

LESSON 13

Introduction To Eschatology

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

I. Introduction (pg. 51)

“William Miller of Vermont developed “kingdom arithmetic” to predict that the Second coming [of Christ] would occur between March 21, 1842, and March 21, 1843. Obviously, Jesus did not return during that time. Disappointment swept through the Millerite ranks and once again embarrassment hovered over the church. Miller himself seemed undaunted, asserting that he simply miscalculated his “arithmetic.” He refigured and asserted with confidence that Christ would return on October 22, 1844. As time drew near, a sign with this message was displayed on a Philadelphia store window:

This shop will close in honor of the King of Kings who will appear about the twentieth of October. Get ready, friends, to crown him Lord of all.

Most of the Millerites sold or gave away their possessions and prepared their wardrobe for the coming of the kingdom. They gathered in white robes and waited – and waited. Of course October 23, 1844 came and Christ did not return. Five years later William Miller died and these words were penned on his tombstone:

At the appointed time the end shall be.

Welcome to the last class in this Systematic Theology course! Since it’s the final lesson, it’s fitting that we spend our time thinking about the end times, or eschatology. The word eschatology comes from the Greek word “eschatos,” which means “last” – we’re studying the last things.

Now let me be clear here that this is not a class on astrology or something similar to that. That kind of pagan fortune telling is detestable to God and should be avoided (Deut. 18:9-13). What we are doing is inquiring of God, and the source of our findings will be solely from God’s Word found in Scripture.

While there may be uncertainty as to when or in exactly what manner these last events will take place, the passages that we’re going to examine today make it clear that God has already written the final chapters of history.

If you are someone who thinks that studying the end times is a fruitless endeavor because of the difficulty in interpreting some of the biblical passages or for any other reason, let me read to you the introduction to the book of Revelation. It says, “**Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near**” (Rev. 1:3). God has promised his blessing to those who endeavor to know more about him through his Word. May we be such a people this morning.

II. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (PG. 51)

So to begin the end, we need to know that the Bible promises a literal return of Christ. Jesus came once to make atonement for sin, and he will come again to consummate his rule.

This truth is mentioned and assumed throughout the New Testament and was taught by the apostles. Paul says in I Thessalonians 4:16, “**For the Lord himself will come down from heaven....**” The Lord’s brother James refers to the future expectation of this coming when he writes, “**Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming**” (James 5:7).

Where did these men get this understanding that Jesus would return again? Well, it appears from the Lord Jesus Christ himself. When sitting with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, Jesus tells them, (*recorded in handbook*) “**At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to another**” (Matthew 24:30-31).

This Second coming of Christ is often referred to as “the Day of the Lord” or some other similar phrase in the Scriptures. It’s a phrase that connotes both calamity and judgment, as well as salvation. When the Lord Jesus returns, we are told in Zephaniah that, “**That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness...because they have sinned against the LORD...In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth**” (Zephaniah 1:15-18).

At the same time the whole world will be consumed by the fire of God’s jealous anger (v. 3:8), God says that he will “**purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder**” (Zephaniah 3:9). That day of judgment for the ungodly will be a day of rejoicing for the righteous.

Acts 1:11, “**and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”**”

Well, now that we understand that Christ will come back, what is the nature of this second coming? What will it be like? What can we say about it from Scripture?

A. There will be a sudden, personal, visible, bodily return of Christ

Jesus will come back Himself, in His person. While this seems self-evident in an evangelical church, it was once popular in liberal protestant circles to believe that Jesus Himself would not come back. Instead, the air, or aroma, of Christ would come back, and an acceptance of His teaching and an imitation of His lifestyle of love would increasingly return to earth. Then the ethical norms from the Sermon on the Mount would be established, and utopia would be enjoyed by all.

Well, this is not the message that Scripture gives us. The Bible teaches that the incarnation of the Son of God was not his last manifestation in the flesh to men on earth. In John 14:3, Jesus says that, “[*he*] **will come back.**”

When Jesus ascended into heaven in Acts 1:11, without delay two angels came and said to the disciples, “**This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven**”

So the Lord’s eschatological return won’t be a spiritual coming to dwell in people’s hearts and make them happier and more ethical, but a visible, bodily and personal return. And it will be a glorious return. Matthew 16:27 tells us that Jesus will return “**in his Father’s glory.**”

It appears this glory will be visible to all. In Revelation 1:7, John writes, **“Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him....”** Likewise, in the 1 Thessalonians passage we read earlier, (*in handbook at top of page 52*), Paul says that, **“the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God...”** (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Christ’s return will not be done secretly or stealthy. No, it will be loud and clear and announced and everyone will know that the Son of God has come. It will be a fitting return for the King of Kings.

