

The Gospel and Culture Part 3:

Heaven, Hell and the End Times

Goals of the Series

- ❖ To submit fully to the teaching from God's Word
- ❖ To discover what God's Word says about modern cultural topics
- ❖ How are we as Christians to engage with each of these topics
- ❖ Become equipped to take the Gospel in the culture
- ❖ Let the Word of God be our ONLY source of authority

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. - 1 John 2:15-17

"I believe that one reason why the Church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the Church Put your finger on any prosperous page in the Church's history, and [you] will find a little marginal note [that says]: 'In this age [people] could readily see where the Church began and where the world ended.' Never were there good times when the Church and the world were joined in marriage with one another." Charles Spurgeon

Goals of this Particular Night

- ❖ Have a Biblical understanding of death
- ❖ See how the Gospel restores God's creation
- ❖ Rightfully anticipate the return of Jesus and clear up any confusion
- ❖ Understand the horrors of Hell and the beauty of Heaven
- ❖ Live Gospel-centered lives during the End Times

Questions/concerns/challenges

- ❖ We sometimes read (and write) in between the lines
 - Every generation has had people make predictions of the end of the world
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:2* - *not to be easily upset or troubled, either by a prophecy or by a message or by a letter supposedly from us, alleging that the day of the Lord has come.*
 - Joseph Smith and the Mormons believing he'll return to Kansas City
 - Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel: 1981

- 88 reasons why the rapture will occur in 1988
- The new Millennium - 2000
- The End of the World - 2012
- Everyone during the pandemic
- ❖ “Revelation (and Daniel) are confusing”
 - Too many symbols, numbers, characters, etc.
- ❖ Arguments and controversies about when and how Jesus comes back?
 - Premil? Postmil? Pretrib? Posttrib?
 - Does Jesus come back only once? Twice?
- ❖ “Hell seems too scary!”
 - Is it real or figurative?
 - Is it really eternal?
- ❖ “Heaven seems boring after a while”
 - Can’t everyone just go to Heaven?
 - How can I be happy in Heaven if my family is in Hell?
 - Giving up and not caring
- ❖ “I’ll just avoid studying the end times all together...”

Reasons to Study This Topic

- ❖ The apostles of Jesus commanded God's people to search the Scriptures and

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- ❖ Scripture testifies that God will bring the world as we know it to an end

Isaiah 65:17 - “For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind.

- ❖ Jesus repeatedly reminded his disciples to watch for his future arrival

Matthew 24:42 - Therefore be alert, since you don’t know what day your Lord is coming.

- ❖ Paul warns Christians to be alert

1 Thessalonians 5:6 - So then, let us not sleep, like the rest, but let us stay awake and be self-controlled.

- ❖ In Revelation, we are called to read it aloud, and take to heart what is written.

Revelation 1:3 - Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, because the time is near.

- ❖ Studying the end times ultimately shows us not how or when things will happen, but who oversees all things

So our question shouldn't be whether to think about the end times; God clearly expects us to consider the end times. Instead, our question should be, "How can we keep our feet in our study of the end of time? How do we study the second coming of Jesus without veering into dangerous doctrinal territory? How can we explore the end times in a way that focuses on Jesus?"

- ❖ We are living in the last days

Acts 2:16 - And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit on all people;

Hebrews 1:2 - In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him.

The Reality of Death

Psalms 90:12 - Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.

- ❖ Life is precious

Genesis 1:26-27 - Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

- ❖ Life is valuable

Psalms 139:13-16 - For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well. My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret, when I was formed in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began.

- ❖ Life is fleeting

Psalms 102:11 - My days are like a lengthening shadow, and I wither away like grass.

Psalms 103:15-16 - As for man, his days are like grass—he blooms like a flower of the field; when the wind passes over it, it vanishes, and its place is no longer known.

James 4:13-14 - Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes.

❖ Death is coming **latest statistics show that 10 out of 10 people die**

Psalm 90:10 - Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years. Even the best of them are struggle and sorrow; indeed, they pass quickly and we fly away.

Hebrews 9:27 - And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment...

Death is often sudden, and sometimes surprising

Luke 13:1-5 - At that time, some people came and reported to him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And he responded to them, "Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well. Or those eighteen that the tower in Siloam fell on and killed—do you think they were more sinful than all the other people who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well."

