



The Essentials: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Class #9 – End Times

I. The Study of End Times

- a. If you recall the study of end times is commonly referred to as *Eschatology*
 - i. *Eschatology* can simply be defined as the “study of the end” – whether the end of an individual life, the end of the age, or the end of the world
 - ii. It is the study of the future and final events mentioned in the Bible concerning humankind (believer and non-believer), the world, death, hell, heaven, Satan, judgment, etc.
 - iii. The study of Eschatology (end times) generally falls into two categories: Personal Eschatology and General Eschatology
 - iv. **Personal Eschatology** focuses on the study of the end of an individual life (believer and non-believer) in this present world and their final destination in the life to come
 - v. **General Eschatology** focuses on the study of the end of this present age and God’s final plans and purposes for the age to come
- b. Last week, we focused our attention on personal eschatology, this week, we will focus our attention on general eschatology and examine “*things to come*”

I. The Importance of Studying General Eschatology (Prophecy)

- a. Let’s look at a few reasons why it is important to study general eschatology
 - i. It is estimated that approximately 27% of the Bible was prophetic at the time it was written
 - ii. Prophecy is a very important component of the Bible and it should be a very important component in our study and understanding of the Bible – and here’s a few reasons why:
- b. First, the Scriptures promise a special blessing to those who study prophecy
 - i. **Revelation 1:3** – “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*”
- c. Second, Prophecy proves the reliability of the Word of God
 - i. **Isaiah 46:9-10** – “*Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.’*”
- a. Third, Prophecy gives us a proper view of our age
 - i. **1 Peter 4:7** – “*But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers*” (Prophecy is not meant to scare us, but prepare us)
- b. Fourth, Prophecy provides comfort
 - i. **1 Thessalonians 4:17b-18** – “*...and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words*”
- c. Fifth, Prophecy proves God is in control
 - i. **Psalms 115:3** – “*Our God is in heaven, He does whatever He pleases*”
- d. Sixth, Prophecy promotes Evangelism
 - i. **2 Corinthians 5:11a** – “*Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...*”
- e. Seventh, Prophecy provokes a sincere love and intimacy for Jesus Christ
 - i. **Revelation 19:10b** – “*... for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*”

II. The Time Line of General Eschatology

- a. Let's look at a panorama view of God's plans and purposes for the future
 - i. What's next? What is God's program for the future? What is going to happen to this world? What is going to happen to believers? Non-believers?
 - ii. All these questions we will seek to answer tonight by looking at an overview of End Times Events – "***A Timeline of the End Times***"
- b. In His Word, God has revealed to us His plans and purposes for the future, and we can rest assure He is going to fulfill His Word
 - i. Before we began, I really want to emphasize that these events we will be looking at tonight ***will come to pass...***
 - ii. Eschatology is not wishful thinking, however, the Bible contains prophecies that have already perfectly come to pass, therefore, we can have complete confidence that those prophecies awaiting future fulfillment will also come to pass perfectly
 - iii. The prophet Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, "***...the dream is certain and its interpretation is sure.***" Cf. **Daniel 2:45**
- d. Now, for our timeline, we are going to look at *Seven Things – Seven Things* that will take place during the last days (chronological order of end times events)
 - i. Because of time restraints, we cannot cover each event exhaustively, but we want to look at a basic overview of "***Things to Come***"
 - ii. Before we began, I just want to say this, if you have any questions during the course of the lecture make sure to write them down, and after class, I would love to answer your questions to the best of my ability
 - iii. Therefore, let's begin our Timeline of End Times Events:

II. 1st – "The Church Age"

- a. The first event on our timeline is what we call the "Church Age" or the "Age of Grace"
 - i. Presently, we are living in the "Church Age" – which is the period of time when the Lord Jesus Christ is building His church...
 - ii. In **Mathew 16:18b**, the Lord Jesus declared, "***...I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.***"
 - iii. When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, the Lord Jesus became flesh and entered this world, lived a sinless and perfect life, went to the cross to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin, rose from the dead on the third day, and forty days after His resurrection ascended into heaven where He is presently seated at the right hand of God the Father
 - iv. After His ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost and the church age began – "***The church was birthed***"
 - v. On the Day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter boldly proclaimed the *gospel of Jesus Christ* in Jerusalem and ***three-thousand*** people got saved
- b. And from the Day of Pentecost until Today, the Gospel continues to be preached and people continue to get saved – "*Jesus is building His Church!*"
 - i. The Gospel is the good news of who Jesus is and what God has done for all mankind in Him – "***Don't ever forget the Gospel!***"
 - ii. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and the penalty, or wages, of sin is death (Romans 6:23)
 - iii. Yet, God came in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, lived a sinless life, then willingly went to the Cross to offer Himself as a substitute for our sins
 - iv. At the cross, Jesus died for the sins of the world, yet after His death, three days later, Jesus physically and miraculously rose from the dead

