

## Lesson 21-24

### The Doctrine of Eschatology

*“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” Luke 21:25-28*

#### I. What does the word “eschatology” mean?

- A. The word “eschatology” comes from two Greek words, *eschatos* meaning “\_\_\_\_\_” and *logos* meaning “word or discourse.”
- B. Literally the word “eschatology” means “words about the \_\_\_\_\_.”
- C. From a theological point of view, “eschatology” refers to that branch of theology that deals with the last or final things. It usually refers to some of the following:
  - 1. The last days leading up to the return of Christ and the associated events.
  - 2. The second coming of Christ itself.
  - 3. The final judgment of the living and the dead.
  - 4. The millennial kingdom and the eternal states.
- D. Note the following verses about the last days: Matthew 24: 3-44; Mark 13:3-37; Luke 21:3-36; John 6:39-44, 54; 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:17-18; II Timothy 3:1-5; James 5:3; I Peter 1:5, 20; II Peter 3:3; I John 2:18; Jude 18.

#### II. What are some of the prophetic signs of the last days?

There are many signs of Christ’s return and of that period known as the last days (Mt. 24:3).

- A. There will be signs in \_\_\_\_\_ itself (Luke 21:25-28; Rom. 8:20-21).
  - 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11).
  - 2. \_\_\_\_\_ and pestilence (Mt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11).
  - 3. \_\_\_\_\_ in the heavens (Mt. 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:11, 25-26; Acts 2:19-20).

- B. There will be signs in the world system and \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.
1. \_\_\_\_\_ and rumors of wars (Mt. 24:6-7; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9-10).
  2. Nations rising up against \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:7).
  3. Perplexity and \_\_\_\_\_ of nations (Luke 21:25-26).
  4. Multiplication of \_\_\_\_\_ and travel (Dan. 12:4)
- C. There will be signs in the \_\_\_\_\_ and the church.
1. \_\_\_\_\_ by false ministries (Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 23-26; Mark 13:5-6, 21-23).
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ of Christians (Mt. 24:9-10; Mark 13:9, 13, 11; Luke 21:12-15).
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ of Christians (Mt. 24:10; Mark 13:12-13; Luke 21:16-19).
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ and pressure (Mark 13:9, 19-20, 24).
  5. The Gospel preached in the \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:14; Mark 13:10).
  6. All nations flowing into the \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord (Is. 2:2-3).

### III. What will be the spiritual climate of the last days?

The end times will be characterized by two significant \_\_\_\_\_ forces.

- A. On the negative side, the \_\_\_\_\_ will come to full manifestation (II Tim. 3:1-5).
1. The love of many will \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:12).
  2. There will be a great \_\_\_\_\_ (II Th. 2:3).
  3. Many will give heed to \_\_\_\_\_ and doctrines of devils (I Tim. 4:1-2).
  4. Many \_\_\_\_\_ will arise deceiving many (Mt. 24:24; II Tim. 3:13).

5. \_\_\_\_\_ will be prevalent (Mt. 24:4-5, 24).
6. Wickedness will come to \_\_\_\_\_ (Rom. 1:18-32; Rev. 22:11).

*And when that time comes, all doing wrong will do it more and more; the vile will become more vile; good men will be better; those who are holy will continue on in greater holiness. Revelation 22:11, Living Bible*

- B. On the positive side, the \_\_\_\_\_ will come to full manifestation (Is. 60:1-5).
1. The church will be glorious and \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 5:27; Is. 60:13).
  2. There will be days of great \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 13:39; Rev. 14:14-16).
  3. There will be a great \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit of God (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-18).
  4. The spirit and power of \_\_\_\_\_ will be on the families of the church (Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6).
  5. The Gospel will be going forth into the \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:14).
  6. The kingdom of God will come to \_\_\_\_\_ (Jam. 5:7-8; Rev. 22:11).
- C. The days of \_\_\_\_\_ are a prophetic type of the last days (Mt. 24:36-42; Luke 17:24-27).

