



# THE WELL INSTITUTE

ESCHATOLOGY  
(The Doctrine of END TIMES)

WEEK 1: What is Eschatology & Why Study It?

## ESCHATOLOGY (THE STUDY OF THE END TIMES)

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#### Introduction

Perhaps of all the confusing and mysterious theological studies available, most Christians struggle with understanding the biblical perspective of the **End Times**. The subject of (Eschatology) which is the study of the End Times is as fascinating as it is confusing. The Bible is full of prophecy and apocalyptic literature -almost every book of the Bible contains a portion of prophecy. The subject of the End Times should not be ignored by anyone, especially not of true Believers who will want to understand what God declares to happen when He returns again to this earth (His Second Coming). As an informed disciple of Jesus, you really need to know what you believe concerning the eminent return of Jesus Christ and all the details surrounding His return.

To help you navigate through a very confusing topic, this packet will outline, highlight, and point you to several scriptures which will give you comfort as you dive into a difficult and often misunderstood subject. In the end, this study is to help you ask pertinent questions related to the Bible, theology, and specifically the biblical details of the End Times. Prayerfully, this packet can help explain difficulties and other areas where confusion about the End Times reigns. Know that you are not alone in being intimidated by what are confusing scriptures and symbols in the book of Revelation, Daniel, and many others. However, God has called every Christian to embrace their responsibility to know the Bible, and all of it, (even the hard stuff) – so that you can stand before the Lord, “*as a workman who need not be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of God*” (2 Timothy 2:15). Besides, the book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible which promises actual blessings to those who read and heed the instruction within it (Revelation 1:3). Thus, don’t miss out on God’s blessings (grace, knowledge, encouragement, wisdom, passion, and perspective) by ignoring the study of the End Times; but rather, embrace your responsibility to deal with and struggle through the rich and often symbolic nature of apocalyptic Scripture as you seek to glorify God through this study (Col. 3:17).

#### What is Eschatology?

Eschatology is the study of the End Times, concerning the prophecies, events, and realities (both spiritual, physical, personal and cosmic – those predicted and promised) which are detailed through both Apocalyptic and Prophetic Scripture within the Bible. In short, Eschatology is the study of the detailed events surrounding Jesus’ final return to earth (His Second Coming) and the consummation of the universe (i.e. the rebirth, renewal, and recreation of the new heaven and earth) after divine cosmic judgment.

The term **Eschatology** comes from the Greek language: *Eschaton* (last things) and *logia* (the study of). Therefore, Eschatology is the technical study of the last things or End times events.

The Importance of Soteriology:

The importance of Ecclesiology:

The importance of Eschatology:

\*Hebrews 9:15-28

## What is the essence of the biblical message of the End Times?

Many Christians who love the Lord with all their heart, at times, disagree about important truths and doctrines of Scripture. Thus, we see many different Christian denominations in our country -the result of disagreement on how we understand and practice Christianity. The subject of the End Times is no less debated than perhaps any other doctrine, and unfortunately, has been a point of division rather than unity throughout Church history. **The point of this study, in essence, is to declare that the Bible teaches a clear, physical, and historical (FUTURE) re-appearing or Second Coming of Jesus Christ as Savior and Messiah over the whole World (Acts 1:11).**

The imminent return of Christ is a *non-negotiable* core Christian doctrine that Evangelical Christianity has held for centuries and still holds to be true (Dan. 7:13; Zech. 14:4; Mt. 24:30; 26:64; Rev. 1:7; 14:14). The imminent and visible return of Christ is as crucial a teaching as the virgin birth or the resurrection; in truth, they are all tied together through the life and ministry of Jesus the Messiah, based on hundreds of prophecies throughout all of Scripture.

That Jesus is coming back is a promise and a biblical warrant for Christ's kingdom to be established on this earth (John 14:3). Jesus is coming again to this earth. To accept and hold to this biblical reality is in part what defines you as a Christian, since you are believing what Jesus says about Himself and what the Bible claims as fact. Now, the rest of the details concerning **how** and **when** He returns are open to interpretation and discussion. So, not all Christians agree on the details. Godly and well-meaning Christians view differing the events of Revelation as either *Preterism*, *Historicism*, *Realism*, or *Futurism*.

- Some believe that the events of Revelation have already occurred in the past (almost 2 thousand years ago). Those who hold to this view are called \_\_\_\_\_. Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD known as St. Augustin) held to this view.

-Those who hold that the events described in Revelation have occurred throughout Church history over the last two thousand years through real historical events and persons are called \_\_\_\_\_. Many of the Reformers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Thomas Cranmer held to this view.

-Those who hold that the events in Revelation are specifically symbolic and can be interpreted allegorically are called \_\_\_\_\_. These hold that the events in Revelation (other than the literal return of Jesus to the earth at His Second Coming) are not fulfilled in a literal, real, earthly or physical sense in the past, present, or future.

- These believe, then, that the events of Revelation are only or primarily symbolic. These idealists hold to a more symbolic or allegorical understanding of prophecy and apocalyptic literature. Specifically, these hold that there will be no true (actual) one thousand years on this earth under the reign of Jesus as Messiah. Those who advocate a more spiritualized or symbolic approach to the events of Revelation can be generally called either **Postmillennialists** or **Amillennialists** (A = as in "not" for Millennialism).

Last, those who hold that the events as described in Revelation and other Apocalyptic Scripture throughout the Bible are actually (literally) real, physical, earthly, and still future are called \_\_\_\_\_. In other words, these interpret Scripture to be literal and the details of Revelation to describe real and future events which have not yet happened in history. Moreso, Futurists hold that all unfulfilled prophecy

in the Old Testament which pertains to the Jewish people, the Messiah, and the promises to God's people in general (and to their blessings and land in specific) are YET to be fulfilled and are still future. These hold that the events in Revelation have not yet occurred and are still future and that we are to expect Jesus not only to return physically in the future, but that the events of Revelation are real and will occur in the future – enacting the “End Times.” Those who hold this perspective are more generally referred to as **Premillennialists**, since Jesus is understood to re-appear and claim His rightful throne on this earth BEFORE (PRE) the literal thousand year (millennial) reign. Those who do not necessarily hold to an actual rapture event before the 7 years of tribulation and who consider the Church as the spiritual heirs of Israel in fulfillment, are generally referred to as **Historic Premillennialists**; and those who hold to a literal rapture event before the 7 years of tribulation and distinguish between the future of both Israel and the Church are called **Dispensational Premillennialists**.

As you study this doctrine of eschatology, even if you disagree with some of these conclusions, you still can be challenged and learn a lot about what the Bible teaches concerning the nature of Jesus, His work on the earth, and God's redemptive act of restoration on the earth. In short, the book of Revelation is **THE** revelation of Jesus Christ. Any study concerning this doctrine will be a blessing to the student, as the study of Eschatology will reveal more about the wonder and glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Again, this study, as a prelude to the glory of Christ, is worth your time, devotion, and best effort. Press on to discover more!