- About 164,000 people die a day
- Approximately 2 every second

"One hundred [people] are dying [every] minute. If you could hear them all, you'd hear so many screams you'd go insane. Only God can hear them all and not go insane. God parcels out our awareness in small amounts lest we go under. How can you live in a world like that as a loving person and rejoice in the Lord?" - John Piper

Death is tragic

Genesis 3:22-24 - The Lord God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

Death is a consequence of sin **This needs to be made clear. No where in the Bible is death considered "natural." Or "part of life." Its described as an enemy to be defeated!**

Romans 5:12 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.

Death is a tool of Satan.

Hebrews 2:14-15 - Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.

There are different kinds of death

- Spiritual death: The separation of a person from God.

Genesis 3:22-24 - The Lord God said, “Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

Romans 5:12 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.

- Physical death: The cessation of life in our physical body.

Genesis 5:3-5 - Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. Adam lived 800 years after he fathered Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters. So Adam’s life lasted 930 years; then he died.

- Eternal death: The finalization of separation from God.

Revelation 21:8 - But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Revelation 20:6 - Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

We need hope!

- ❖ The Bad News: Death is our universal enemy

1 Corinthians 15:26 - The last enemy to be abolished is death.

We are all spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:1-3 - And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also.

We will all experience physical death.

1 Corinthians 15:22 - For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

We all deserve eternal death.

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

The Gospel

❖ The Good News: Death has been ultimately defeated!

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 - When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place: Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Jesus has lived the life we could not live.

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

1 John 3:5 - You know that he was revealed so that he might take away sins, and there is no sin in him.

Jesus has died the death we deserve to die.

Romans 5:6-8 - For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 3:13 - Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.

Jesus has conquered the enemy we cannot conquer.

Colossians 2:13-15 - And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them in him.

❖ The Decisive Question:

Will you turn from Jesus?

- Live without Christ now.
- Die without Christ forever.
 - For the non-Christian, death remains an eternally dreaded enemy

Or will you trust in Jesus?

- Die with Christ now.
- Live with Christ forever.
 - For the Christian, death is no longer a fear or enemy

Philippians 1:21-23 - For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better

For all of us, death is not the end. Death is only the beginning...

So what happens when we die?

The Intermediate State

- ❖ The intermediate state refers to the condition of people between their bodily death and their bodily resurrection.

Revelation 6:9-11 - When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given. They cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, the one who is holy and true, how long until you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?" So they were each given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters, who were going to be killed just as they had been.

- ❖ All people possess both a body and a soul

Genesis 2:7 - Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

When we die, our bodies are buried.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - and the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

When we die, our souls persist.

Philippians 1:21-23 - For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better

One day, our bodies will be resurrected and reunited with our souls.

John 5:28-29 - Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 - Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality.

❖ What happens at the moment of death?

The souls of believers immediately enter the presence of God.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 - So we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Luke 23:43 - And he said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

The souls of unbelievers immediately experience the punishment of God.

Luke 16:19-31 - "There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was lying at his gate. He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!' "Son,' Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us

and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.’ “‘Father,’ he said, ‘then I beg you to send him to my father’s house— because I have five brothers—to warn them, so that they won’t also come to this place of torment.’ “But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ “‘No, father Abraham,’ he said. ‘But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ “But he told him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’”

- ❖ What are they doing right now?
They are watching

Hebrews 12:1 - Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us,

Luke 15:7 - I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don’t need repentance.

They are waiting **The story doesn’t end in the intermediate state! This is not what we should be longing and hoping for!**

Revelation 6:9-11 - When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given. They cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, the one who is holy and true, how long until you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?” So they were each given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters, who were going to be killed just as they had been.

- They are clearly conscious
- They are audibly loud
- They are emotionally passionate
- They are distinctly individual
- They are completely unified
- They are continually interceding
- They thirst for final justice
- They long for full redemption
- They know God’s character more deeply
- They love God’s church more fully
- They are trusting God’s promises in the present
- They are anticipating God’s plan for the future

- ❖ How then should we think about our own death?
All who follow Christ should anticipate death with confidence

Psalm 23:4 - Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

Romans 8:37-39 - No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All who do not follow Christ should fear death greatly!

