

Eschatology
The Study of End Times
Part 2

Introduction

1. Define eschatology: the study of the end of the world; it includes things like the return of Jesus Christ, the Millennium, the antichrist, judgment of wicked and reward of the saints, the new heavens and earth, eternity, etc.
2. The two most important questions regarding eschatology:
 - a. The first is, Are these events to be interpreted literally or symbolically/allegorically?
 - b. The second is, Are they referring to the past, present, or future...or possibly even a mixture of past, present and future events?
3. The Church has struggled with and debated these two questions for the past 2000 years and it's led to different views of eschatology

A. Review: The Four Different Views of the Millennium

1. There are four primary views when it comes to the millennium, and we looked at these last week:
 - a. **HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM**
 - b. **AMILLENNIALISM**
 - c. **POSTMILLENNIUMISM**
 - d. **DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIUMISM**
 - 1) This is the most prominent view among evangelicals, and the one we hold to here at Renew
 - 2) Dispensational theology interprets the Bible and God's redemptive plan through a series of dispensations, or administrations, where God worked/works with different groups of people at different times in different ways, slowly revealing more and more about His plan over time
 - 3) Most break history down into seven dispensations, and the Millennial kingdom is the last of these dispensations
 - 4) The main tenants of dispensational premillennialism are:
 - a) A more literal interpretation of prophetic texts
 - b) It is more pessimistic than optimistic (the world will grow more rebellious and more antagonist toward the Gospel)
 - c) All of the end times events are still future
 - d) Maintains a distinction between Israel and the Church with God still planning to fulfill ALL of the earthly promises He made to Israel
 - e) Jesus will come back before the millennium and reign as a literal, earthly king for 1000 years
2. Why does this matter to us?
 - a. It's important to understand where someone is coming from when they preach, teach, or write on eschatology
 - b. Dustin and I interpret the Bible through a dispensational premillennial lens

- c. Our statement of faith for Renew Bible Church reflects this viewpoint
- d. This doesn't mean that we agree with every tenant of dispensational theology because there are many different "flavors" of dispensationalism with disagreements over different aspects or elements, but the general framework is consistent with what the Bible reveals
- e. So, our approach to eschatology follows this model

B. Review: Outline of the End Times from Daniel

1. The first thing we learned is that there would be five kingdoms that would rule from Daniel's time until the millennium (Daniel 2:31-45)
2. Next, we learned about referred to as Daniel's 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24-26)
3. The last thing we learned from Daniel is how the last week—the only one still in the future and yet to be fulfilled—would unfold
4. What we're going to do next is look at what Jesus and the book of Revelation has to say about the end times and see how those compare with what we've already learned from Daniel

C. Outline of the End Times from Jesus

**Jesus addressed the end times in detail in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 25-25, Mark 13, Luke 21; He also discussed His second coming in Luke 17:22-37

1. We'll be focusing on Matthew's account and in 4:3 the disciples ask Jesus what signs will precede His 2nd coming and the end of the age (READ)
2. What Jesus describes next is Daniel's 70th week
3. He begins with what He calls **BIRTH PANGS** (READ Matthew 24:1-14):
 - a. Birth pangs are the things that lead up to the birth, but they are not the birth itself
 - b. Those things that lead up to the return of Jesus and the end of the age include others coming in His name (false Christs), wars between nations, famines and earthquakes; Jesus said these things are just "***the beginning***" of the birth pangs!
 - c. They will be followed by increasing persecution of believers, apostasy and betrayal, false prophets, and lawlessness; and the lawlessness will cause most people's love to "**grow cold**"
 - d. It isn't until all these things are finished, and the Gospel has been preached in the whole world, that Jesus will return and the end of the age will come
4. Next, Jesus describes the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** which was spoken of by Daniel (READ Matthew 24:15)—according to Daniel, this happens in the middle of the 70th week as we saw earlier in Daniel 11:31
5. Next Jesus describes a time of **GREAT TRIBULATION** (READ Matthew 24:16-28)—this refers to the second half of Daniel's 70th because Jesus places it after the abomination of desolation which Daniel puts at the midpoint
 - a) He describes the tribulation of this time as, "**such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be**"
 - b) He warns that when this happens, those in Judea (Israel) must flee to the mountains for safety (may refer to Rev 12:1-6 where Jews flee to the wilderness to be nourished and protected by God)
 - c) Jesus also said that unless God cuts those days short, no life could be saved
 - d) Even then, however, His return is not quite yet