## A. WHY STUDY THE END TIMES? WHY READ THE BOOK OF REVELATION?

Why is Revelation such an important Book to study, believe, and obey?

In the Book of Revelation we see . . .

1. The revelation of \_\_\_\_\_ . The word Revelation (*Apocalypto*) means the unveiling.
2. The hope of \_\_\_\_\_ ultimately realized through the gospel. Jesus wins. In Him, we win.
3. The fulfillment of the \_\_\_\_\_: The Purpose of the Church; the Promise & Function of Ch. in et.
4. The fulfillment of the promises to God's Covenant People, \_\_\_\_\_: (Presence, Blessings, Land)
5. The ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ to this earth.
6. The divine judgment of the \_\_\_\_\_ on the earth (temporally) and then for eternity in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The divine judgment of \_\_\_\_\_, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and their \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The restoration of all things on \_\_\_\_\_: the Millennium; a re-edenification/renewal = temporal.
9. The consummation of this present earth and the \_\_\_\_\_ of a new heaven/earth & new Jer.

I believe there are also three clear reasons, apart from receiving God's promised blessings, why God wants us to read this last Book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, making an attempt to try and fully grasp and assimilate the knowledge and revelation that is contained in this Book:

1. An important reason to read and study the book of Revelation is due to the fact that it is the very \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible; it is the very last “chapter” of God's redemptive history. The book of Revelation unfolds the climax to our whole story *in* the Lord. As such, each Christian should know exactly how life and key moments in world history will eventually play out and exactly what our final ending is going to be in the Lord – as He has revealed it to us through Scripture.

Can you imagine reading a good fiction novel, and then all of sudden you quit reading as you get to the last chapter, never finding out what the final ending came out to be? Can you imagine watching an exciting movie on the big screen, and then all of sudden you walk out on the last 10 minutes of the movie never finding out exactly how the movie was going to end?

If you ask many Christians what the final end of their story in the Lord is going to be, they will tell you that when they die and depart from this earth, they will go straight to heaven and live with God, Jesus, and all of their saved loved ones forever in heaven. This is true! However, unless you have read from the book of Revelation and other biblical verses that pertain to end time events, you would not know that there are two more interesting events that will occur after you have already died and entered into heaven.

The Bible teaches that saints who have been living with Jesus in heaven will be coming back to \_\_\_\_\_ with Him *on this earth* during His Millennium Kingdom (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:4, 6 22:5). The Bible describes that the Millennium Kingdom will last 1000 years and will be on this very earth (Rev. 20:9). **After** this 1000 years have passed, the next, last, and final event will be God the Father judging all souls for eternity and creating a New Heaven and a New Earth where He will and Jesus will then rule this new earth from the new holy city of Jerusalem for the rest of all eternity. As a Believer in Jesus, your eternity is tied to serving the Lord, ruling the earth with Him, and then being a part of eternity in the New Heaven and New Earth (within the New Jerusalem). For Believers, our new life in Christ (after our earthly death) will be the most glorious beginning to NEW life and life eternal. As a Christian, according to Revelation and the rest of the Bible, you have so much to look forward to...*"Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him"* (1 Cor. 2:9). In the book of Revelation, we discover God's plan for r\_\_\_\_\_, r\_\_\_\_\_ for the lost, and r\_\_\_\_\_ for those He saves.

2. A second reason that each Christian should have basic knowledge on the End Times is so they can \_\_\_\_\_ and transmit this knowledge to other Christians who do not have or have ever been exposed to this future historical certainty. We are called to encourage each other (Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25). What could be more encouraging than sharing the truth of Scripture and the hope of eternity with \_\_\_\_\_? Knowing what the Bible declares will happen in the future for His glory. Knowing that He wins!!!! knowing that He WILL finally and ultimately conquer ALL death, all pain, all sin, all suffering, and all loss. Jesus conquers all of this for all time. What a hope, what a future!!!! This truth should give great encouragement for those who are currently struggling on this earth with pain, suffering, and real loss.

Until more churches start to teach on this subject matter, you are going to have many Christians, especially in the times we are living at right now, who are going to be very hungry for information on this topic, and they will seek out teachers who can educate them on this topic.

3. The third reason that every Christian should be fully armed with knowledge on this topic is because we will never know which \_\_\_\_\_ will be the one that will start to live through these end time events. And once these end time events start to take place, **your knowledge on this subject matter** and **one's faith in the Lord** will be the only two things that will help get you through some of these horrific events. You will need to know biblically how End Time events will play out. If you do not, you could easily lose your faith in the Lord due to the extreme activity that will be occurring during those very trying times.

This is why the Lord explains in great \_\_\_\_\_ in the Bible on this entire subject matter. He wants to give all of us more than enough fair warning on exactly what will be coming down the road so we can properly prepare ourselves, others, and future generations to be able to handle all of it once it begins.

No one knows the exact date of our Lord's return back to this earth (Matthew 24:36), but there is question that the end time events prophesied to occur from the Bible *will* unfold in God's perfect timing. Only time will tell if our generation will be the one to see our Lord's visible return back to our earth. However, sooner or later, all of these end time events will eventually occur because our Bible tells us so. As such, each and every Christian should have some basic fundamental knowledge on this part of our walk with the Lord so they cannot only have it for themselves and their own knowledge base in the

Lord, but so they can also have it to be able to teach and encourage others about it. Since God promises a blessing for all those who read and obey what the Lord commands in Revelation, we owe it to ourselves, our children, our Church, and our community to be as informed as possible about the biblical Revelation of Jesus Christ. This study is well worth your best effort. Press on and take heart at all the Lord has prepared for those He loves and be sober-minded about all that will occur to those who openly reject Jesus as Savior.

### - What Do We Gain from the book of Revelation?

1. The goal of this the study is to better understand Jesus as Lord and God –

- We gain God's \_\_\_\_\_ in Revelation to those who read & do what is instructed therein (Rev. 1:3; 22:7). How? How are we blessed?

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ we discover greater \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ – greater \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ – and greater \_\_\_\_\_ because of Jesus. All which should lead to greater \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus as reigning Lord of all! We learn to practice what we will be perfected in in the future in His presence in our glorified state. It's good to practice worship now everyday and in all ways!