1. There are many \_\_\_\_\_ similarities between the last days and Noah's day (Gen. 6:1-22). Wickedness came to full fruit.
  - There was a \_\_\_\_\_ explosion (Gen. 6:1).
  - Marriage vows were \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:38).
  - The earth was filled with \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 6:11).
  - \_\_\_\_\_ was the order of the day (Mt. 24:38; Gen. 6:2).
  - People in general were \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 6:5, 11-12).
  - There was persistent unbelief in the face of \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. There are many \_\_\_\_\_ similarities between the last days and the days of Noah. Righteousness came to full fruit in Noah and his family.

- Noah found \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 6:8).
  - Noah lived a \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 6:9).
  - Noah was a \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 6:9).
  - Noah \_\_\_\_\_ with God (Gen. 6:9).
  - Noah feared God and walked in the obedience of \_\_\_\_\_ (Heb. 11:7).
  - Noah had his \_\_\_\_\_ in order (Heb. 11:7).
3. God provided a \_\_\_\_\_ for His people in the days of Noah. The ark is a beautiful type of the church.
- It was \_\_\_\_\_ by God's initiative and commandment.
  - It was prepared \_\_\_\_\_ for the faithful.
  - It was available for clean and \_\_\_\_\_ animals (Jews and Gentiles).
  - It had \_\_\_\_\_ for all.
  - It was a place of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord (Gen. 7:1; 8:16).
  - It was a \_\_\_\_\_ for all who entered before the coming judgment.

#### **IV. What are the four major eschatological viewpoints?**

While there are many opinions about how the end time events will unfold, there are three main views that can be summarized as follows:

A. The \_\_\_\_\_ View.

In this view the Second Coming of Christ concludes God's plan for man on earth. The 1000 year reign referred to in the Book of Revelation is a symbolic number and refers to an indefinite period of time including the entire Church Age.

B. The \_\_\_\_\_ View.

In this view Christ will not return until the kingdom of God has been fully established by the church. In this view the power of the Gospel will gradually overcome all opposing forces until all earthly kingdoms are reformed to reflect godly principles and justice.

C. The \_\_\_\_\_ View.

The pre-millennial view holds that Christ will come again before any millennial (1000 year) kingdom is established. The Pre-millennial view takes on \_\_\_\_\_ main forms:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

In this view the church is “raptured” out before the tribulation at Christ’s secret appearing. During the period of the tribulation, in the absence of the Church, God works through the Jewish nation to evangelize the world. In this view, Christ returns at the end of the tribulation and ushers in the millennium.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

This view is the same as the above view except that the church is raptured out half way through the tribulation.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

In this view the church remains right up to the end through the tribulation when Christ returns to set up a millennial kingdom. In this view the rapture or the catching away of the saints occurs in conjunction with the Second Coming.

## V. What does the Bible teach about the Rapture?

A. The term “rapture” is not found in the Bible as such.

1. The word “rapture” is a term that is used to describe the “\_\_\_\_\_” of the believers at the appearing of Christ (I Th. 4:15-17).

2. There is \_\_\_\_\_ that this is a biblical experience for the believer. The debate has to do with \_\_\_\_\_ this event occurs in the experience of the believer.

B. There are several verses that are used to teach the concept of the pre-tribulation rapture of the saints (Much of this section taken from *Understanding End Times*, by David Sell, pg. 31-37).

1. Revelation 3:10-11

Many consider this verse to be the strongest link to a pre-tribulation rapture. God promises to keep the church from the “\_\_\_\_\_” which shall come upon the whole world.

There are two problems with this thinking. The first is that this verse was specifically written to the church in Philadelphia, which did in fact undergo the hour of trial during ten historical waves of Roman persecution. To suggest the removal of the entire Body of Christ from a future antichristal persecution, when the very church to whom the promise written endured severe persecution, seems inconsistent.