- v. And now, all those who place their *faith* and *trust* in the person and work of Jesus Christ will receive forgiveness of sins, salvation, and everlasting life
- c. Romans 10:9 – “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”
 - i. That is good news! That is the Gospel! Jesus Christ has saved us from the *penalty* of sin, He is saving us from the *power* of sin, and one day, He will save us from the *presence* of sin
 - ii. Therefore, the first event on our timeline is the “Church Age,” this present age of grace where the Lord Jesus Christ is building His church
 - iii. Now, the church age will not last forever, but will come to an abrupt conclusion at the 2nd event on our timeline

III. 2nd – “The Rapture of the Church”

- a. The second event on our timeline is what we call the “Rapture of the Church”
 - i. The *Rapture* is the word we use to describe the event when the Lord Jesus will come back for His church and take us to heaven to be with Him forever
 - ii. A basic definition would be, “*The translation, or transportation, of the invisible church from earth to heaven without the experience of death in a single, unexpected moment.*”
 - iii. Please don’t confuse the rapture of the Church with the 2nd Coming of Christ – during the rapture Christ comes *for His church* to take them to heaven, but during the 2nd Coming Christ comes *with His church* to the earth
 - iv. In **John 14:2-3**, the Lord Jesus promised His followers that He would return for them, “*In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also*”
 - v. The Lord Jesus promised He would return for us and we can rest assure that He is going to keep His promise...Amen.
- b. In 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and Philippians 3:20-21, the apostle Paul gives us more information, descriptions, and details concerning the Rapture of the Church
 - i. In **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**, the apostle Paul declares, “*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*”
 - ii. After the resurrection of those believers who have already died in Christ, those believers who are alive and remain will be caught up, or raptured, together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air – and thus we shall always be with the Lord
 - iii. Interestingly, in **1 Corinthians 15**, the apostle Paul shares with us a few things about our resurrected, glorified bodies:
 - iv. First, they will be incorruptible bodies – “*So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.*” Cf. **1 Corinthians 15:42**
 - v. Second, they will be glorified bodies – “*It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory...*” Cf. **1 Corinthians 15:43a**
 - vi. Third, they will be powerful bodies – “*...it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power*” Cf. **1 Corinthians 15:43b**
 - vii. Fourth, they will be spiritual bodies (dominated by the spirit) – “*It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body...*” Cf. **1 Corinthians 15:44a**
 - viii. Fifth, they will be heavenly bodies (fashioned and built for heaven) – “*As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also*

are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.” Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:48-49

- ix. Sixth, they will be immortal bodies (no death) – “...*this mortal must put on immortality*” Cf. **1 Corinthians 15:53**
- c. Also, we can study Jesus’ resurrected body and get an idea of how our bodies will be for we will be like Him, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Cf. 1 John 3:2
 - i. First, Jesus’ voice was recognized as being the same as the one He had before His death and resurrection
 - ii. Second, Jesus’ physical features were recognized (we are going to recognize each other)
 - iii. Third, Jesus’ resurrected body was a real body of flesh and bones and not merely a phantom body
 - iv. Fourth, it would seem, after His resurrection, Jesus was able to suddenly disappear and go through the walls
 - v. Fifth, Jesus was able to eat food (we will be able to eat, not out of necessity, but out of desire, joy, and celebration)
- d. The Rapture can happen at any moment of any day, therefore, we need to make sure that we are ready and prepared
 - i. We need to keep on *watching, waiting, and working* because Jesus Christ is coming back for His church very soon
 - ii. Really, the Bible teaches that only one thing has to happen before the Rapture of the Church – “*The Fullness of the Gentiles*” Cf. **Rom. 11:25**
 - iii. This speaks of the last person getting saved who is supposed to get saved during the church age, once this occurs, Jesus is calling us home
 - iv. Don’t let me find out that you’re the one holding back the rapture of the church – “*Stop resisting the Holy Spirit and give your life to Christ*”
- e. Now, after the Rapture of the Church, we come to the 3rd event on our timeline

IV. **3rd – “The Tribulation Period”**

- a. The third event on our timeline is what we call “The Tribulation Period”
 - i. This event will take place at some point *after* the Rapture of the church – many Bible teachers believe immediately, but we can’t say for sure
 - ii. Just a brief side note, there are various views amongst Christians concerning the timing of the Rapture – a few of them are the *Pre-Tribulation View* (Before), the *Mid-Tribulation View* (In the Middle), and the *Post-Tribulation View* (After)
 - iii. My personal view is that the rapture will occur before the tribulation period (our church holds to a pre-tribulation view of the rapture) – If you are interested in learning some of the reasons why I hold to this view please talk to me after class...
- b. Now, the Tribulation Period will be a seven-year period of time in which God will pour out His wrath on a Christ rejecting world
 - i. Revelation Chapter 6 thru 18 describes in detail the events that will be taking place on earth during the Tribulation
 - ii. Revelation describes for us 21 Judgments (7 seal, 7 trumpet, and 7 bowl) which God will pour out upon a Christ rejecting world...
 - iii. Like all God’s works, His judgment will be perfect – many people are going to perish during the tribulation period (Billions of People)
- c. The Lord Jesus described this time period in this way – “For then there will be great tribulation, such as have not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” Cf. Mathew 24:21

