this course, is based on the historic Biblical and literary hermeneutics (principles of interpretation), especially on those pertaining to context and literary genre. Since the apostle John wrote Revelation in the genre of apocalyptic literature, a highly symbolic literary form that in Revelation includes numbers as well as colors, names, natural portents, animals, and other phenomena (e.g., golden bowls of incense), we see the number 1,000, as the other numbers in Revelation, as being obviously symbolic, not only here but elsewhere in the OT and NT. Here, and elsewhere in the Bible (see the other loci, esp. [Christology](#)), the Lord is reigning now (cf., e.g., Ephesians 1:18-23).

The context of the term 1,000 years in Revelation 20:2-3, clearly indicates the symbolic aspect of the apocalyptic genre of the passage. For just one example, in 20:1-2, we read that an angel came down out of heaven with a great chain and bound Satan. Obviously, John did not intend that text to be taken literally; Satan is a spirit, and physical chains do not bind spirits, but God's omnipotent power, to which the chain refers, does bind spirits, including Satan. See below for more on this subject.

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a- *Amillennialism* Cont'd.: The millennium is going on now, between Christ's first and second comings. Jesus is reigning in heaven during these "1000 years," which term is only mentioned in the 20th chapter of the book of Revelation. Before we go further, it is important at this point to remember the historic principle of Biblical interpretation that no doctrine should be based on only one passage of Scripture. It is also necessary for the most accurate interpretation of a passage in the Bible, to ascertain whether the words are to be taken literally or figuratively. Here in Revelation 20 we observe that John is writing in the genre of apocalyptic literature, which was familiar to Christ's people to whom he was writing (as, e.g., sections of Daniel are written in this genre) and which employs much symbolism. Thus, the number 1,000 is a symbolic number, like all the other numbers in Revelation. What does it mean? The number 1,000 is the cube of 10, 10 being a round number symbolizing fullness and completeness, and the number three, a spiritual number, here of course representing the triune God, indicating that God (specifically the Second Person of the Trinity, Christ Jesus, [Ephesians 1:17-23]) is in full control, ruling over the whole time between his first and second comings, so the church does not have to worry about anything, even the harshest events it experiences between now and the Lord's return.

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a- *Amillennialism* Cont'd.: This was great and encouraging news to the church, which was being cruelly persecuted by the especially vicious tyrant, Domitian, the Roman Emperor in the mid-90s of the first century A.D., when John penned the book of Revelation from prison on the Island of Patmos, just off the eastern coast of Asia Minor (now Turkey) where the seven churches to whom he was writing were located. In fact, John wrote the whole book of Revelation to comfort the persecuted church, which makes it especially helpful now in these days, where the church is being persecuted more than at any other time in the history of the world, more Christians being martyred in the last 100 years than in all the previous 20 centuries combined!

The Lord will reign on earth in the period of the new heaven and the new earth, when he returns to restore all things. This explanation has been called the amillennial view of eschatology. The word amillennial (no literal thousand year period), while correct in its denotation, can convey a misleading connotation that those of us who hold to that interpretation are negative and do not proclaim the joy of the realities expressed in God's Word especially pertaining to the reign of Christ already now. Far from it! For this reason, I prefer the term Anthony Hoekema presents in *The Bible and the Future*, "realized millennialism."

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The other millennial views all base their reasoning on the assumption that the text, and other related Bible passages, can be interpreted literally. Hence, they interpret the 1,000 years as a literal millennial reign of Jesus Christ here on earth.

b- **Postmillennialism** is the view that Christ's second coming will occur after a 1,000-year reign of Jesus that will take place sometime during this era. Adherents of this view hold that Christ's reign will not only be in the future, but it will also be here on the present earth, rather than already ongoing now in and from heaven as amillennialists maintain.

The underlying presupposition is that the spread of the Gospel of Christ will result in the gradual improvement of life here on earth to the extent of eventual righteousness, justice, peace, and much else, then Jesus will return to reign for 1,000 years prior to the final judgment. Some adherents who lack a well-formulated Biblical [anthropology](#), see this gradual improvement coming from a natural evolutionary process.