The second problem surrounds the choice of the Greek word “*tereo*” which is rendered “keep.” If the author intended to communicate a removal from the situation, John would have used the Greek word “*paraphero*” translated “to take out or remove.” Both Greek possibilities present themselves next to each other in John 17:15, where John again writes, “*I do not pray that You should \_\_\_\_\_ of this world, but that You should \_\_\_\_\_ from the evil one.*”

Since John wrote both Revelation and the Gospel of John, he was familiar with both Greek words and their proper usage. Had John promised the church at Philadelphia some type of literal “removal” he would have used the appropriate word. Rather than “remove” the church, Jesus promised to keep or “\_\_\_\_\_” the church during the difficult days ahead.

## 2. I Thessalonians 5:9-10

Those who espouse the pre-tribulation rapture theology equate the tribulation period with the wrath of God. It should be noted that the New Testament defines wrath four different ways:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Wrath. This wrath results in eternal damnation (John 3:36; Rom. 5:9; I Th. 1:10; Rev. 14:10).
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Wrath. This wrath is a pouring out of tribulation upon the world during the great tribulation (Rev. 15:7; 16:1).
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ Wrath. This is a wrath exercised by the devil against the purposes of God when he realizes that his days are numbered (Rev. 12:12).
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ Wrath. This is when man exercises a lack of control and manifests an unproductive anger (Jam. 1:19-20).

So to which of the four definitions of wrath does I Thessalonians 5:9 refer. When you read the context, it places the wrath of God in opposite position to salvation through Jesus Christ. The opposite of salvation is eternal damnation.

## 3. Jeremiah 30:7

Pre-tribulationists assign the identity of Jacob to the church; post-tribulationists could agree to that possibility. Both might also agree that this could refer to the coming end-time tribulation. Where each side disagrees centers upon the interpretation of the phrase, “*but he shall be saved out of it.*”

Does this mean “\_\_\_\_\_” or the “ability to \_\_\_\_\_ whatever the trouble?” The Hebrew wording does not in any way indicate “removal.” Had Jeremiah meant to illustrate “removal,” he would have used the Hebrew word “*suwr*,” which appears throughout his writings for that exact purpose. For example, “*suwr*” appears in Jeremiah 32:31, which says, “*For this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove [Heb. “suwr”] it from before My face.*” Historically, the city was removed from the map. The word used in Jeremiah 30:7 is “*yasha*,” meaning to be “\_\_\_\_\_”; to get the victory.”

#### 4. I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Those holding to pre-tribulation viewpoint believe these verses prove a rapture before the tribulation since Paul addresses the need for hope. They assume the hope Paul offers is an \_\_\_\_\_ from the tribulation.

Nothing within these verses suggests that interpretation; instead, the intent of his words addresses verse 13, *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.*” The Thessalonians believed that if people died before Jesus returned, they would miss going to heaven. Through verses 14-17 Paul methodically describes how Jesus will first come for those asleep (dead in Christ), and then call for those who are alive. These verses do not address the tribulation period in any way.

#### 5. Luke 21:34-36

Luke 21:36 reads, “*Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*” Those who hold a pre-tribulation view use this verse to say that if we will pray always, we are promised to escape tribulation. The post-tribulation view rejects this logic, claiming that it is possible for some to escape the disasters of the end, while still having \_\_\_\_\_ as the result of a rapture. Revelation 12:6 speaks of a woman fleeing into the wilderness, where she will be protected and nourished from the dragon during a time of tribulation.

#### 6. I Corinthians 15:51-54

The pre-tribulationists say these verses suggest a rapture before the coming of Christ since there is no mention of a tribulation before or after the resurrection. Post-tribulationists see I Corinthians 15 as a chapter devoted exclusively to the

subject of the resurrection of the dead (See vs. 4-57). To address the tribulation or any other topic would detract from the single purpose of this chapter. To apply these verses as a proof text to the placement of a rapture in respect to the tribulation diverts from the integrity of Paul's sole purpose for this chapter.