2. In the book of Revelation, we gain a better understanding of God's \_\_\_\_\_ for His redeemed children, this world, people-groups on the planet, and the Jewish race (Israel). [Rev. Chs. 7, 9] – The Book of Revelation is best understood in context with other Old Testament prophetic books such as Isaiah, Zech. Dan., Obadiah, Joel, Amos, the Gospels of Mt. 24 /Lk. 21, 1-2 Thess., and 1-2 Peter.
3. In the book of Revelation, we gain motivation to \_\_\_\_\_ passionately our \_\_\_\_\_ with a lost world [2 Th. 2:3-12]

### - What Do We Learn in the book of Revelation?

1. Christ is Holy & demands \_\_\_\_\_ (Provides holiness through His Spirit) and enables holy worship in our daily lives = Preparation for our eternity with Him. [1 Pet. 1:13-16]
2. God's judgment is \_\_\_\_\_; Hell is real; Hope in Christ is real (rescue/salvation) since Heaven is displayed as absolutely real. [Rev. Chs. 6, 8-10, 16; Ch. 20; Ch. 21]
3. Because God is a God of promise, in the book of Revelation, it displays God's ultimate fulfillment of His many \_\_\_\_\_ and blessings to Israel [Rev. 12, 14].
4. Because God loves the world, in Revelation, He gives multiple \_\_\_\_\_ for their rescue and \_\_\_\_\_ = 2 Witnesses, 144 thousand witnesses, even Angels are all sealed and commissioned to share, preach the gospel of salvation to the lost world [Rev. 9:20-21; Ch. 11, 8:13 & 14:6]. God gives the world every possible chance to respond to His mercy and grace BEFORE He brings judgment upon them for their rejection and disbelief.

## What do we DO with the book of Revelation?

1. Read it, \_\_\_\_\_ on it, and write out questions.
2. Think about your lifestyle, your concept of worship, your own personal holiness – am I Holy? Am I Preparing for \_\_\_\_\_ now?
3. Think about those who are \_\_\_\_\_ around you. What is your action plan for those lost loved ones in your family? Local community? Globe?

### Some Ground Rules as we study Eschatology:

1. Be prayed up. This stuff is difficult!
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you as you read, discern, interpret, and apply Scripture.
3. Be kind. Allow others to express their wrong, crazy, and delusional opinions with grace
4. Be patient. It takes time to understand how all of God's prophecies apply and unfold over time.
5. Ask questions. Question everything. And seek your answers in Scripture, not in other people's opinions, experiences, or judgment. Let God's Word inform your eschatology.

\*Very few people agree on Eschatology. We will never make or allow this topic of study to be a test of Christian Fellowship. There is room at the table for all genuine, biblical belief systems concerning Eschatology. We are called to focus on the main thing: Jesus, and Him glorified (1 Corinthians 2:2)

# Covenant Theology and Dispensational Theology

## An Overview of Covenant Theology

Covenant theology is an approach to biblical interpretation that appreciates the importance of the covenants for understanding the divine-human relationship and the unfolding of redemptive history in Scripture. Blending insights from systematic and biblical theology, covenant theology explains the economic Trinity, communion with God, the person and work of Christ, the sacraments, justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, the role of obedience in the Christian life, the believer's assurance of salvation, the unity and progress of redemptive history, and more, in light of the Bible's teaching on the divine covenants.

### SUMMARY

Covenant theology is a framework for biblical interpretation, informed by exegetical, biblical, and systematic theology, that recognizes that the redemptive history revealed in Scripture is explicitly articulated through a succession of covenants (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and New), thus providing an organizing principle for biblical theology. Covenant theology also posits theological covenants (the Covenants of Redemption, Works, and Grace) and appreciates how the scriptural teaching about covenants entails and relates to a number of vitally important biblical themes and issues, including the purpose of God in history, the nature of the people of God, the federal headships of Adam and Christ, the person and work of Christ, the continuities and discontinuities in the progress of redemptive history, the relation of the Old and New Testaments, law and gospel, the assurance of salvation, the nature and significance of the sacraments (or ordinances), and what it means to walk with God in this life.

The word “covenant” occurs over 30 times in the New Testament (almost 300 in the Old), and covenant terminology and related categories and themes are found in every part of it. The New Testament writers variously describe Jesus as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant promises, the New Covenant prophecy of Jeremiah, the covenant inauguration ceremony of the Mosaic covenant in Exodus 24:8, and the Passover lamb. For the New Testament, then, you cannot understand the person and work of Christ apart from his fulfillment of all the covenants of the Old Testament. And especially when it comes to understanding the meaning and significance of the death of Christ, Jesus himself expounds his death in covenantal terms and fulfillments. His blood inaugurated the New Covenant, and without that bloodshed there would have been no New Covenant. His death is the ground of forgiveness of sins in the New Covenant, and his covenantal mediation assures everlasting communion with God. So how do you assemble all this (and much more) into a coherent account of the biblical covenants (and their implications) in the Old and New Testaments? That’s what covenant theology does.

Covenant theology “puts the Bible together” by appreciating the importance of the divine covenants. That is, covenant theology is an approach to understanding the meaning of the Scriptures (what theologians call a “hermeneutic”), that recognizes the central significance of the scriptural covenants in structuring redemptive history. To say it another way, covenant theology explains the relationship between God and humanity in terms of divinely initiated covenants that also structure the history of redemption revealed in Scripture because divine covenants in the Bible provide an exegetical, thematic, and theological framework for seeing the overarching unity as well as progress in God’s plan of salvation. Hence, drawing upon and deploying the Bible’s teaching about, and use of, the covenants, Covenant theology seeks to give an account of the unity and continuity, as well as the discontinuity and progress, in the promise and fulfillment of the unfolding history of redemption.

Covenant Theology is structured around two distinct covenants that God establishes with man: The first is the *Covenant of Works*, which God established with Adam, together with all who came from him; the second is the *Covenant of Grace*, which God establishes with Christ, together with all who belong to Him.

### 1. The Covenant of WORKS:

The Covenant of Works refers to the covenant relationship that God entered into with Adam in the garden before the fall. We read in Genesis 2:16-17: “The Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.’” God was giving Adam a very specific command. His obedience would have meant life, but his disobedience would result in death.

This relationship that God initiated with Adam is called the Covenant of Works, because, as we’ll see, it was a covenantal relationship; and because the condition of this covenantal relationship with Adam was his works; that is, God was requiring of Adam perfect obedience to the command He had given. The Westminster Shorter Catechism describes it this way: “When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.” This is the Covenant of Works.

One thing that’s vital for us to understand about the Covenant of Works is the relationship that Adam shared with the entire human race who would descend from him. Though God’s command was given only to Adam, at the same time, Adam served as a representative for the entire human race. Indeed, the destiny of all humanity hinged on Adam’s obedience or disobedience. Scripture makes this clear in passages such as Romans 5:12-21. Had Adam obeyed, it would have meant life not only for him—but for all humanity; and in the same way, when he disobeyed, he brought ruin and death upon us all.