- ❖ How should we view the deaths of others?
 - How should we view the death of non-Christians?
 - With Biblical honesty

2 Thessalonians 1:5-9 - It is clear evidence of God's righteous judgment that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering, since it is just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to give relief to you who are afflicted, along with us. This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels, when he takes vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength

- With humility
- With appropriate honor

2 Samuel 1:22-23 - Jonathan's bow never retreated, Saul's sword never returned unstained, from the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty. Saul and Jonathan, loved and delightful, they were not parted in life or in death. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

- With heart-breaking anguish **No Christian rejoices at the death of an enemy. If the Lord takes no pleasure in this. Then neither should His children**

Romans 9:1-3 - I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience testifies to me through the Holy Spirit— that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the benefit of my brothers and sisters, my own flesh and blood.

Ezekiel 33:11 - Tell them, 'As I live—this is the declaration of the Lord God—I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked person should turn from his way and live. Repent, repent of your evil ways!

How should we view the death of Christians?

- With profound sorrow

John 11:35 - Jesus wept.

Acts 8:2 - Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him.

- With abiding joy

Psalms 116:15 - The death of his faithful ones is valuable in the Lord's sight.

Revelation 14:13 - Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "so they will rest from their labors, since their works follow them."

- With sincere worship

Job 1:18-22 - He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house. Suddenly a powerful wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on the young people so that they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you!" Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything.

- With unshakeable hope

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For we say this to you by a word from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Return of Christ

Hebrews 9:27-28 - And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment— so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will

appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

❖ What We Know for Certain:
Jesus is coming back

Matthew 24:30-31 - Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Revelation 22:7 - "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

- His return will be unexpected

Matthew 24:42-44 - Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day your Lord is coming. But know this: If the homeowner had known what time the thief was coming, he would have stayed alert and not let his house be broken into. This is why you are also to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Luke 12:40 - You also be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

- His return will be visible, from above

Acts 1:9-11 - After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."

Revelation 1:7 - Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So it is to be. Amen.

- His return will be for His people

John 14:1-3 - "Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 - For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

- His return will be glorious and amazing

Matthew 24:30 - Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Jesus will judge all humanity

Acts 17:31 - because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.

God will physically resurrect all humanity at some point in the future

John 5:28-29 - Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation.

❖ What We Don't Know:

When is Jesus coming back?

Mark 13:32-33 - "Now concerning that day or hour no one knows—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son—but only the Father. "Watch! Be alert! For you don't know when the time is coming.

What signs still need to be fulfilled?

- The preaching of the gospel to all nations

Matthew 24:14 - This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- The great tribulation

Matthew 24:15-22 - So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place" (let the reader understand), "then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. A man on the housetop must not come down to get things out of his house, and a man in the field must not go back to get his coat. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! Pray that your escape may not be

in winter or on a Sabbath. For at that time there will be great distress, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again. Unless those days were cut short, no one would be saved. But those days will be cut short because of the elect.

- False prophets and miracle workers

Mark 13:22-23 - For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the elect. And you must watch! I have told you everything in advance.

- Signs in the Heavens

Matthew 24:29-30 - Immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- The coming of the antichrist (man of lawlessness)

2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 - Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him: We ask you, brothers and sisters, not to be easily upset or troubled, either by a prophecy or by a message or by a letter supposedly from us, alleging that the day of the Lord has come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's temple, proclaiming that he himself is God. Don't you remember that when I was still with you I used to tell you about this? And you know what currently restrains him, so that he will be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but the one now restraining will do so until he is out of the way, and then the lawless one will be revealed. The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth and will bring him to nothing at the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is based on Satan's working, with every kind of miracle, both signs and wonders serving the lie, and with every wicked deception among those who are perishing. They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth and so be saved.

- Who is the antichrist(s)?
 - ◆ Someone who spreads deception.

2 John 7 - Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

Revelation 13:13-14 - It also performs great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in front of people. It deceives those who live on the earth because of the signs that it is permitted to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived

- ◆ Someone who stands in the temple, claiming to be its center.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 - Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's temple, proclaiming that he himself is God.

- God's plan of salvation for Israel

Romans 11:25-27 - I don't want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you will not be conceited: A partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, The Deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

- Does Israel represent:
 - ◆ An ethnic group?
 - ◆ A national state?
 - ◆ The Church?