The postmillennial view has lost much credibility in the last century in the perspective of two horrific world wars, a growing amount of international and domestic discord and immorality, and thus being unrealistic. For those who think carefully, postmillennialism conflicts with other Biblical teaching such as the great apostasy that will occur at the end.

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The other millennial views all base their reasoning on the assumption that the Revelation 20:2-3 text, and related Biblical prophecies, can be interpreted literally. Hence, they interpret the 1,000 years as a literal millennial reign of Jesus Christ here on earth.

c- **Premillennialism** is the view that Christ's second coming will occur before a 1,000-year reign of Jesus that will take place sometime during this era. Adherents of this view, who differ among themselves on a number of details, hold that Christ's reign will not only be in the future, but it will also be here on the present earth, rather than already ongoing now in and from heaven as amillennialists maintain.

Premillennialists believe that Jesus will return at sometime during this present age, but after the great tribulation, the great apostasy, and the appearance of a human antichrist, to reestablish the kingdom of David and rule from his throne in Jerusalem for 1,000 years. When Christ comes again, he will be joined in the air by resurrected believers who have been living in glory, and those still living who will be transformed and glorified, all of whom will accompany Jesus to earth for his 1,000-year reign.

Much of the historic premillennial view also conflicts with the Bible. For example, it portrays the kingdom of God as an earthly and national kingdom, whereas Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36; cf., Matthew 12:28; Luke 17:21; Colossians 1:13, *et al.*) The passage this view uses its main support, Revelation 20:1-6, portrays a scene in the present heaven and does not speak of the Jews or an earthly kingdom. The return of the glorified Christ and his people already glorified, nullifies the finality of their glorification. The premillennial view is not in accord with NT eschatology. The NT speaks of no third age between the present age or the age to come. On the contrary, when Jesus returns he will establish a new age and sit on his glorious throne (Matthew 25:31), not a millennial throne with sin and evil all around it. See more in Berkhof and Hoekema.

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The non-amillennial views all base their reasoning on the assumption that the Revelation 20:2-3 text, and related Biblical prophecies, can be interpreted literally. Dispensationalists (below) argue also from another principle, i.e., Israel and the church are fundamentally, and always will be, distinctly different. Hence, they interpret the 1,000 years as a literal millennial reign of Jesus Christ here on earth.

d- **Dispensational Premillennialism** is the view that Christ's second coming will occur before a 1,000-year reign of Jesus that will take place sometime during this era. Adherents of this relatively recent view (beginning only in the latter 19th century), an offshoot of traditional premillennialism, hold that Christ's reign will not only be in the future, but it will also be here on the present earth, rather than already ongoing now in and from heaven as amillennialists maintain.

The word, dispensational, refers to the theological theory that God has divided up all of history into seven periods in which he distributes, or dispenses, grace in different ways (but only “by God's grace through the work of Christ that was accomplished on the cross and vindicated in his resurrection”). Anthony Hoekema quotes the definition in *The New Scofield Bible*: “A dispensation is defined as ‘a period of time during which man is tested in respect this obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.’” (Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 188)

Dispensationalists differ from historic premillennialism, and also are quite divided among themselves, on several other aspects of their eschatology, in particular pertaining to the timing of Jesus' second coming, i.e., whether he will come before (pretribulationists), during (midtribulationists), or after (posttribulationists) the tribulation. They believe that Jesus will return in two stages. They also hold to a fundamental and continuous distinction between Israel and the church.

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d- *Dispensational Premillennialism* Cont'd.: We should be careful to note that nowhere in the Bible does God mention seven different eras in which he is going to be dispensing grace and testing people in seven different ways. This concept is the result of a theological construct that has a relatively recent (late 19th and early 20th century) origin.

Here and in several other key aspects of their eschatology, dispensationalists err in their interpretation of Biblical texts. For example, their teaching that God has a separate purpose for Israel and the church is in opposition to Biblical teaching which throughout both testaments reveals a strong covenantal continuity (*op cit.*) between Israel and the church. The view of a millennial restoration of the Jews to the promised land is contrary to the Bible. Explanation of these errors and much more about premillennialism follows and is also in [Dispensationalists and Dispensational Premillennialism](#) and other articles at [From Acorn to Oak 12](#). See also Hoekema and the critique by theologian Herman Bavinck (*op cit.*, Overview) Note Bavinck uses the term chiliast, which comes from the Greek *chīliasmós* < *chīli(oi)*, 1000 + *-asmos* < *ismos, ism*. Thus, chiliasm means millenarianism.