### 2. The Covenant of GRACE:

After Adam had fallen into sin in the garden, and all men with him, the Lord drew near to Adam and entered into a very different kind of covenant with him. Beginning with the promise of Genesis 3:15, God



entered into a covenant of grace with fallen man. In the Covenant of Works, God had entered into a covenant with sinless man that was based on human obedience. But now, in the Covenant of Grace, wonder of wonders, God enters into a covenant with fallen man that is based on divine grace.

The Covenant of Grace is set forth in The Westminster Confession of Faith in this way: "Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe."

Genesis 3:15 contains the first promise that Scripture makes of the coming of the Savior. Satan had triumphed; mankind had fallen. But that wouldn't be the last word. God would send a Redeemer to save His people from their sins. A seed would come from the woman who would crush the serpent. God would act. Ruin had come through one man. But redemption would come through Another. And through God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, the Lord continues to expand on this promise more and more. These covenants aren't to be understood as separate dispensations, but as progressive stages of one single, overarching covenant—the Covenant of Grace. And with each new stage, we come to learn more about the Savior and the salvation He would win for His people.

So, in its essence, the Covenant of Grace is really just another name for the gospel. God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, teach us about the gospel. Through pictures, prophecies, and promises, these covenants point us forward to Christ and the salvation He would accomplish for His people. And with the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the new covenant, those pictures become a reality, and those promises find their fulfillment. In the Covenant of Grace, God would do so much more than make salvation possible for us again—He would make it certain. In the Covenant of Grace, God redeems sinners—and He does it by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

### 3. The Covenant of REDEMPTION:

Though the Covenant of Grace comes after the Covenant of Works chronologically, Scripture makes it clear that God's plan of salvation was set in place long before the creation of the world. For indeed, before the earth's foundation, and even from all eternity, the Godhead of the Trinity, foreseeing and ordaining the fall of Adam, was pleased to construct a plan of redemption in which the Father would send the Son into the world to redeem for himself, through the working of the Holy Spirit, particular individuals among Adam's fallen race. This rescue plan is often called the Covenant of Redemption.

Where do we see it in Scripture? First, we're told that God's plan to redeem a people for himself was put into place before the creation of the world. Ephesians 1:3-4 says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . [who] chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. . ." (cf. 3:9-11; 2 Timothy 1:9). Secondly, Scripture tells us that the Father commissioned the Son with a special task; the task of accomplishing redemption for His people. Christ is constantly testifying of the fact that the Father sent Him into the world to accomplish a particular work. He says in John 6:38: "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." And again He testifies in John 10:18, saying: "I have authority to lay [my life] down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." And in John 17:4, as Jesus prays to the Father, He says: "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." Thirdly, Scripture tells us that the Father had promised to give the Son a particular people—the same people He was sent to redeem. In Psalm 2, we read of a sacred exchange that took place in eternity past between the Father and the Son: "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He [the Father] said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession.'" (vv7-8). And Jesus speaks of a people that the Father had given Him when He says in John 6:39: "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." Christ also prays again to the Father in

John 17:6, saying: "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."

## 1. The STAGES of the Covenant of Grace:

A) The Inauguration of the Covenant of Grace (Genesis 3:15): This is the first promise we're given in Scripture of a redeemer who would come into the world to save God's people from the sin and death into which they were plunged in Adam. All the successive divine covenants are built on this promise.

B) The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 6,9): In God's covenant with Noah, we have both a continuation and enlargement of the same gospel mercies that God had announced to Adam in Genesis 3:15. In this covenant with Noah, we come to learn even more about this redeemer and the salvation that He would accomplish for God's people. In the Noahic Covenant, we're pointed to Christ and the gospel primarily through pictures, as both Noah himself and his ark are meant to teach us truths about Jesus.

C) The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12,15,17): In God's covenant with Abraham, we're once again given a continuation and enlargement of the same gospel mercies which God had promised to Adam and confirmed to Noah. But whereas God's covenant with Noah sets forth Christ primarily through pictures, here with Abraham we're pointed to Jesus and the gospel primarily through promises; for the promises that the Lord makes to him of a land, a seed, and blessing are ultimately fulfilled in Christ.

D) The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 20-24): In God's covenant with Israel under Moses, we have once again a continuation and enlargement of the same gospel mercies which God promised to Adam and confirmed to Noah and to Abraham. Through the Law that God gives at Sinai, we come face to face with the righteous character of our Creator; but there's also more, for in the person of Moses himself, as well as in God's redeeming His people from Egypt, and in the manna, the rock, the sacrifices, and the tabernacle, we're also pointed ahead once again to the person and work of the coming Redeemer.

E) The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89): In God's covenant with David, we have once again both a continuation and enlargement of the same gospel mercies that have gone before. Here in this covenant with David, God comes to him, promising to raise up for him one of his descendants, who would sit on his throne, and who would build for the Lord a house, and whose kingdom would never end; and though it seems at first glance all these promises find their fruition in David's son Solomon, we come to learn that these promises of David's seed and throne are ultimately fulfilled only in Jesus.

F) The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31 and Luke 22:20, etc): In the new covenant, we have the ultimate fulfillment of everything that has gone before. All the manifestations of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament pointed us forward to Jesus. Now, with the coming of Christ, the pictures have finally become a reality; the shadows have truly taken on their substance; and the promises have at last found their fulfillment. Jesus came into the world as the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David, in order to reverse the work of the snake and accomplish redemption for His people.

The KEY application of Covenant Theology is our **security in Christ**. The fact is, our salvation isn't ultimately contingent on us at all. It's contingent on a promise the Father made to the Son. The Father has promised His Son a people in the Covenant of Redemption—and if God's Word to man is certain because God cannot lie—how much more certain is the promise of God the Father to God the Son? Another application of the Covenant of Redemption is God's love for us in Christ. The truth is, God loved you, not just at your conversion, and not just from your mother's womb, but before the foundation of the world. This means that God loved you not just long before you loved Him, but long before you ever existed; long before anything existed. It also means that He loved you knowing full well all the sins you would ever commit. And the last application in thinking through the Covenant of Redemption is the Great Commission. Jesus said to His disciples in John 20:21: "as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." God's rescue mission is happening even as we speak, and Jesus is calling us to be a part of it. And we can go with great confidence, because the Father has promised to give a people to the Son. We don't announce the gospel hoping that some might come—we do so knowing that Christ's sheep will come.

## How does Covenant Theology understand and inform Eschatology?

Any system of eschatology which will be acceptable to a covenant theologian must place the covenant of grace at the very start of its prophetic interpretation so that it can dictate the hermeneutic from the outset. This means that options will be circumscribed by the dominant covenantal idea. It also means that Dispensationalism, with its emphasis upon the various distinguishable administrations throughout the progress of revelation history, is completely unacceptable. This is especially true since dispensationalism rejects the standard Reformed view pertaining to the covenant of grace. What is more, the idea of the covenant in Reformed thought makes it essential for a grammatical-historical hermeneutic to be supplanted on those occasions when the unity of that overarching covenant is threatened by a plain reading of the passage in question.