#### 7. Revelation 4:1

Some pre-tribulationists believe that the call for John to ascend into heaven symbolizes the rapture of the church. This assumption stems from the word "church" not appearing from chapter four on through the rest of the book of Revelation. Due to the absence of this word, it is assumed the church must be in heaven during the time of the tribulation.

There are two problems with this assumption. First, why didn't God call the "church" to come up to heaven, instead of John? John ascends into the heavenlies, most likely through a trance, to receive the vision of the Revelation. To identify "John" as "the church" is forced and unsubstantiated.

The second problem point toward the various terms found within Revelation chapters 4-21 that refer to the Body of Christ still being present during these chapters. See the following: Revelation 6:9, 11; 7:3, 14; 12:6, 17; 13:7, 10; 14:12, 13; 17:6; 18:4, 20.

These thirteen verses describe members of the Body of Christ--the Church--some of which will live through the tribulation and stand as those alive and remaining unto the coming of the Lord (I Th. 4:15).

#### 8. Matthew 24:40-42

These familiar verses address the two standing in the field grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other left. Some holding a pre-tribulation view see the one taken in the rapture, while the other is left behind.

The post-tribulation view does not equate these verses with the rapture, but with the separation of believers and unbelievers at the time of the judgment. Before interpreting verses 40-41, we must respect the context of the surrounding verses (vs. 26-39).

To remain consistent with the previous analogy, those taken are the unbelievers; those who are left are the righteous. When taken in context, verses 40-41 have nothing to do with the rapture, but rather address the taking of wicked in judgment and the leaving of the righteous to enjoy the eternal kingdom or the 1000 year millennium.

#### 9. II Thessalonians 2:7

Pre-tribulationists believe the Holy Spirit will remove Himself from the earth when the antichrist arrives. If the Holy Spirit is removed, it must mean that the church is also removed, knowing that the Spirit lives within believers.

Post-tribulationists state the impossibility of that interpretation, noting that during the tribulation there will still be saints present. Are saints no longer filled with the Holy Spirit? Of course they are (Rom. 8:9). The alternative interpretation realizes the time is coming when the Holy Spirit will no longer restrain evil as He has done so throughout the ages.

10. Matthew 24:29-31

After the tribulation Jesus visibly returns to the earth, an event every eye shall see. Verse 31 next indicates that it is at this time that the rapture of the church takes place: *“And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*

The elect are believers according to the following: Luke 18:7; Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1; I Peter 1:1-2.

## VI. What does the Bible teach about the Second Coming of Christ?

- A. It is a fact that Christ \_\_\_\_\_ a second time (See: The Doctrine of Christ, XI).
- B. Christ will return personally, \_\_\_\_\_, gloriously and triumphantly (See: The Doctrine of Christ, XI).
- C. Christ has a multi-faceted \_\_\_\_\_ for His return.
  - 1. To receive \_\_\_\_\_ (John 14:3; 17:24; I Th. 4:16-17).
  - 2. To \_\_\_\_\_ with His servants (Mt. 25:19).
  - 3. To \_\_\_\_\_ all (Mt. 25:31-46; II Tim. 4:1, 8; Jude 14-15).
  - 4. To \_\_\_\_\_ every man according to his works (Mt. 16:27; I Cor. 3:12-15; II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 5:4).
  - 5. To complete the \_\_\_\_\_ of the saints (Rom. 8:23; Heb. 9:28; I Th. 3:13).
  - 6. To be \_\_\_\_\_ in His saints (Col. 3:4; II Th. 1:10).

7. To receive His \_\_\_\_\_, His reward for redemption (Mt. 25:10; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7-9).