❖ A Few Different Views on the return of Jesus
Based on Revelation 20:1-6

Revelation 20:1-6 - Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven holding the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it so that he would no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were completed. After that, he must be released for a short time. Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

- The Millennium - The 1,000-year reign of Jesus

- Tribulation - Time when disasters happen on earth and Christians suffer intense persecution

❖ Dispensational Premillennialism

Key Facts:

- Jesus returns before Millennium and “raptures” His people
- Seven Year Tribulation occurs after rapture
- Jesus comes again with His people and begins 1,000 year reign on earth prior to Final Judgement

Strengths:

- Literal interpretation of Revelation
- Scripture points to God removing believers from Great Tribulation
 - *1 Thessalonians 5:9 - For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*
 - *Revelation 3:10 - Because you have kept my command to endure, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is going to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*
- There is no mention of the church mentioned between Revelation 4 and 19

Weaknesses:

- This view only works if Revelation 19 and 20 are in chronological order
- No specific mention of rapture in any church letters other than 1 Thessalonians

❖ Historical Premillennialism

Key Facts:

- Christians endure Great Tribulation, and then Jesus returns at some point
- Jesus returns and begins 1,000 year reign prior to Final Judgement

Strengths:

- Tribulation roots out false members of churches
 - Revelation 2:22-23
- Antichrist is revealed prior to Christ’s return
 - 2 Thess. 2:3-4
- Earliest view of end times among Christians who lived after the apostles

Weaknesses:

- No clear evidence for literal 1,000-year reign, except found in Revelation 20

❖ Postmillennialism

Key Facts:

- Great Tribulation refers to destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.
- Society gradually improves leading to a world in which almost everyone turns to Jesus
- The millennium represents the powerful advancement of the Gospel, yet Jesus will not be present on earth

- Jesus will return immediately after the millennium and the final judgement, and defeat of Satan will happen

Strengths:

- Fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:34 and Micah 4:1-4
- Jesus claims every people group will receive the Gospel before His return
 - *Mathew 24:14 - This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come*

Weaknesses:

- Does not give strong evidence for the “sign of the times” that Jesus teaches in Matthew 24
- The hope of the believer soon becomes in the millennium reign, and not in the resurrection
- If millennium were to occur, verses like Ephesians 5:16 would no longer be relevant and true
- Wasn't until 12th century that someone wrote down this view
- Had lots of popularity in 1800's, yet the world wars and destruction in the past 100 years have caused many to question this view

❖ Amillennialism

Key Facts:

- The Millennium, similar to the rest of Revelation is symbolic
- Millennium is period of time between the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1) and the future return of Jesus
- Tribulation occurs as persecution of Christians as Jesus's kingdom expands, known as the church age
- Satan is “bound up,” meaning he has no power to stop advancement of the Gospel

Strengths:

- The Bible uses numbers, including 1,000, figuratively
 - *Psalm 50:10 - for every animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.*
 - *Psalm 90:4 - For in your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours of the night.*
- In the rest of Scripture, return of Jesus, final judgement, and resurrection seem to happen simultaneously
 - *John 5:28-29 - Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

Weaknesses:

- How can Satan be both “god of this age” and “bound up”?
- Can lead believers to be pessimistic about future strength of church in this age

❖ Why is it so hard to come to a simple conclusion/timeline of events?

Consider the time prior to the birth/life/death/resurrection of Christ

1 Corinthians 2:7-9 - On the contrary, we speak God's hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom God predestined before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, because if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived—God has prepared these things for those who love him.

- ❖ No Matter Which View You Take
Trust in the authority of Christ.

Matthew 24:29-30 Immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

- The things of this world are passing. The truth of His word is permanent.

Matthew 24:35 - Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

We can persevere in the power of Christ.

- We will face deception.

Matthew 24:4 - Jesus replied to them, "Watch out that no one deceives you.

Matthew 24:22-25 - Unless those days were cut short, no one would be saved. But those days will be cut short because of the elect. "If anyone tells you then, 'See, here is the Messiah!' or, 'Over here!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Take note: I have told you in advance.

- We will face tribulation

Matthew 24:6-8 - You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these events are the beginning of labor pains.