Therefore, some have accused covenant theologians of teaching what is called "Replacement Theology" (i.e., the Church replaces Israel). Such accusations are likely based on the fact that Covenant Theology teaches that the Church is Israel and Israel is the Church and its denial of any future plan for Israel. In 2002, Knox Theological Seminary issued a document clearly stating the CT position: "The inheritance promises that God gave to Abraham . . . do not apply to any particular ethnic group, but to the church of Jesus Christ, the true Israel", and "A day should **not** be anticipated in which Christ's kingdom will manifest Jewish distinctives, whether by its location in 'the land,' by its constituency, or by its ceremonial institutions and practices" (p. 3).

Accordingly, some have (reasonably) concluded that Covenant Theology takes the position that the church has either replaced or superseded ethnic Israel. Promises in the Bible made to ethnic Israel—people connected by blood to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—covenant theologians consider as metaphorically fulfilled in the Church, as "Israel" and the Church are all one "people of God," a group that may or may not include people of Jewish ancestry, depending on the context. Unlike dispensationalists, covenant theologians deny any connection between ethnic Israel and the current or future land of Israel: "The titlement of any one ethnic or religious group to territory in the Middle East called the 'Holy Land' cannot be supported by Scripture."

## NOTES:

# An Overview of Dispensational Theology

## DEFINITION

Dispensationalism is an evangelical theological system that addresses issues concerning the biblical covenants, Israel, the church, and end times. It also argues for a literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecies involving ethnic/national Israel, and the idea that the church is a New Testament entity that is distinct from Israel.

## SUMMARY

Following a brief introductory description of dispensational theology this essay will survey, in turn, the essential features of Dispensationalism, its distinctive hermeneutic, its specific theological beliefs, and, finally, its later developments.

Dispensationalism is an evangelical theological system that addresses issues concerning the biblical covenants, Israel, the church, and end times. It also argues for a literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecies involving ethnic/national Israel, and the idea that the church is a New Testament entity that is distinct from Israel.

Like other evangelical systems, Dispensationalism is a post-Reformation development. In his book, *Dispensationalism before Darby*, William C. Watson documents a strong futuristic hope for ethnic/national Israel that existed among many English theologians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century Dispensationalism picked up and built upon this hope.

As a system Dispensationalism is linked with the teachings of the Anglo-Irish theologian and Plymouth Brethren minister, John Nelson Darby (1800-82). Based on his study of [Ezekiel](#), Darby believed that Israel would experience earthly blessings in a future dispensation that were different from what the church would experience. He advocated for a strong distinction between Israel and the church. Darby also popularized the idea that the church would be raptured or snatched to heaven just prior to the seventieth-week of Daniel.

Early Dispensationalism began in Britain but then experienced great popularity in the United States. Darby and other Brethren ministers brought Dispensationalism to America. The rise in popularity of Dispensationalism also occurred through Bible conferences, the rise of Bible institutes and colleges, the influence of Dallas Theological Seminary (est. 1924), and the popularity of radio and television programs from dispensational teachers. Hal Lindsey's book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and the *Left Behind* book series (Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins) were books published from a dispensational perspective that became best sellers. Dispensationalism remains popular in the United States but also has many critics.

## Dispensations and the Pre-Tribulational Rapture

The two most recognized features of Dispensationalism involve belief in (1) seven dispensations and (2) a pre-tribulational rapture of the church in which the church will be snatched to heaven before a coming seven-year Tribulation Period.

First, while affirming that salvation has always been by grace through faith alone, Dispensationalism teaches that God has worked in different ways in different eras of history. Dispensationalism often taught that the various dispensations involved a test for mankind, a failure, and then a judgment. This then

would be followed by another dispensation. These seven dispensations are (1) innocence; (2) conscience; (3) human government; (4) promise; (5) law; (6) grace; and (7) kingdom. Not all dispensationalists agree on how many dispensations there are and what they should be called. While belief in seven dispensations is held by many, others say there are anywhere from four to eight. Plus, some have differed on the criteria for determining a dispensation.

Also, Dispensationalism is known for affirming a pre-tribulational rapture. This involves the idea that the church will be raptured or snatched to heaven before a coming seven-year tribulation period. This tribulation or Day of the Lord includes God's judgment on an unbelieving world. It will also involve God bringing Israel to salvation. Dispensationalists believe that 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and Revelation 3:10 reveal that the church is promised physical rescue from this period of divine wrath. They also believe that 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 describes the rapture event. While most dispensationalists believe in a pre-tribulational rapture, some hold to other rapture views such as mid-tribulational, pre-wrath, and post-tribulational. Thus, the pre-tribulational rapture view is not an essential doctrine of Dispensationalism even though most dispensationalists believe it.

### **Essentials of Dispensationalism**

Dispensational scholars have emphasized certain beliefs as most essential to this system. Charles Ryrie (1925-2016), for example, presented a *sine qua non* (i.e. essential conditions) of Dispensationalism that involved three areas: (1) a distinction between Israel and the church; (2) a hermeneutic of "literal interpretation" to all areas of scripture including Old Testament prophecies; and (3) the glory of God as the underlying purpose of God in history.

Another dispensationalist, John Feinberg, offered six "essentials" of Dispensationalism: (1) multiple senses of terms like "Jew" and "seed of Abraham"; (2) a hermeneutic in which the New Testament reaffirms and does not reinterpret the Old Testament; (3) unconditional promises to national Israel in the Old Testament must be fulfilled with national Israel; (4) a distinctive future for Israel; (5) the church as a distinctive organism; and (6) a philosophy of history in which history is the gradual implementation and outworking of the kingdom of God.

The lists from Ryrie and Feinberg show that Dispensationalism is primarily about a hermeneutic for Bible interpretation, especially involving Old Testament prophecies concerning ethnic/national Israel. And it involves certain beliefs concerning Israel and the church.

### **Hermeneutics (How we interpret the Bible)**

Concerning Bible interpretation, dispensationalists promote what they call a "consistent literal" or "grammatical-historical" hermeneutic to the Bible. The word "literal" is disputed and dispensationalists acknowledge other systems are often literal too with their interpretations. But by this they mean that all Bible passages, including Old Testament prophetic sections and the Book of Revelation, should be consistently understood according to their grammatical, historical, and genre contexts. Doing so affirms the significance of ethnic/national Israel in God's purposes and that the church and Israel are distinct.