So if that is how Christ will return, when will it happen? Can we know the time of Christ’s return, as William Miller concluded? This brings us to our second point about Jesus’ second coming.

B. The time of Christ’s coming is unknown (pg. 52)

Scripture does not disclose the time of Christ’s second coming. Jesus says in Matthew 24:36, (*recorded in handbook*), **“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”**

Why does God not reveal to us the exact time when Christ will return? How does not knowing when Christ will return affect our Christian life? [*The unexpectedness of Christ’s return allows us to continue to be engaged in life and encourages us to be ready at ALL times and not just before his return.*]

If we continue reading in Matthew 24:42-44, Jesus makes it clear why it is not for us to know when he will return. He says, **“keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”**

Jesus then illustrates this teaching again with the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25. He is driving home this message to **“keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour”** of his return.

Despite this clear teaching, people seem to have an insatiable desire to try to answer the “when” question of the second coming. You see this not only on the tabloids at the check-out counter, but also in the teachings of many religious sects (some claiming the name of Christ).

It’s not a sign of godliness to predict something with certainty that God says we will not know. Jesus commands us to watch and be prepared for his return. We are to be ready – as for an event that could happen at any time. This seems to indicate that it’s possible that Jesus could come back at any time – even today.

“Now, wait a second.” you say. “Scripture does present the notion that certain signs will precede the return of Christ.” This is true. Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:34-37, and Luke 21:11 all contain Christ’s teaching on signs of the end of the age. In Luke 21:11, for example, Jesus says, **“There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilence in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.”**

Mark 13:34-37, **“It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵ Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—³⁶ lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”**

Well, what are we to think about these things? How do we reconcile passages that warn us to be ready because Christ could suddenly return at any moment with passages that indicate that several important events must take place before Christ can return? There are some evangelicals who believe that by charting some of the “signs” that are thought to precede the return of Christ, they can make the statement that “since A, B and C have happened, now Christ can return” and name the exact moment when the parousia will occur.

Part of the problem here is undoubtedly exegetical sloppiness that seems to ooze out of many sectors of evangelicalism. The signs are not interpreted correctly due to poor hermeneutical presuppositions. Nevertheless, the two sets of passages: those speaking to the immediacy and unexpectedness of Christ’s return and those speaking to signs preceding Christ’s return need to be resolved.

The first thing that we should realize is that some of those prophetic signs mentioned in the synoptic gospels were fulfilled when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. Yet, we certainly have no reason to believe that all of Jesus’ eschatological teaching was realized just a few decades after his death.

For example, what about the signs in heaven when **“the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken”** (Mark 13:24-25)? In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul writes about “the man of lawlessness” coming before the day of the Lord and being beaten on that Day. In the past, many people have thought this could be Nero or Hitler or the Pope during the Reformation, yet these have all come and gone and Christ has yet to return. There is still a futuristic element to Jesus’ prophecy that we must take into consideration.

Wayne Grudem offers up a pretty good answer to the tension between Christ’s return being unexpected while at the same time having obvious signs that precede his coming. Grudem concludes that there is a way to resolve these two sets of passages without making subjective statements as to whether or not certain signs have been fulfilled. He says,

“It is unlikely but possible that the signs have already been fulfilled, and therefore we simply cannot know with certainty at any point in history whether all the signs have been fulfilled or not. This position is an attractive one because it takes seriously the primary purpose for the signs...to intensify our expectation of Christ’s return...With regard to the warnings to be ready...Christ could return at any time...and so we must be ready, even though it is unlikely that Christ will return at once (because it seems that there are several signs yet to be fulfilled).”¹

This position accords well with the nature of biblical prophecy. George Eldon Ladd writes, **“Biblical prophecy is not primarily three dimensional but two; it has height and breadth but is little concerned about depth....”**² In other words, the chronology of future events is not always specified.

The Apostle Peter reminds his readers that they are not to lose faith when scoffers mock their belief in the second coming and say “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?” Peter writes in 2 Peter 3, **“But do not forget one thing dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness...But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.”**

Peter then turns from the doctrine of the second coming to application of that doctrine to the Christian life, which brings us to the third point.

¹ W. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 1101.

² G.E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, p. 22.