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The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ²for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6)
- “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (Matthew 24:44)
- “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 reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
- 3) The Word of God does reveal several aspects of the nature of Jesus’ second coming.
 - a) The time of his coming is known only to God the Father. (Matthew 24:36)
 - 3- Jesus’ return will be unexpected and be a surprise, and we are warned to be prepared and ready. (Matthew 24:37-44; 25:1-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; Revelation 3:3)
 - b) Jesus’ return will be a glorious and triumphant coming. (Matthew 24:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7,10; 1 Thessalonians 3:13)

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the end of my life and the end of history?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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, ²¹who, 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 reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
- 3) The Word of God reveals several aspects of the nature of Jesus’ second coming.
 - c) **Jesus will arrive in his resurrection body.** (Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7)

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Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Daniel 12:2)
- “But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’” (Luke 20:37; Exodus 3:6)
- “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)
- “I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.” (John 5:25-29)
- See also 1 Corinthians 15:20-58.

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
- 4) The purpose of Jesus’ second coming is to introduce the future age through two major events: the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.
 - a) Pertaining to the resurrection of the dead, we must discern very important differences between the resurrection of the body and other matters with respect to the body and views of the body.
 - 1- Resurrection is totally different from the concept of reincarnation. Reincarnation is an unbiblical (e.g., Hebrews 9:27), unrealistic, demonic (1 Corinthians 10:20-21; John 14:6; *et al., op cit.*), and thus untrue, pagan concept central to religions as Hinduism and Buddhism.
 - 2- The resurrection body is substantially different from bodies that have been raised from the dead, or resuscitated, but that remain in their original state while they yet live here on earth, e.g., Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:41-56), Lazarus (John 11:41-44), and Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43).

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Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

“While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’

³⁷They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.’

⁴⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴He said to them, ‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.’

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.’” (Luke 24:36-49)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) The purpose of Jesus’ second coming is to introduce the future age through two major events: the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.
 - a)3- Our resurrection body will be like Jesus’ resurrection body with an amazing and presently unknown chemistry and physiological constitution.
 - a- 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, because there will be no sin and evil.
 - b- It will be recognizable (cf. Luke 24:30-31).
 - c- It will be whole and complete, e.g., no need for eye glasses, crutches, or wheelchairs and no withered arms or prostheses.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

²⁴ Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:19-29)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

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 - b- It will be recognizable (cf. Luke 24:30-31).
 - c- 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, believers and unbelievers, 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11–15)
- “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” (Revelation 22:12–13)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) The purpose of Jesus’ second coming is to introduce the future age through two major events: the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.
 - c) There will be a final judgment that will bring God’s people into his eternal presence for his glory and pleasure and for our glorification and joy with no more sin or evil present among us. As Hoekema writes, “The final state will be one of either eternal misery or eternal happiness. All who are in Christ will enjoy everlasting blessedness on the new earth, whereas all who are not in Christ will be consigned to everlasting punishment in hell.” (265)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

Meaning and Practical Benefits



2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) The final judgment (2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 20:12), which will be rendered by Christ Jesus, will be entirely gracious and merciful, while at the same time being completely just, righteous, and fair.

Notice this picture of an olive wood statue symbolizing Christ Jesus’ first and second advents. His first advent is seen in his carrying a sheep, portraying his pastoral love that will also be operative in his second advent—clearly pointed to with the spear, not a shepherd’s staff— thus referring to the judgment. In his first advent, he said he had not come to judge but to save. At his second advent, he is coming for the promised judgment that will resolve all wrongdoing and evil, and restore his creation, 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

“So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? ⁴Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance? ⁵But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶God ‘will give to each person according to what he has done.’ ⁷To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹For God does not show favoritism.” (Romans 2:3-11)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) The purpose of Jesus’ second coming is to introduce the future age through two major events: the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.
 - c) The Bible is clear: there will be a final judgment, and Jesus, our Savior and our Lord, will be the judge.
 - 3- For Christians, this is not a day to dread, because our decision to follow Jesus Christ will be vindicated. Since we belong to Jesus, he knows us, and he will bring us into his kingdom and his eternal presence, fellowship, and service.
 - 4- There will be a separation of the “sheep from the goats.”