Also concerning hermeneutics, Dispensationalism holds that the New Testament builds upon the meaning of the Old Testament. But the New Testament does not transcend or reinterpret Old Testament passages or the storyline that began in the Old Testament. Thus, there is storyline continuity between Old Testament expectations and New Testament fulfillments over the course of Jesus' two comings. In addition, Dispensationalism acknowledges the existence of types and typological connections in the Bible, but it does not believe types remove or transcend the significance of ethnic/national Israel in the

Bible's storyline. Also, the fact that Jesus is the ultimate Israelite does not mean that promises to the corporate entity of Israel will not be fulfilled as stated. Dispensationalism affirms that Jesus is the ultimate Israelite who will save and restore ethnic/national Israel and bring blessings to the Gentiles (see Isa. 49:3-6). An initial phase of this is occurring in the church today, while a final fulfillment will occur in the earthly kingdom after the second coming.

## **Theological Beliefs**

### ***Fulfillment of All Aspects of the Covenants of Promise***

Most Christian theological systems affirm that God's covenant promises will be fulfilled and that this occurs through Jesus. Dispensationalism, though, affirms that all spiritual, physical, and national promises contained in the covenants of promise (i.e. Abrahamic, Davidic, New) must be fulfilled literally. This includes promises concerning Israel, the nations, and land. Some promises were fulfilled with Jesus' first coming, while others await Jesus's second coming. So not only must spiritual blessings occur such as forgiveness of sins, salvation, Jew-Gentile unity, and the indwelling Holy Spirit, but physical promises involving nations, land, culture, and agriculture, etc., must be fulfilled literally as well. Also, promises to ethnic/national Israel must be fulfilled with ethnic/national Israel. While certain spiritual blessings associated with these covenants are participated in or partially fulfilled with the church, the full scope of covenant blessings, including physical, land, and national blessings for Israel await Jesus' return and kingdom.

### ***Continuing Significance of Ethnic/National Israel***

Dispensationalism asserts that ethnic/national Israel remains significant in God's purposes and will be in the future. In addition to saving a remnant of believing Israel in this age, God will save and restore ethnic/national Israel as a whole in the future (see Rom. 11:26). Just as Israel as a whole rejected Jesus at His first coming (see Luke 19:41-44) Israel as a corporate entity will believe in Jesus around the time of His second coming to earth (see Matt. 23:39; Rom. 11:26-27). The nation that received covenant curses for disobedience will also receive covenant blessings for belief and obedience (see Deut. 30:1-10). This will lead to a reversal of the "times of the Gentiles" in which Gentile powers dominate Israel and its land (see Luke 21:24), and it will lead to greater blessings for the world (see Rom. 11:12, 15). Dispensationalism believes that Israel will have a functional role to the nations when Jesus rules the nations at His return to earth (see Isa. 2:2-4; Matt. 25:31).

### ***Church a New Testament Entity***

Dispensationalism affirms that God has always had a people throughout history, but the church is a New Testament entity that began in the Book of Acts. The church did not exist in the Old Testament but is a New Testament organism linked with the arrival of Jesus the Messiah and the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. While God has always had a "people" from ancient times, it is Jesus and the Holy Spirit's ministry that usher in the era of the church. These are New Testament, not Old Testament realities. The church also has a specific structure (elders, deacons, etc.) and function (the Great Commission) that is fitted specifically for this age before Jesus' return to earth.

## ***Distinction between Israel and Church***

Dispensationalism maintains a distinction between Israel and the church. Israel is an ethnic/national entity that has roots back to Abraham (see Gen. 12:2-3), while the church is a New Testament entity.

In addition to Israel's being God's vehicle for Scripture and the Messiah, Dispensationalists hold that the nation is intended to bring world blessings (see Gen. 12:2-3). This occurs both in this age, with Israel in unbelief, and in the future when Israel as a whole believes in Jesus (see Rom. 11:12, 15, 26).

On the other hand, the church of this age is a multi-ethnic entity with a government structure and mission fitted for worldwide gospel proclamation before Jesus returns. When Jesus comes again to establish His kingdom the church will reign with Jesus on the earth (see Rev. 2:26-27; 5:10).

The Israel-church distinction means that promises and covenants made with Israel cannot find a complete fulfillment with the church since the church is not Israel, and God must fulfill His promises with the group to whom the promises originally were made (i.e. ethnic/national Israel). Some dispensationalists believe no promises to Israel find fulfillment in the church today (Classical Dispensationalists), while others believe there is a partial fulfillment of some covenant promises with the church (Progressive Dispensationalists). But all dispensationalists believe the complete fulfillment of Old Testament promises will occur in the future when Israel is saved and restored.

## ***Futurism***

Dispensationalism is strongly connected to futurism. Futurism is the view that major portions of Bible prophecy await future fulfillment from our current standpoint in history. This includes Daniel 9:27, much of the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21), and Revelation 6–22:5. Particularly significant to Dispensationalism is the belief that the seventieth week of Daniel 9:27 will occur in the future. This allegedly involves a coming seven-year period that includes the activity of an antichrist figure who does an abomination event in the Jewish temple. Dispensationalists believe that several events described in Jesus' Olivet Discourse and Revelation 6-19 correspond to the events explained in Daniel 9:27.

## ***Premillennialism***

All dispensationalists hold to premillennialism and the view that that the thousand-year reign (i.e. millennium) of Revelation 20:1-6 is a future earthly kingdom that follows the second coming of Jesus. This millennium is viewed as the fulfillment of various kingdom passages in the Old Testament (see Isaiah 9; 11; Zechariah 14). While not all premillennialists are dispensationalists, all dispensationalists are premillennialists. What often distinguishes dispensational premillennialists from non-dispensational premillennialists is the dispensational belief that Israel will be restored as a nation with a functional role of leadership and service to other nations during the coming millennial kingdom.

## ***Significance of Geo-Political Nations in Future***

In addition to affirming a future significance for ethnic/national Israel, Dispensationalism asserts that God has a future purpose for geo-political nations in the coming earthly kingdom (see Isa. 19:16-25; Zech. 14). Thus, God's future purposes involve both saved individuals and nations (see Rev. 21:24, 26). Egypt, for example, is featured as having a significant role in the coming kingdom of God according to passages like Isaiah 19:16-25 and Zechariah 14. Dispensationalists believe the nation Israel will have a functional role of leadership and service to these nations in the future. One implication of this dispensational view is

that the church of this age is not the final era of God's plans on earth. A coming rule of Jesus over the nations and Israel will occur after this age. Most dispensationalists believe the church of this age will rule with Jesus over the nations at this time (see Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21).

**NOTES:**



# Are we the terminal generation?

2 Peter 3:3-14 –

3 First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts

4 and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!”

5 They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water,

6 through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished.

7 But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless. (creation, flood, return)

8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. (perfect timing, not concerned with dates)

9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness,

12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which will be set ablaze and dissolved, and elements will melt with fire?

13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness is a home.