- Christians are not saved from trials.
- Christians are saved through trials.
- We will face persecution

Matthew 24:9 - Then they will hand you over to be persecuted, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of my name.

- Persecution inevitably follows kingdom proclamation.
- Proclamation inevitably results in kingdom consummation.
- We will face temptation.

Matthew 24:10-13 - Then many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Matthew 24:14 - This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Anticipate the coming of Christ.

Matthew 24:36-42 - Now concerning that day and hour no one knows—neither the angels of heaven nor the Son—except the Father alone. As the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark. They didn't know until the flood came and swept them all away. This is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding grain with a hand mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day your Lord is coming.

- His delay will be long.
- But His return will be sudden.
- His judgment will be irreversible.
 - Our hearts will be exposed
 - Our sentence may be surprising.

Matthew 7:21-23 - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!'

- Our lives will stand alone .
 - We must be prepared ...
 - ◆ Are we keeping watch for Christ?

1 Thessalonians 5:2 - For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night

◆ Are we faithfully following Christ?

Matthew 25:1-13 - At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they didn't take oil with them; but the wise ones took oil in their flasks with their lamps. When the groom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. "In the middle of the night there was a shout: 'Here's the groom! Come out to meet him.' "Then all the virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' "The wise ones answered, 'No, there won't be enough for us and for you. Go instead to those who sell oil, and buy some for yourselves.' "When they had gone to buy some, the groom arrived, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. Later the rest of the virgins also came and said, 'Master, master, open up for us!' "He replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you!' "Therefore be alert, because you don't know either the day or the hour.

◆ Are we serving Christ with what He has given us?

Matthew 25:14-30 - For it is just like a man about to go on a journey. He called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent, depending on each one's ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. In the same way the man with two earned two more. But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I've earned five more talents.' "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy.' "The man with two talents also approached. He said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I've earned two more talents.' "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy.' "The man who had received one talent also approached and said, 'Master, I know you. You're a harsh man, reaping where you haven't sown and gathering where you haven't scattered seed. So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' "His master replied to him, 'You evil, lazy servant! If you knew that I reap where I haven't sown and gather where I haven't scattered, then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and I would have received my money back with interest when I returned. "So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. And throw this good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

- Are we serving the people that God has put around us?

Matthew 25:31-46 - "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or without clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?' "And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' "Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger and you didn't take me in; I was naked and you didn't clothe me, sick and in prison and you didn't take care of me.' "Then they too will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help you?' "Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

- ♦ This is not because you want to get to Heaven, but because Jesus has changed your heart.
Sacrificial service is not a means of earning salvation.
Sacrificial service is necessary evidence of salvation.

The Resurrection

- WHAT I WANT US TO SEE IN THIS SECTION IS THAT BELIEVERS HOPE IS NOT IN HEAVEN BUT THE RESURRECTION, A RESURRECTION INTO THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

- ❖ Jesus rose from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 - For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared

to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me.

He died on the cross.

- He wasn't resuscitated

He was buried in a tomb

- Then His tomb was empty
- The disciples didn't steal the body
- The disciples weren't delusional in their claims
- He wasn't reincarnated

He was resurrected

❖ What does this mean?

Jesus is Lord over life and death

John 10:18 - No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father

Jesus is Lord over sin and Satan.

*1 Corinthians 15:55-57 - **Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting?** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*

Jesus is Lord over you and me.

Philippians 2:10-11 - so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

❖ When the resurrected Christ returns, Christians will experience physical resurrection with Him.

1 Corinthians 15:22-23 - For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ.

Most believers will die

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 - Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

All believers will be resurrected.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 - For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For we say this to you by a word from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord's coming will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

- Those who are alive when Christ returns will be physically transformed in their bodies.
- Those who are dead when Christ returns will be physically reunited with their bodies.

❖ What will our new bodies be like?
Christ-like

Philippians 3:20-21 - Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

- Physical

Luke 24:38-39 - "Why are you troubled?" he asked them. "And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."

- Eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 - Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

- Beautiful

Daniel 12:3 - Those who have insight will shine like the bright expanse of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

- Powerful

Matthew 26:41 - Stay awake and pray, so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

- Recognizable

Matthew 8:11 - I tell you that many will come from east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 9:30-33 - Suddenly, two men were talking with him—Moses and Elijah. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and those with him were in a deep sleep, and when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men who were standing with him. As the two men were departing from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it's good for us to be here. Let's set up three shelters: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he was saying.