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

The Doctrine of the Last Things

- “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14)
- “For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)
- “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
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 - 4- There will be a separation of the “sheep from the goats.”

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

Jesus' Second Coming, Consummation

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³²All 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. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴Then 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

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?” 4)c)
- 4- 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14)
- “For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)
- “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)
- “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:22–23)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) The purpose of Jesus’ second coming is to introduce the future age through two major events: the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.
 - c) **The Bible is clear: there will be a final judgment, and Jesus will be the judge.**
 - 5- **Those who have rebelled against God, his Word, and his will, will receive what they want, eternal separation from God and eternity in hell, including false and lying prophets. (Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Matthew 24:24; Deuteronomy 13:1-3)**

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

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)
- “He [Christ] will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 8:3)
- See R. C. H. Lenski commentary on 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (*op cit.*).

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) The purpose of Jesus’ second coming is to introduce the future age through two major events: the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment. 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.
 - d) 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. We are responsible for our behavior, and we will have to give account for it.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

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):

- “...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)
- “He [Christ] will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 8:3)
- “So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:9–10)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) **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.**
 - e) **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 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’” (Matthew 19:28)
- “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:2–3)
- “To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—” (Revelation 2:26)
- “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Revelation 3:21)
- “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and for the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 4) Jesus Christ will render the final judgment.
 - f) Christ’s believers will participate with him in the judgment. (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)
 - 1- Lenski comments well on 6:2-3: “We judge the world now. Paul does it when he calls the world ‘unrighteous.’ Whoever has the Word of God and rightly uses that Word thereby judges the world, and judges it truly. And in the final judgment at the last day the saints shall be Christ’s associate judges. This is a part of their royal rule as crowned kings.” (236; cf. 1 Peter 2:9)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:2–3)
- “His [God’s] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10–11)
- “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” (Jude 6)
- “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Revelation 3:21)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place at the end of history?”
 - 4) Christ’s believers will participate with him in the judgment. (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)
 - f) Christ’s believers will participate with him in the judgment. (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)
 - 3- **And Christ’s faithful believers will participate with him even in judging angels.** Lenski, citing another Biblical scholar, Osiander, offers an insightful and wise interpretation of 6:3: “The Word by which the saints judge extends also to the angels. Osiander writes: ‘Just as we find a law of mediation in the ministration of grace from man to man although the Lord remains supreme, so we find the same law of mediation in the final ministration of justice, the believers judge the world including the angels, yet the Lord is always supreme. In what this judging consists, in promulgating or confirming the verdict or in otherwise assisting, we must leave until the great act takes place.’” (238)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:2–3)
- “His [God’s] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10–11)
- “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” (Jude 6)
- “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Revelation 3:21)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
- 4)f) Christ’s believers will participate with him in the judgment. (1 Corinthians 6:2-3)
 - 3- Christ’s faithful believers will participate with him even in judging angels.

➤ What an exalted position God has given us! What dignity, worth, and honor he has bestowed upon his people who bear his image in Jesus Christ!

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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.’ ⁷To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸But 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. ⁸He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰on 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 reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and for the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 5) The Final State, no longer now the intermediate state, takes place following the last judgment. The final state consists of eternal punishment for those who are committed to evil and of eternal blessedness and glory for those in Christ.
 - a) The punishment for those who follow evil is an eternal separation from God who is most holy and who will not permit in his presence evil that offends him and harms those he loves. Those committed to evil do not want to be with God.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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.’ ⁷To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸But 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. ⁸He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰on 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 reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and for the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?”
 - 5) The final state consists of eternal punishment for unrepentant evildoers and glory for those in Christ.
 - a) Those committed to evil do not want to be with God and his holy ones in such an environment as heaven. Their decision to choose hell instead of heaven will result in much anguish and feel like being in a lake of fire, because they will be with others committed to evil that will then be unrestrained, unlike in this phase of life where the Holy Spirit is restraining evil. The Spirit will not be in hell to help them.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- ¹“Then I saw a new [*kainos*] heaven and a new [*kainos*] earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... ⁴[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. 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 21:1a 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 reveals the end.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology reveals the end of history. 5), b), 1-
 - b- As we saw previously 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 in 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 much more, without the sin, evil, corruption, and disharmony that Adam's and Eve's disobedience brought to God's original creation and that we are now enduring until Christ Jesus returns.
 - c- Thus, as we reconnect with our spouse (though no longer married [Matthew 22:30]), family, other loved ones, and friends in and with Christ, 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 phase of life here on earth. 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. [Cf. Revelation 21:24-27] 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 Hoekema explained 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- ¹“Then I saw a new (*kainos*) heaven and a new (*kainos*) earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... ⁴[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. 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 21:1a 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 reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?” ⁵, 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “And he [God] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,¹⁰ 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 it was the *Father’s* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him [Christ Jesus],²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made [Greek, aorist (past) tense: historical, once for all, permanent and to be brought to completion in Christ’s second coming] peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” (Colossians 1:19–20 NASB)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