- i. During this time period, there will be a one-world government, a one-world religion, a one-world economic system, and a one-world leader
 - ii. The Antichrist is going to come on the scene and deceive many – He is going to promise peace and prosperity, but only deliver death and destruction
 - iii. **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10** – *“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”*
 - iv. As we see the condition of the world today, we clearly see that the stages are being set for this *one-world system* and *one-world leader*
 - v. **Revelation 13:7b-8** – *“...And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*
- d. Now, after the Tribulation Period, we come to the 4th event on our timeline

V. 4th – “The 2nd Coming of Christ”

- a. The 4th event on our timeline is what we call the “2nd Coming of Christ”
 - i. At the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period, the Lord Jesus is going to come back to earth with His church and set up His Kingdom
 - ii. In **Revelation 19:11-16**, the apostle John describes this event, *“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful & True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war...and the armies of heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses...and He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords”*
 - iii. In Jude 14-15, the apostle Jude mentions this event, *“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’”*
- b. His second coming will be in complete contrast to His first coming...
 - i. The first time He came, He came as a Suffering Servant to die for the sins of the world; the second time He comes, He will come as a conquering King to rule and reign over the world
 - ii. The first time He came, He humbly rode into Jerusalem riding a donkey by Himself; the second time He comes, He will come riding on a glorious white horse with all the armies of heaven behind Him
 - iii. The first time He came, He was rejected by the world; the second time He comes, He will judge the world
- c. Soon, King Jesus is going to return to the earth, and we are going to return with Him – “He’s not going to return as a little Baby, but as a Glorious King”
 - i. After the 2nd Coming of Christ, we come to the 5th event on our timeline

VI. 5th – “The Millennial Kingdom”

- a. The 5th event on our timeline is what we call the “Millennial Kingdom” or the “Millennium”
 - i. After the Lord Jesus return to earth, at His second coming, He is going to set up His Kingdom upon the earth for a literal thousand years
 - ii. Satan will be chained up and bound for a 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3) and Christ will be ruling and reigning over the entire earth from Jerusalem
 - iii. **Revelation 20:4-6** – *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their*

witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

- b. Much of Old Testament prophecies is devoted to describing the character and nature of the Millennial Kingdom (Characteristics of the Kingdom)
 - i. In their writings, the prophets described many blessings and benefits that would be poured out upon the earth during the reign of the Lord Jesus
 - ii. During the Millennial Kingdom, the earth will be restored to the way God intended it to be – the curse will be removed and the earth will return to the ideal, perfect conditions God created at the beginning
 - iii. **Romans 8:19-22** – *“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”*
 - iv. Now, through the writings of the prophets, we are able to get an overall picture of what life is going to be like during the Millennial Kingdom
 - v. Let’s look at a few characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom:
- c. First, “A Kingdom of Righteousness”
 - i. **Jeremiah 23:5-6** – *“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.”*
- d. Second, “A Kingdom of Peace”
 - i. **Isaiah 32:17-18** – *“The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”*
- e. Third, “A Kingdom of Joy”
 - i. **Isaiah 9:3-4** – *“You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy; they rejoice before You according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For you have broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.”*
- f. Fourth, “A Kingdom of Glory”
 - i. **Isaiah 24:23** – *“Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously.”*
- g. Fifth, “A Kingdom without War”
 - i. **Isaiah 2:4** – *“He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*
- h. Sixth, “A Kingdom of Perfect Instruction”
 - i. **Isaiah 2:3** – *“Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways,*

and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

- i. Seventh, “A Kingdom of Complete Harmony”
 - i. **Isaiah 11:6-9** – *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall gaze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain.”*
- j. Eighth, “A Kingdom of Feasts”
 - i. **Zechariah 14:16-17** – *“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain.”*
- k. Ninth, “A Kingdom of Longevity”
 - i. **Isaiah 65:20** – *“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.”*
- l. Tenth, “A Kingdom with the Church ruling and reigning with Christ”
 - i. **Revelation 5:9-10** – *“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.’”*
- m. After the Millennial Kingdom, we come to the 6th event on our timeline

VII. 6th – “The Great White Throne Judgment”

- a. The 6th event on our timeline is what we call the “Great White Throne Judgment”
 - i. After the 1,000 year reign of Christ is completed, all non-believers will be resurrected and stand before God Almighty (Christ) to be judged
 - ii. The book of life will be open, and those whose name are not written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire for all of eternity...
 - iii. **Revelation 20:11-15** describes this event, *“...and I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened...and anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire”*
- b. After the Great White Throne Judgment, we come to the 7th event on our timeline

VIII. 7th – “The Eternal Order”

- a. The last event on our timeline is what we call the “Eternal Order” or the “New Heavens and the New Earth”
 - i. This simply speaks of “Heaven Forever” with the Lord Jesus Christ – it is described in Revelation Chapter 21 and 22
 - ii. **Revelation 21:1a** – *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...”*
- b. One day, very soon, we will be with the Lord, but until that day, we must keep on *watching, waiting, and working* – Amen.