## **VII. What effect does the Second Coming have on the Church?**

- A. The dead \_\_\_\_\_ will rise (I Th. 4:16).
- B. Believers will meet Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to be with Him forever (I Th. 4:17).
- C. Believers will receive their new \_\_\_\_\_ (I Cor. 15:35-49; Phil. 3:20-21).
- D. Believers will be \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ's image (I John 3:2).
- E. Believers will be united with Christ in \_\_\_\_\_ (Rev. 19:7-9).
- F. Believers will receive a \_\_\_\_\_ of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8).
- G. Believers will live and \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ forever (Mt. 19:28; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:4-6; 22:5).

## **VIII. What is to be our attitude as we anticipate Christ's return?**

- A. Our attitude in general.
  1. We should \_\_\_\_\_ for His coming (Mt. 24:44; Luke 21:34-36; I John 2:28).
  2. We should be \_\_\_\_\_ about His coming (I Th. 4:17-18).
  3. We should \_\_\_\_\_ the second coming (II Pet. 3:10-13; I Th. 2:19).
  4. We should be looking and \_\_\_\_\_ for His coming (Luke 12:36-37; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28).
  5. We should \_\_\_\_\_ for the second coming (Rev. 22:20).
  6. We should \_\_\_\_\_ in the event He delays His coming (II Th. 3:5; Jam. 5:7-11).
- B. Our personal readiness.
  1. We should watch out for \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:4).
    - a. Do not go after those who say "Christ is in the desert" (Mt. 24:23-26).

b. Do not be misled by \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:11, 24  
Compare: Mt. 7:15).

c. Be sober and alert and avoid spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ (I Th. 5:3-8).

2. Do not allow \_\_\_\_\_ to come in when natural signs begin to unfold (Mt.  
24:6; Luke 21:26-28).

3. Keep your behavior excellent among the heathen as a \_\_\_\_\_ (I  
Pet. 2:11-12).

B. Our attitude toward the lost.

1. We should make it a priority to preach \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 24:14).

2. We should \_\_\_\_\_ to come into the kingdom with a sense of  
urgency (Luke 14:22-23).

## IX. What is the date of the Second Coming?

A. The Bible teaches that \_\_\_\_\_ the day or hour of the Second  
Coming.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven do not know (Mt. 24:36).

2. Even \_\_\_\_\_ in His earthly walk did not know (Mark 13:32).

3. Even the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord do not know the specific time (Mt.  
24:42-44).

4. Some of this information comes from books of the Bible that are \_\_\_\_\_  
until the time of the end and unless the seals are opened our understanding is  
veiled (Dan. 12:4; Rev. 5).

5. To unbelievers and those believers who are asleep, He will come as a  
\_\_\_\_\_ I Th. 5:2).

B. The Bible seems to indicate that those among His people who are watchful can know  
the \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 19:44).

1. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees who should have had insight into the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord (Mt. 16:1-4; Luke 12:54-56).

2. God seems to be committed to His people, the children of the light, in letting  
them in on \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 18:17-19; I Th. 5:4).

C. Certain things must take place \_\_\_\_\_ the Second Coming of Christ.

1. On the \_\_\_\_\_ side

a. The \_\_\_\_\_ is revealed (II Th. 2:3).

b. A \_\_\_\_\_ or apostasy of many (II Th. 2:3; I Tim. 4:1-4).

c. A general world-wide \_\_\_\_\_ or persecution of the church (Mt. 24:29-35).

2. On the \_\_\_\_\_ side.

a. The Gospel is preached in \_\_\_\_\_ world (Mt. 24:14).

b. The end-time world-wide \_\_\_\_\_ of souls comes in (Mt. 13:39).

c. There is a \_\_\_\_\_ of all that was prophesied (Acts 3:19-21).

d. The bride of Christ, the Church will have made herself \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7).

D. God will let us know what we need to know when we need to know it. In the meantime we need to occupy this world, press into the kingdom, reach forth to the mark of the high calling and extend His kingdom until the whole earth is filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.