- We will retain various distinctions.

Revelation 7:9 - After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands

Consider the amazingness of the resurrection. Our current bodies embody all the effects of sin and death. They decay, they get sick. They're fragile. The new bodies all the benefits of the work of Christ! Incorruptible. Indestructible. Enduring forever!

❖ Creation is Restored

Romans 8:19-25 - For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

The Final Judgement

Hebrews 9:27-28 - And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment— so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will

appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

- ❖ When the resurrected Christ returns, all people (Christians and non-Christians alike) will be resurrected for the day of final judgment

Matthew 25:31-33 - "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on the left.

- ❖ A day of final judgment is coming.

Acts 17:30-31 - Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.

The nature of judgment will be personal.

Matthew 7:21-23 - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!'

- The Final Judgment does not ultimately determine our spiritual condition.
- The Final Judgement reveals our spiritual condition.

The impartiality of judgment will be unquestionable.

Colossians 3:25 - For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.

The effects of the judgment will be eternal

Matthew 25:46 - And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life

The final Judge will be Christ

2 Timothy 4:1 - I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of his appearing and his kingdom:

Even angels will be involved in this judgment

- Holy angels will gather the judged

Matthew 24:31 - He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

- Fallen angels all be judged.

2 Peter 2:4 - For if God didn't spare the angels who sinned but cast them into hell and delivered them in chains of utter darkness to be kept for judgment

All people (and all they have done) will be judged

Ecclesiastes 12:14 - For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.

❖ Two Truths

God will justify every saint who has trusted in Him.

Romans 8:1-2 - Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

- Every sin has been forgiven

Hebrews 8:12 - For I will forgive their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins.

- Varying rewards for faithfulness will be distributed

Luke 19:17-19 - Well done, good servant!' he told him. 'Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, have authority over ten towns.' 'The second came and said, 'Master, your mina has made five minas.' 'So he said to him, 'You will be over five towns.'

God will condemn every sinner who has turned from Him.

John 3:16-18 - For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.

- Every sin will come to light

1 Corinthians 4:5 - So don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.

- Varying degrees of punishment will be enforced

Matthew 11:22-24 - But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until today. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.

❖ Two Questions:

Did we put our faith in Christ's work?
Was there evidence of faith in our work?

❖ Two destinations:

Everlasting joy
Eternal torment.

❖ God will be glorified for His justice.

Revelation 15:2-4 - I also saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had won the victory over the beast, its image, and the number of its name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. They sang the song of God's servant Moses and the song of the Lamb: Great and awe-inspiring are your works, Lord God, the Almighty; just and true are your ways, King of the nations. Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All the nations will come and worship before you because your righteous acts have been revealed.

So let's be careful not to evaluate God's justice in the short-term.

- God will assert His justice ultimately and completely in His perfect time.

Walk in Holiness now

- Not because we fear God's wrath toward sinners, but because we feel God's wrath toward sin.
- Not because we're worried about eternal condemnation, but because we want eternal reward.

Philippians 3:12-21 - Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let all of

us who are mature think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this also to you. In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us. For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame; and they are focused on earthly things. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 - For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.

So Where does everyone go?

The Horrors of Hell

Revelation 20:15 - And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire

- ❖ We must approach this doctrine biblically
 - The Bible speaks clearly about Hell
 - The Bible speaks comprehensively about Hell
 - **Jesus spoke more about Hell than He did about Heaven**
 - The aim of scripture is not primarily to inform people about the details of Hell
 - The aim of scripture is primarily to warn people about the of Hell
 - That we might repent of sin
 - That we might live in righteousness

- ❖ We must approach this doctrine humbly

Romans 9:14-24 - What should we say then? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not! For he tells Moses, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy. For the Scripture tells Pharaoh, I raised you up for this reason so that I may display my power in you and that my name may be proclaimed in the whole earth. So then, he has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy and he hardens whom he wants to harden. You will say to me, therefore, "Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will?" On the contrary, who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, "Why did

you make me like this?” Or has the potter no right over the clay, to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for dishonor? And what if God, wanting to display his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath prepared for destruction? And what if he did this to make known the riches of his glory on objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory— on us, the ones he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