C. Christians should eagerly await Christ's return (pg. 52)

In that same passage from 2 Peter that we just read, Peter takes his knowledge of God's attributes and the day of the Lord and applies it to how men ought to live. He says that since the day of the Lord will bring about destruction of the heavens, we should strive to be holy and to make every effort to be found blameless and at peace with God.

The Christian's hope is rooted in Christ – his resurrection and return. We need to remind ourselves and each other of the promise that we will be raised with Christ when he returns. Looking back at Peter's first letter, he is addressing those who are suffering for being a Christian, and what does he tell them? How does he encourage them during their trials? He points them to Christ's return when his glory will be revealed and their joy will be filled, 1 Peter 4:13, **“But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”**

Regardless of the specific details of Christ's return, our response should be the same. We should eagerly desire and long for Christ's return in glory. It's the overriding hope of the Christian life that this will take place. Scripture is very clear about this.

John's response in Revelation to Jesus' claim that He will return is simple and gloriously appropriate: **“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”** (Rev. 22:20)

Jesus' return is the event that gives us hope as Christians. It confirms that history is not a despairing cycle, but the story of God redeeming a people to the glory of His name. The doctrine of the second coming proclaims that God is in control and that Christ will come again for His chosen ones. Jesus said in John 14:1-3, (*typo in workbook, not verse 4*), **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”**

This is to bring us much joy as we await these things. We are but aliens and strangers in the world waiting to be brought home. Our citizenship is not on earth but in heaven, if we follow Christ (Phil. 3:20).

Let us, as a church, be more engaged in reminding each other of this sweet truth. Why neglect and cast aside such a rich jewel of a promise? Ask yourself, “How many times a day do my thoughts turn to this hope?” A lot? Often? Occasionally? Rarely? Never? If we're not turning to this hope more often, then perhaps we love this world more than we should. Let us take delight in this most assured promise.

Questions or Comments?

III. The Millennium (pg. 53)

For those of you who have been here throughout the Systematic Theology classes, you will know that we have talked about a lot of difficult topics; the incarnation, the problem of evil, and the Trinity all come to mind. Well, this next section on the millennium has its own set of difficulties so not to disappoint you.

The discussion of the millennium, which means “a thousand years”, originates from the book of Revelation in the first part chapter 20. The question often asked from this passage is, “What are the thousand years and when will Christ return with respect to them?”

To give you a flavor for this passage, let's read Revelation 20:1-10, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

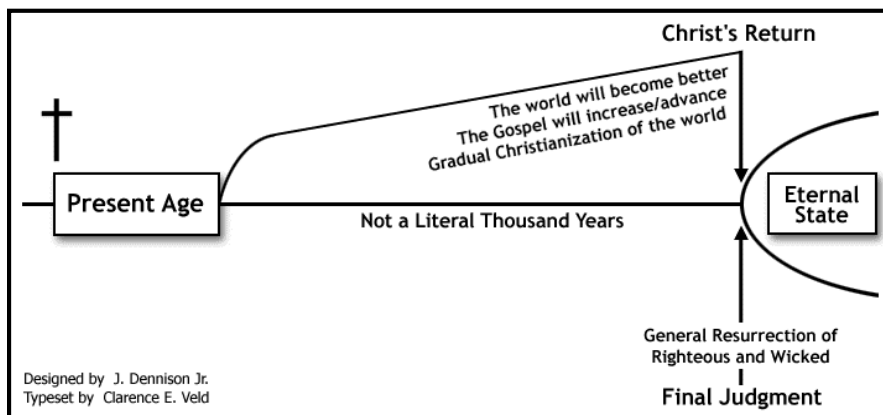
The Defeat of Satan

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

There are four basic views of the millennium that have had prominence throughout the history of the church, though some have a much longer ancestry than others. Let me briefly explain all four and then give some summary reflection.

- *Postmillennialism (turn to page 55)*

The first view we will look at is that of postmillennialism. This view says that through the binding of Satan, there will be a gradual increase in the growth of the church and spread of the gospel where more and more people will become Christians. The influence of more believers will change society so that it will function as God intended gradually resulting into an age of peace and righteousness, in other words – the millennium, which is not necessarily a literal one thousand years. Christ will then come back "post", or after, the millennium.