2. Future Eschatology reveals what will occur at the end of this phase of life for individuals and the world.
 - b. Corporate/cosmic eschatology answers the question, “What will take place for the whole world at the end of history?” 5), b),
 - 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 [his] 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?

3. Interpretation of more 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?

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)
- “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33; cf. Revelation 3:12 and other related passages.)
- “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

- b. In the **John 16:33** passage, noting the meaning of two Greek words is helpful. The word for “world,” *κόσμος* (*kosmos*), means the whole world, including with all its evil. The word Jesus used for “overcome,” is *νενίκηκα* (*nenikēka*) and means “I have conquered.” Jesus has conquered Satan and the demonic forces generating the evil that we are battling daily in the spiritual war in which we’re involved (Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 12-20) How comforting it is to know that our Lord has won the war! The current battles are just the “mopping up phase.” Everything is under his control and we know the final outcome.
 - For added joy: memorize these comforting words! Be sure to read a portion of God’s Word and pray every day.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

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

²Therefore 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.

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

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

⁴but 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.

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

⁶The 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 11:1-6; cf.
7-9)

Meaning and Practical Benefits

- c. 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!
- d. 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),
- e. and his second coming will eternally eliminate evil from the lives of his people. The theodicy question is not only answered; it is resolved forever! (Isaiah 11:3b-9; Revelation 21)

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

- “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

- f. What a huge joy it is to know that our greatest blessings are still to come including being in God’s very presence and service with our loved ones in Christ, together with all God’s other people, forever!
- g. 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)
- h. 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.

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

Doctrine of the Last Things, Consummation

Meaning and Practical Benefits

NOTE: All the words translated “new” in the verses that follow are *kainos* in the original Greek.