We do not deserve God’s mercy

- He would be just to condemn all people
- He is gracious to save some people

We dare not defy God’s authority

- He is Creator; we are creature
- He is owner; we are owned
- He is God; we are not
 - We do not have the right to judge His ways
 - God has the right to do what He wants

We must contemplate real eternal destinies

- This is not just some boring, old-fashioned theological doctrine

“I’m scared [to write a book on Hell] because so much is at stake. Think about it. If I say there is no Hell, and it turns out that there is a Hell, I may lead people into the very place I convinced them did not exist! If I say there is a Hell, and I’m wrong, I may persuade people to spend their lives frantically warning loved ones about a terrifying place that isn’t real! When it comes to Hell, we can’t afford to be wrong. This is not one of those doctrines where you can toss in your two cents, shrug your shoulders, and move on. Too much is at stake. Too many people are at stake. And the Bible has too much to say.” - Francis Chan

❖ What is Hell?

A place of ultimate justice

Revelation 6:9-11 - When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given. They cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, the one who is holy and true, how long until you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?” So they were each given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters, who were going to be killed just as they had been.

A place of fiery agony

Mark 9:43-48 - “And if your hand causes you to fall away, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and go to hell, the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to fall away, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than to

have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to fall away, gouge it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

A place of conscious torment

Luke 16:22-28 - One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!' "Son,' Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.' "Father,' he said, 'then I beg you to send him to my father's house— because I have five brothers—to warn them, so that they won't also come to this place of torment.'

A place of outer darkness

Matthew 8:11-12 - I tell you that many will come from east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

A place of weeping and gnashing of teeth

Matthew 13:42 - They will throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

A place of continual rebellion

2 Peter 2:4 - For if God didn't spare the angels who sinned but cast them into hell and delivered them in chains of utter darkness to be kept for judgment

A place of full of evil people

Revelation 21:8 - But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

A place of divine destruction

2 Thessalonians 1:9 - They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength

A place of complete separation

Matthew 7:21-23 - Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!'

A place of eternal duration

Revelation 14:9-11 - And another, a third angel, followed them and spoke with a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he will also drink the wine of God's wrath, which is poured full strength into the cup of his anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or anyone who receives the mark of its name."

❖ Is the Bible's description of Hell literal or metaphorical?

The Bible's descriptions of Hell are possibly literal.

The Bible's descriptions of Hell are probably metaphorical.

- This is not very comforting.
- We use similes and metaphors when describing something beyond our ability to understand and explain **What do you think lake of fire is a metaphor for? Snow? A relaxing day at the beach?**

❖ Isn't Gehenna (Hell) just another word for a garbage dump?

"People tossed their garbage and waste into this valley. There was a fire there, burning constantly to consume the trash. Wild animals fought over the scraps of food along the edges of the heap. When they fought, their teeth would make a gnashing sound."

Gehenna was the place with the gnashing of teeth, where the fire never went out.

Gehenna was an actual place that Jesus's listeners would have been familiar with. So the next time someone asks if you believe in an actual Hell, you can always say, 'Yes, I do believe that my garbage goes somewhere ...'" Rob Bell

The idea of Gehenna as a simple garbage dump is deceptively misleading

Matthew 5:29 - If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

The idea of Gehenna as a simple garbage dump is biblically inaccurate

2 Chronicles 33:6 - He passed his sons through the fire in Ben Hinnom Valley. He practiced witchcraft, divination, and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did a huge amount of evil in the Lord's sight, angering him.

The idea of Gehenna as a simple garbage dump is historically unlikely

- There is no archeological evidence that Gehenna was a garbage dump
- The first reference we have to Gehenna being a garbage dump was 1,200 years after Jesus lived

"Gehenna is a repugnant place, into which filth and cadavers are thrown, and in which fires perpetually burn in order to consume the filth and bones; on which account, by analogy, the judgment of the wicked is called 'Gehenna.'" David Kimhi, Rabbi, AD 1200

The image of Gehenna as a violent picture of divine punishment is abundantly clear.

❖ What about Annihilationism?