6. The next thing Jesus describes is His appearing in the sky and He shares three things that will coincide with it (24:29-31):
 - a) The first is that **“Immediately”** after the great tribulation, the sky will be filled with celestial disturbances: the sun and moon darkened, stars falling from heaven, heavens being shaken (READ 24:29)
 - 1) Throughout the Scriptures, these signs are used to describe the coming of the Day of the Lord which is the final outpouring of His wrath upon the earth
 - 2) Joel 2:31-32: **“The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ³² “And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.”**
 - 3) Isaiah 13:9-11a: **“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light. 11 Thus I will punish the world for its evil And the wicked for their iniquity;”**
 - 4) This same language is used in Revelation 6 to announce the beginning of the Day of the Day and the pouring out of God’s wrath upon the earth (READ 6:12-17)
 - b) The second thing that will happen is that Jesus will appear visibly in the sky (READ 24:30):
 - 1) This will not be secret; all the tribes of the earth will see Him
 - 2) He will come with power and great glory
 - c) The last thing that will coincide with His appearing is that He will send forth His angels to gather His elect (READ 24:31):
 - 1) The angels will arrive with a audible blast of a trumpet
 - 2) They will gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other
 - d) Some see this as a reference to His second coming while others believe it describes the rapture of the Church and we’ll get into that more specifically next week
7. The rest of chapter 24 and through 25:29 is comprised of parables addressing the need to be ready and prepared for His appearing
8. The last thing Jesus describes is what is referred to as the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats which takes place immediately after the end of God’s wrath and before the 1000-year reign (READ 25:31-46)

D. Outline of the End Times from the Book of Revelation

1. Prologue (1:1-8)
2. Letters to the seven churches (1:9-3:22)
3. Vision of God’s Throne in Heaven (4:1-11)
4. Daniel’s 70th week (chapters 5-11):
 - a. The BEGINNING OF DANIEL’S 70th WEEK (The seven seals; 6:1-8:1):
 - 1) First seal (READ Revelation 6:1-2): False Christs
 - 2) Second seal (READ Revelation 6:3-4): Removal of peace/wars