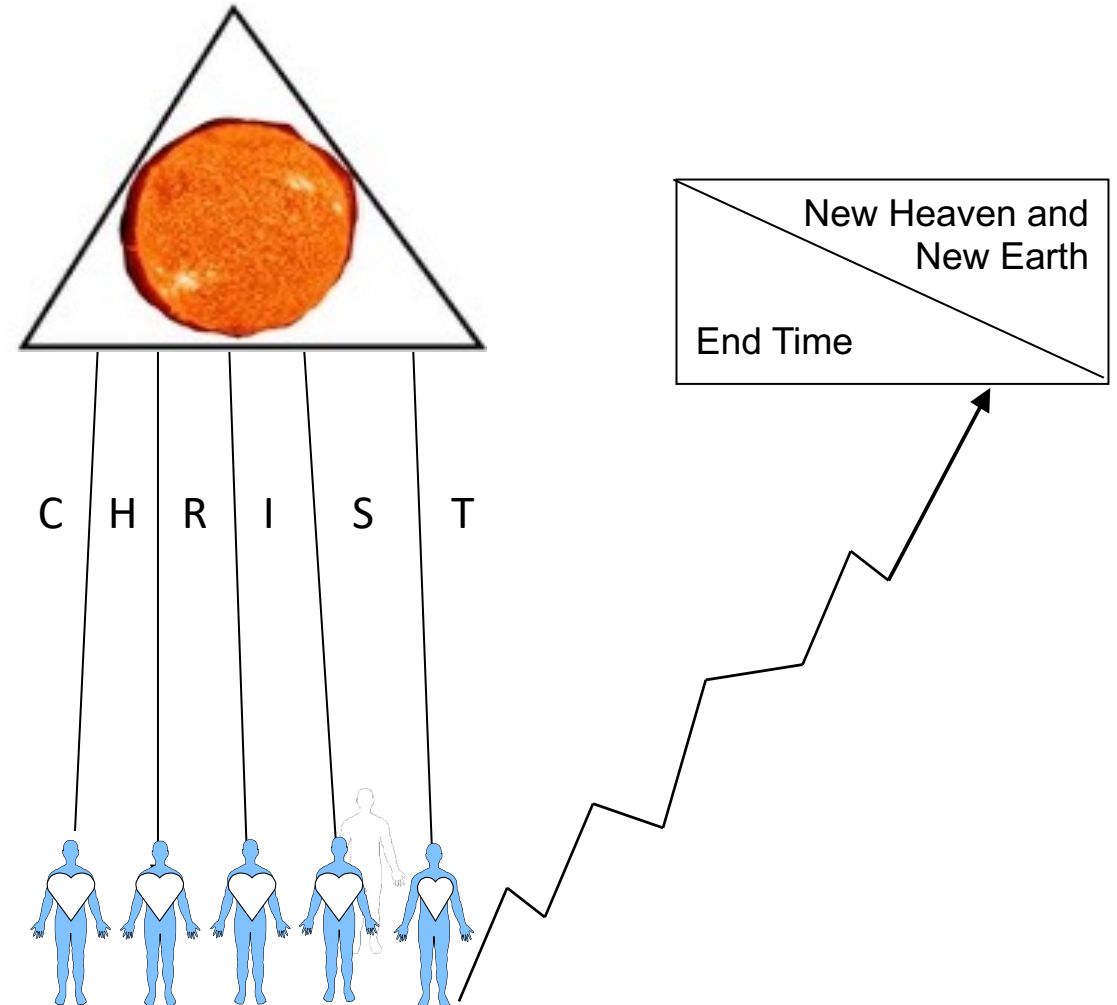
- “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” (Hebrews 8:8, quoting Jeremiah 31:31 [38:31 in the LXX])
- “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,” (Revelation 21:1-2; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22 [LXX])
- “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.” (Revelation 2:17)

- i. For a firm foundation for a constant bright and optimistic perspective on the future, keep in mind the continuity between the good of the present and the glory of the future that is denoted by *kainos*, the renewed realities we enjoy to a limited extent already in Christ that will be glorified in the new heaven and the new earth. Consider the examples that follow.
 - 1) The new covenant (Hebrews 8:8, quoting Jeremiah 31:31 [38:31 in the LXX, the Greek translation of the OT])
 - 2) The new heaven and the new earth (Isaiah 66:22; Revelation 21:1)
 - 3) New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2)
 - 4) The new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - 5) A new name (Revelation 2:17)

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

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Cite some very practical blessings for God's people in the doctrine of eschatology.
2. What do you personally find most helpful about the Biblical doctrine of eschatology?



[If time: Start in groups of four, then debrief in the large group. If time is short: begin in dyads, then ask for volunteers to share with the whole group what they think.]

For More Information

In order to facilitate course preparation, the slides in this presentation on Biblical Eschatology have been selected from the larger [overview](#) of Eschatology, which itself has been drawn from the Eschatology section of the original and unabridged version of the PowerPoint program (PPT), [*Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, Including God’s Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity.*](#)

This abridged PPT is still larger than can be covered in an average one-class session, particularly in the West. Therefore, highlighting of especially essential parts is offered to help when time is very limited.

For further information about the subjects on the Eschatology slides in this abridged program, see the additional slides in the Eschatology section that are on the original and unabridged presentation, which is located on the [Christian Theology](#) page of the author’s free and secure [general Website](#). See also other documents on the Christian Eschatology page, including a video of the author’s teaching of some of the key aspects of Christian Eschatology in another class on this subject.

Notes

1. For more information on each of the six Biblical doctrines in historic Christian systematic theology in this course, 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
2. See the “Resources for Further Information” slide on the unabridged [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian Systematic Theology](#) PowerPoint program, in particular, Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979).
3. 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.