14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish;

**Just like the watching seasons change, one can know when His return is near.**

*Matthew 24:32-36, 42-44, 46; 25:13*

We are to be A \_\_\_\_\_ (mindful of our surroundings)

A \_\_\_\_\_ (perceptively watching for his prophecies/signs)

A \_\_\_\_\_ (obedient to his Word in holiness and evangelism)

Christians beware for the lost – no second chances (2 Thes. 3:10-12)

This means we are to EVANGELIZE NOW!!! The lost who reject now, will reject later and perish.

## 7 Signs of His Imminent Return

### 1. World \_\_\_\_\_ God, \_\_\_\_\_, and Christ only to turn to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

2 Timothy 3:1-4 “You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, unloving, slanderers, without self control, brutal murderers, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,”

Our world is \_\_\_\_\_ in: drugs, alcohol, pornography, rape, perversion, idolatry, anarchy, rebellion, theft, lying, apathy, incest, corruption, homosexuality, bestiality, murder, sexual immorality, rebellion, abortion, SIN!!

Read 2 Peter 2 and Jude vs. 4-19,23

### 2. Church \_\_\_\_\_, yet heightened sense of “Religion”

1 Timothy 4:1-3

- 1 Now the spirit expressly says that in latter times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, (*cults, new age, occult*)
- 2 through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron.
- 3 They forbid marriage and demand abstinence for foods (*Catholics, Hindus*)

2 Timothy 3:5-7

- 5 holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them! (*liberals*)
- 6 For among them are those who make their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desires, (*televangelists*)
- 7 who are always being instructed and can never arrive at knowledge of the truth. (*pente*)

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound teaching and Doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they accumulate teachers for themselves according to own desires; they will turn aside from the Truth, and will turn to myths. (*seminaries, Jesus seminar*)

“What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

4 Jesus answered them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah!’ and they will lead many astray.” (*cults, media, money*)

8 And he said, “Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is near!’ Do not go after them.” (*Koresh, Applewhite, J.W., Mytraya*)

24 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. (*satanic powers*)

### 3. Worldwide \_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 24:7-8* And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,

And he said, "When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately." (*rumors of nuclear holocaust i.e. 30x stronger than Hiroshima*)

The world has always had wars, but exponentially increasing the world is at its limit: WWI 13 million dead. The 1900's started the trend of Nation against Nation: not the end but the beginning of worldwide killing over power, money, oil.

There are over thirty wars right now worldwide.

### 4. Cataclysmic worldwide \_\_\_\_\_

*Luke 21:11* . . .there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pains. And there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

*Plagues and pestilence – aids, ebola*

*Zechariah 14:12* "This shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet; their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths."

*(Increased earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, volcanoes, meteors, tornadoes, mud slides, fires, Tsunamis, etc. worldwide)*

### 5. Intense Christian persecution and hopelessness

9 "Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name.

10 Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another.

11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

12 And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold.

In the last days difficult time will come. All who desire to live Godly in Christ Jesus WILL BE PERSECUTED. And evil men who impostor will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

*Matthew 10:22-31, 2 Timothy 3:12-13*

Hundreds of thousands martyrs a year/Millions of suicides – 2 million in Sudan alone

## 6. \_\_\_\_\_ explosion (Daniel 12:4)

“But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and the book sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be running back and forth, (travel????) and knowledge shall increase.”

- 2,226,000,000 new books a year, internet, space exploration and genetics (genome)
- Car, train, plane, space, boat travel at speed of sound – globe=family community now!
- If not travel, then time pressures of life – busy, hectic, tense lifestyles=us.

## 7. Rebirth of \_\_\_\_\_ – May 14, 1948 and 1967

*Jeremiah 23:8; Ezekiel 3:6-7* “As the Lord lives who brought out and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them. Then they shall live in their own land.”

*Ezekiel 37:7-11* “I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, gather them from every side and bring them into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land on the mountain of Israel.”

\*Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

*Luke 21:24*

Even conservative Bible scholars based on Matthew 24:34 consider a generation 80 – 100 years. If the time starts at Israel’s Reunification (’48 – ’68), then that places the tribulation roughly between 2000 – 2050 AD. The Rapture must happen first.

Evidence that we are the terminal generation?????????

## **4 Facts which precursor the Tribulation:**

The following events will take place in the seven-year tribulation after the rapture of the Church. However, we can already see the preparations and foundations laid for these events today – signals that time is near!!!

1. **Simultaneous instant worldwide \_\_\_\_\_**  
Revelation 11:3, 7, 10  
International satellite link-up world-wide i.e. CNN
2. **One world \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and religion**  
Daniel 7, Revelation 13  
United Nations, Euro Currency and Credit Cards, International Ecumenical Co.
3. **New \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem**  
2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:1-2  
Blue prints, money, Levitical priest's clothing, red heifer, etc. – waiting on Jihad
4. **\_\_\_\_\_ never mentioned! The greatest power in the world is noticeably absent from any biblical text or allusion**  
Deuteronomy 6  
America in moral, spiritual, physical decline at unsurpassed rate

So, be ready and busy, waiting on His glorious RETURN!

*Matthew 24:42-50*

“Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

43 But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave who his master will find at work when he arrives.

47 Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.

50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know.”

*1 Thessalonians 5:2-6*

“The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While they are saying ‘peace’ and ‘safety’ then destruction will come on them suddenly like birth pains upon a woman and they shall not escape. Thus, let us not sleep brothers, but be sober and alert.”

### III: Foundational Definitions for the Study of Eschatology

- Amillennialism:** The perspective, held by many theologians since Augustine in the fourth century, that understands the **Millennium** described in Revelation 20:4–6 as occurring presently and spiritually either through Christ’s reign at the right hand of God or through the righteousness of the church. Thus, those who hold this view deny that Christ will reign over a literal earthly kingdom after His second coming. Amillennialists believe in a single, general **resurrection** of the righteous and the wicked for reward and punishment.
- Apocalypse:** From the Greek word *apokalupsis*, this refers to a revealing, or unveiling, of something previously hidden. The book of Revelation, or “The Apocalypse of John,” is an unveiling of future events (Revelation 1:1).
- Church:** The ever-enlarging universal church is made up of all true believers in heaven and on earth over whom Jesus Christ reigns as Lord. Regardless of denomination, all true believers are spiritually baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ’s body and are therefore spiritually united with Him and with one another. See Romans 12:4–5; 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Ephesians 4:11–16; and 1 Peter 2:9–10.
- Church Age:** The period of time in which the **church** stands at the center of God’s unfolding plan for human history, during which the Gospel is preached and disciples are made in Christ-following communities united by the Holy Spirit. The church age extends from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and will continue until the **rapture** of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- Covenant Theology:** The theological system that views all of biblical history through the framework of two [or three!] covenants: [the covenant of redemption,] the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. Covenant theologians often (though not exclusively or necessarily) hold to **Amillennialism**. The less common Covenant **Premillennialism** almost always rejects the **Pretribulation Rapture**.
- Dispensational Theology:** The theological system that views all of biblical history through the framework of three or more **dispensations**, i.e., distinguishable administrations in the outworking of God’s purpose. These dispensations at least include a past Old Testament dispensation, a present **Church Age**, and a future **Millennium**. Dispensationalists necessarily hold to **Premillennialism** and almost always hold to a **Pretribulation Rapture**.
- Dispensations:** The means by which God administers His governance of humanity throughout history. These various means of administration generally progress toward the final and ultimate expression of God’s administration under Jesus Christ.
- Eschatology:** From the Greek words *eschatos* (last) and *logos* (discourse), eschatology is the study of ultimate Christian hope and end times, including the **Rapture**, **Tribulation**, resurrection, **Millennium**, and God’s plan of the ages as history moves toward the future.
- Midtribulation Rapture:** This view of the timing of the **rapture** described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 teaches that in the middle of the future seven-year **Tribulation**, true believers will be “caught up” from the earth to heaven, saved from the direct wrath of God that comes during the last half of the Tribulation.
- Millennium:** From the Latin words *mille* (thousand) and *annus* (year), this is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints as described in Revelation 20:1–5, during which time Satan is bound. Some interpreters understand the Millennium to be a literal kingdom that will be established in the future (**premillennialism**), while others take it less literally as