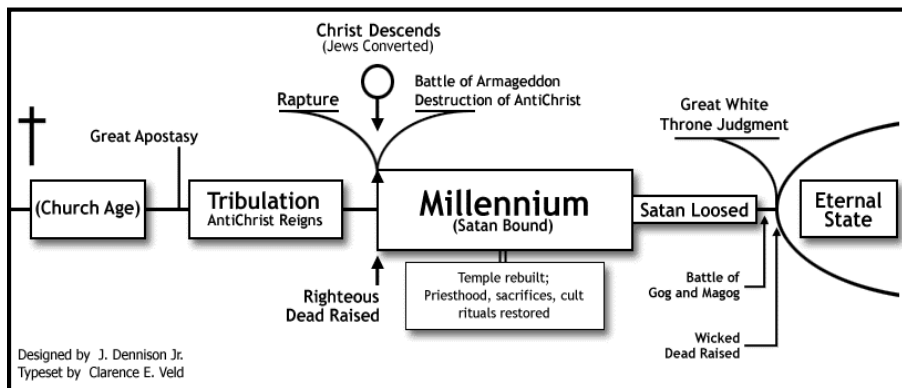
- *Amillennialism (page 56)*

The second view is that of Amillennialism. This view is the simplest and says that Satan’s binding will reduce his influence over the nations so that the gospel is preached to the whole world, yet there is a general view that times will worsen. Christ’s reign is a heavenly one and the millennium is equivalent to the church age currently going on, without reference to a literal thousand years. Christ will then return and judge believers and unbelievers at once.



- *Classic or Historic Premillennialism (page 56)*

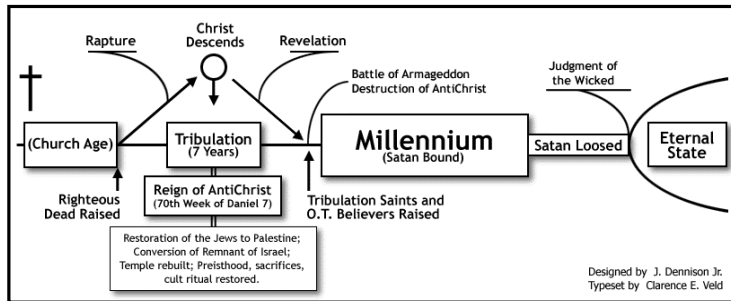
The third view is that of classic or historic Premillennialism. Although there are slight variations to this view, it basically states that Christ will come back “pre”, or before, the millennium. The church age will go through the tribulation period. At the end of the tribulation, Satan will be bound, and Christ will come back to establish his kingdom on earth for the millennium, which is not necessarily a literal thousand years. The resurrected believers will reign with the resurrected Christ physically on earth during this time. Unbelievers will also be on earth at this time and most will become believers and be saved. At the end of the millennium, Satan is loosed and Christ decisively defeats him and his remaining followers. Then the unbelievers from all times will be judged, and the believers will enter into the eternal state.



- *Dispensational Premillennialism (page 57)*

Finally, we have dispensational Premillennialism. This is a rather recent view that is premillennial in that Christ will secretly return for believers before the suffering of the tribulation period. During the tribulation, the Jewish people will be left to go through it and will be ultimately converted. He will then return for a

third time after the tribulation with his saints to rule the earth for one thousand years. The rest of it then follows the same as the classic premillennial view.



(bottom of page 53) We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at

the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

You can become a member of EBC without making a declaration about what you believe about the millennium. This is a controversial issue among many evangelicals, but it's only secondary in nature. Our Statement of Faith here at Emmanuel declares only that which is a matter of fact from Scripture and is necessary for our unity as a church.

There are many great theologians over the years who have differed on these various views. Augustine, B.B. Warfield, and many others during the great revivals of the past have held to the postmillennial view. Louis Berkhof, John Calvin and other Reformers have held to the amillennial view. Don Carson, Al Mohler, and Wayne Grudem hold to the classic premillennial view while John MacArthur is a dispensational premillennialist. I think it would be safe to say that our church leaders fall somewhere on or between dispensational or classic premillennialism.

The end comment to make about all of these views is that they have all been held by what we would consider genuine Christians and great theologians. This is not an essential doctrine of the Christian faith. Your salvation doesn't hang on how you come down on this issue. The important thing is that all of these views have the similar belief that Christ is returning and that judgment is coming. We must be prepared, which brings us to our next topic – the final judgment.

IV. The Final Judgment (pg. 54)

This is the judgment in which all people are either condemned or rewarded for eternity. As with our last section, we're not going to delve into exactly when this will take place on the eschatological timetable. But if we look at Scripture on this, the basic message is that there will be one judgment and that it's coming soon.

In his speech to the Athenians, Paul proclaims: **“God...commands all people everywhere to repent. For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead”** (Acts 17:30-31).