- 3) Third seal (READ Revelation 6:5-6): Famine
 - 4) Fourth seal (READ Revelation 6:7-8): Death for ¼ of the earth from war, famine, disease, and wild animals
 - 5) Fifth seal (READ Revelation 6:9-11): Vision of martyred believers with mention of more to come
 - 6) Sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-7:17; READ 12-17): Preparation for Day of the Lord/God's Wrath
 - a) Great celestial disturbances
 - b) Kings of earth cry out in fear of God's impending wrath
 - c) Sealing of 144,000 Jews
 - d) Uncountable mass of believers before the throne (those who came out of the Great Tribulation)
 - 7) Seventh seal (READ Revelation 8:1):
 - a) 30 minutes of silence in heaven which immediately precedes the Day of the Lord (READ ALSO Habakkuk 2:20; Zephaniah 1:7)
 - b) Immediately following the silence, God's wrath begins with the seven trumpet judgments and concludes with the seven bowl judgments
- b. THE BEGINNING OF GOD'S WRATH (the seven trumpet judgments; 8:2-11:19)—also called THE DAY OF THE LORD:
- 1) First trumpet (READ Revelation 8:1-7): 1/3 of the earth destroyed by hail, fire and blood thrown from heaven
 - 2) Second trumpet (READ Revelation 8:8-9): Great mountain burning with fire thrown into the sea killing 1/3 of ocean life, 1/3 of ships, and turning 1/3 of the oceans to blood
 - 3) Third trumpet (READ Revelation 8:10-11): Great star called Wormwood falls from heaven and makes 1/3 of the earth's fresh water undrinkable; many die from drinking it
 - 4) Fourth trumpet (READ Revelation 8:12-13): 1/3 of the sun, moon and stars go dark and shorten the amount of daylight and moonlight; the announcement of the **THREE WOES** which refers to incredible distress, affliction, torment
 - 5) Fifth trumpet/First woe (READ Revelation 9:1-12): creatures from the bottomless pit are released to torment, but not kill, anyone on earth who does not have the seal of God on their foreheads for five months; they are described as a combination of locusts and scorpions lead by a demonic angel from the abyss named Abaddon (Apollyon in the Greek); the torment is so bad that men will seek death but not find it
 - 6) Sixth trumpet/Second woe (READ Revelation 9:13-11:14):
 - a) Four angels unbound to kill 1/3 of mankind by plagues of fire, smoke and brimstone; those not killed refuse to repent; most see these as fallen angels who lead an army of 200 million, but it's unclear if this refers to a literal human army or a demonic army
 - b) Another angel (good angel) with a book in his hands announces that there would no longer be a delay and that the mystery of God which had been preached to His servants the prophets is finished
 - c) John is given a vision of the nations that were given authority to trample the earth for 3.5 years (began at the mid-point, abomination of desolation)
 - d) He is also given a vision of the two witnesses who would witness for the same period (from the midpoint until the end of the 1260 days); they have supernatural powers and prevent rain, can turn water to blood, cause plagues, but will ultimately

be killed by the Beast, lay dead for 3.5 days, before being resurrected and taken to heaven

- e) At that time, 1/10 of Jerusalem will be destroyed and 7000 people killed

- 7) Seventh trumpet/Third woe (READ Revelation 11:15-19):
 - a) Announces the end of the kingdom of the world and the beginning of the Kingdom of the Lord
 - b) Foreshadows the earthly reign of Jesus

- c. First Parenthesis (12-14):
 - 1) A non-sequential series of visions that reflect events that mostly unfold at various times during Daniel's 70th week
 - 2) They include Jews who escape to the wilderness as described in the Olivet Discourse and are protected by God, Michael the Archangel rising up to wage war with the Devil, persecution of believers, the reign of the Prophet and the Beast, a vision of Jesus standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000 Jews; angels from heaven preaching both the Gospel and doom to the inhabitants of the earth, and the reaping of the both the righteous and the wicked

- d. THE CONCLUSION OF GOD'S WRATH (the seven bowl judgments; 15:1-16:21):
 - 1) The first six bowls (READ 16:1-16)
 - 2) The seventh and final bowl (READ 16:17-21)

- e. Second Parenthesis (17:1-20:3):
 - 1) Describes the events that take place throughout the seven bowls
 - 2) This includes Christ's victory over and destruction of Babylon, Christ's second coming, and casting of the beast and false prophet into the Lake of Fire, and the binding of Satan in the abyss during the millennium
 - 3) It also describes the Marriage Supper of the Lamb which takes place in heaven, likely right before Christ's 2nd coming

- f. The 1000 Year Reign of Christ (20:4-15)
- g. The New Heavens and Earth (21:1-5)
- h. Epilogue (21:6-21)

E. What about the Rapture?

1. You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned the Rapture of the Church...and that's by design
2. As you probably know, just like everything else in eschatology, there's debate on the timing of the Rapture so I'm going to dedicate the next two weeks to talk about just that one issue
3. I'm sure most, if not all of you, either have an opinion or a hope as to when the Rapture will occur, so it should be an interesting and challenging time
4. Now, to get you to come back, I'll offer a little tease: I'm going to tell you exactly when the Rapture is going to occur <wink>