referring to a current or ideal spiritual or heavenly state (**amillennialism**). Some understand it as referring to an earthly golden age of Christendom preceding an apostasy and the return of Christ (**postmillennialism**).

**Personal Eschatology:** That division of eschatology dealing with the question of the destiny of the individual after death, including the concept of an intermediate state, the nature of a bodiless condition, the question of purgatory, the differences between the Old Testament and New Testament experiences of life after death, the future resurrections, and the judgments of eternal life or eternal damnation.

**Postmillennialism:** This view understands the **Second Coming** to occur after the **Millennium**, which is interpreted as the historically realized reign of Christ on the earth through the social and political influence of the Gospel and the Church. Postmillennialism has often been associated with the “social gospel” of liberal theology or movements like reconstructionism, Christian nominalism, or other attempts at securing a Christian kingdom or government on the earth.

**Posttribulation Rapture:** This view of the timing of the **rapture** described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 teaches that after the future seven-year **Tribulation**, true believers who survived the persecution and martyrdom of the **Great Tribulation** will be “caught up” from the earth to heaven, to either immediately return to earth to reign with Christ during the **Millennium** or to reign with Christ over the earth from the heavenly sphere.

**Premillennialism:** This millennial view understands the **Second Coming** to occur before the **Millennium**, which is understood as a literal reign of Christ and all true believers on the earth after the future **Tribulation**. Premillennialists hold that the first **resurrection** will occur in two stages—all the redeemed will be resurrected before the **Millennium**; all unbelievers will be resurrected and judged after the **Millennium**.

**Preterism:** The view that regards most of the biblical prophecies, including the visions of the book of Revelation, to have already been fulfilled in the first- to fourth-century persecutions, wars, and ultimate victory of Christianity over Paganism. *Classic preterists* believe Jesus will return as Judge of the living and the dead and a final resurrection unto eternal life and death. *Hyper-preterists* tend toward denying any future judgment, linking all eschatological judgments to **personal eschatology**.

**Pretribulation Rapture:** This view of the timing of the **rapture** described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 teaches that before the future seven-year **Tribulation**, true believers from the **church age** will be “caught up” from the earth to heaven and therefore be saved from God’s wrath during the **Tribulation**.

**Rapture (of the Church):** The *rapture* refers to the “catching up” to heaven of all dead and living believers, the dead upon resurrection and the living upon transformation (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Different views on the timing of the rapture in relation to the **Tribulation** include **Pretribulation**, **Midtribulation**, and **Posttribulation**.

**Resurrection:** Jewish and Christian theology have always held to two resurrections: the resurrection of the saved (righteous) and the resurrection of the unsaved (wicked). The first resurrection of the righteous includes all true believers throughout history, beginning with the resurrection of Christ and concluding with all of the elect. The second resurrection includes all of the unsaved from history for the purpose of judgment according to their works and eternal suffering in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15).

**Second Coming:** The coming of Christ in glory—as described in Revelation 19:11–21—to judge the nations, to complete the first resurrection of the righteous saints, and to

establish the **Millennium**. Those who hold to a **Pretribulation rapture** distinguish between Christ's coming "in the air" to **rapture the church** and His second coming to earth in judgment to reign as King,

**Tribulation**. Besides a reference to the general trouble, trials and persecutions that all Christians endure throughout the **church age** (John 16:33), the term "Tribulation," when referring to the end times, specifies the final seven-year period of judgments described in Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:1-28; and Revelation 11-13. The Great Tribulation is often used to refer to the last three and a half years of the Tribulation.

### ***Addendum:***

**Allegorical interpretation** – a method of interpretation, which finds a sense higher than the literal sense in otherwise apparently historical statements.

**Antichrist** – man of sin, son of Perdition. [human world ruler]; indwelt by Satan.

**Apocalupsis** – unveiling, uncovering, or manifestation

**Apostasy** – falling away from truth; 'Spiritual Babylon' = Harlot

**Babylon** – spiritual and economic center of world; seaport.

**Beast** – worldwide worship. Dragon = Satan.

**Bema** – the judgment seat or reward seat before which each Christian must appear.

**Chilia** – Greek word for one thousand (1,000).

**Chiliasm** – a better term for the school of thought usually designated millenarianism.

**Covenant** – a contract into which one enters and by which his course of action is bound.

**Day of the Lord** – God's judgment on world; remnant saved; earth and sin destroyed; God = King.

**Epiphaneia** – revelation or appearance.

**False prophet** – signs and miracles for Beast.

**Gehenna** – place of eternal suffering, which is properly translated hell in the New Testament.

**Hades** – the abode of the dead (Greek), or the grave.

**Harpazo** – to catch up or snatch away. This word is used of the translation of believers at the Lord's coming.

**Israel** – except in rare instances, reference to the literal national group designated Israel.

**Kingdom** – may refer to (1) the reign of Christ in man's heart, (2) the heavenly kingdom, or (3) the earthly kingdom of Christ.

**Mystery** – a known fact ascertained by direct revelation.

**Natural interpretation** – the interpretation of scripture, which takes the natural sense of the word to be the right one.

**Parousia** – presence, and hence, the coming of the Lord to be with His own.

**Seventieth Week of Daniel** – 7-year consummation of Jewish people = rebuked, redeemed, restored.

**Sheol** – the abode of the dead (Hebrew).

**(Great) Tribulation** – 3 ½ years; 2-7 seals, 1-7 trumpets, 1-7 bowl judgments.

**Time of Jacob's Trouble** – 7-year Jewish persecution.