Since God's judgment on mankind is coming, what does Scripture say about it? Well, let me give you three biblical statements about the final judgment.

1. Jesus Christ will be the Judge

Jesus Himself will be the Judge at the time of the final judgment. He is the one appointed by the Father who we just read about in Acts 17. One day our acceptance or denial of Jesus here on earth will be brought to bear its full weight as we come under his judgment. It is Jesus, the one whom we have followed or opposed, who will judge us.

Acts 10:42, **“And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.”**

Read Matthew 25:31-33 (recorded in handbook)

2. Unbelievers will be judged and condemned to eternal punishment

Revelation 20:11-15, **“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”**

It’s at this time of the final judgment that unbelievers will be condemned before the Lord. Paul says in Romans 2:5-8, **“But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each man according to what he has done...for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil there will be wrath and anger.”**

Those who do not believe in Christ will be condemned because they have not turned from their sin and repented. They have not accepted the teaching of Jesus. Those who are condemned will receive the punishment of Hell.

Hell is a place of eternal, conscious punishment for the wicked. In Scripture, hell is often referred to a place where men will weep and there will be gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:30). It’s a place where the fire never goes out (Mark 9:43), where there will be no rest (Rev. 14:11).

Hell is a real place and is the real result of judgment. One notable trend in evangelical eschatology is to reject the doctrine of eternal punishment and advocate “annihilationism,” which means that unbelievers are finally destroyed and no longer exist. But Scripture doesn’t support this view. In Matthew 25:46, Jesus says, **“Then [the wicked] will go away to *eternal* punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”**

It’s difficult to think of someone being in perpetual suffering forever, but we must not force our skewed sense of justice on God’s perfect justice. He is an infinitely holy and eternal God, and to make offense against him is to be dealt the worst punishment possible. And the only way to avoid his fury is through Jesus Christ who endured God’s wrath on the cross. The only difference between heaven and hell is God’s grace in Christ.

3. Believers will be judged

There are two aspects to the judgment for Christians. In one sense, we’ll be judged as righteous and will be eternally rewarded for our position, granted by God’s grace, as co-heirs with Christ.

Christians will not be finally condemned. We will all pass from death to life. That said, the second sense in which we will be judged is by how we lived as Christians. Scripture seems to indicate that there will be varying degrees of reward depending on how we have lived. We will be judged for the works that we have done.

2 Corinthians 5:10 says, **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”**

1 Corinthians 3:12-15, **“Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—¹³ each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”**

This is not meant to inspire terror, but to inspire us to godly living. We will be judged on what we have done with what we have been given. We will give an account before God for how we have lived. God will bring to light all that is now hidden. But all the sins that will be made public on that day will be as those which have been forgiven. This judgment is one of the reasons why God’s grace should never be taken as a license to sin.

Ultimately, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. The reward for being justified in Christ and being declared “righteous” through Christ is heaven. Heaven is the full, unmediated presence of God.

Exactly what will heaven look like? This brings us to the last of the last things – the new heaven and new earth.

Questions or Comments?

V. The New Heaven and the New Earth (pg. 54)

We defined heaven a minute ago, but we should expand our definition to acknowledge that heaven is an actual place. It’s not merely a state of mind or a symbol, it’s real, and if you are a Christian, you will be there bodily for eternity once you have been glorified.

Heaven is the place where God most fully manifests his presence – it is the abode of God. Listen to the Apostle John’s vision of God dwelling with man. As I read this, realize that if you’re a Christian then this is your destiny, this is the consummation of redemptive history.

Revelation 21:1-3 says, **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.’”**

While heaven is mentioned frequently in Scripture, there’s not a lot of detail surrounding what exactly it will be like. This is because we won’t be finally taken up with streets of gold or foundations of precious jewels. No, we’ll be taken up with God and his glory! We will see the face of the eternal and invisible God and live in an endless succession of time worshipping and enjoying our Creator as was meant to be.

Romans 8:19, **“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.”**

These truths and images about the future should kindle the immense joy and hope in us. Christian eschatology is an eschatology of hope; regardless of how all of the much-disputed details turn out, we know how the story ultimately ends.

How much should this inspire us to godly living, to view the challenges of today with an eternal perspective, and to share the good news of this redemption that God is working out before our very eyes?

Jesus says, **“Yes, I am coming soon!”** and we, like a countless multitude that has gone before us, respond: **“Amen, Come, Lord Jesus!”**

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

Questions or Comments?