The idea that after unbelievers have suffered the penalty of God's wrath for a time, God will annihilate them so that they no longer exist.

- Biblically, one sin against an infinite God warrants infinite judgment.
 - The gravity of sin is not determined by the gauge of the one who sins.
 - The gravity of sin is determined by the greatness of the one who is sinned against.
- Biblically, annihilation is unsupportable.

Matthew 25:46 - And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

- Practically, annihilationism is unsustainable
 - Does temporary punishment pay the sinner's price?
 - ♦ If so, then the price for sin has been paid, and the sinner will go to Heaven.
 - ♦ If not, then the price for sin is still unpaid, and the sinner will remain in Hell.

❖ What about Universalism?

The idea that all people will eventually be saved and experience eternity with God.

- “Non-Christian” universalists: Jesus is only one way to God/ Heaven.
- “Christian” universalists: Jesus is the only way to God/Heaven, and eventually all people will be saved through Jesus.

Consider 1 Timothy 2:

1 Timothy 2:3-4 - This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- “The logic of the situation is simple. Either God could not or would not save all. If he could not, he is not sovereign, then not all things are possible with God. If he would not, again the New Testament is wrong, for it openly claims that God would have all to be saved.” Nels Ferre
- This does not mean that all people will be saved
 - We pray for all types of people

1 Timothy 2:1-2 - First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

- Because God saves all types of people

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.

- This does not mean that God’s will has been thwarted
- This does not mean that God’s love is in question

John 3:16 - For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

- ❖ What about the people who never have a chance to hear the gospel go to Hell?
All people have knowledge of God the Father.

Romans 1:18-20 - For God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse.

All people reject true knowledge of God

Romans 1:21-25 - For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles. Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.

There are no innocent people in the world

Romans 3:9-18 - What then? Are we any better off? Not at all! For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, as it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become worthless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they deceive with their tongues. Vipers' venom is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and wretchedness are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

All people are condemned for rejecting God

Romans 3:19-20 - Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are subject to the law, so that every mouth may be shut and the whole world may become subject to God's judgment. For no one will be justified in his sight by the works of the law, because the knowledge of sin comes through the law.

God has made a way of salvation for the lost.

Romans 3:21-26 - But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the Law and the Prophets. The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God presented him as the mercy seat by his blood, through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.

People cannot come to God apart from faith in Christ.

Acts 4:12 - There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.

Christ commands the church to preach the gospel to all peoples.

Romans 10:9-15 - If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

❖ Final Thoughts on Hell

we must declare this truth unapologetically

we must declare this doctrine humbly "I just cant believe in a God who..." who what? Doesn't agree with you?? It's incredibly arrogant to pick and choose which parts we like/dislike about God. No Christian has a problem with Jesus loving the sinner... but condemning them???

- In view of God's sovereignty.
- In view of our salvation.

we must declare this doctrine continually Hell is almost a litmus test for believers. What will we do when we come across passages of scripture that are uncomfortable, difficult, and unpleasant? Will we stay true on what the Word of God says!

- we need to be reminded that divine judgment is coming.
- we need to be reminded that the pleasures of sin are fleeting.
- we need to be reminded that wealth in this world is passing.
- we need to be reminded that unrighteousness is unrewarding.

we must declare this doctrine with holiness

we must declare this doctrine with compassion

we must declare this doctrine with urgency

- In the hardest, most trying, most stretching, most challenging, most difficult, most dangerous, most deadly places in the world ...

Acts 20:22-24 - And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit, not knowing what I will encounter there, except that in every town the Holy Spirit warns me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me. But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

The Beauty of Heaven

Revelation 21:1-3 - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.

- ❖ As we discuss/teach about/proclaim/think about Heaven:
We must stay rooted on Biblical truth

1 Corinthians 2:9-13 - But as it is written, What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived— God has prepared these things for those who love him. Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except his spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people

We must be wise and humble in our speculations

1 Corinthians 13:8-12 - Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known.

We should leave room for personal imagination

Ephesians 3:20-21 - Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us— to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- Our imagination should never fly away from the truth, but rather be rooted in truth

- ❖ What is Heaven?
An area of God's creation

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

A synonym for God's name

John 3:27 - John responded, "No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven.

The place where God dwells

Isaiah 66:1 - This is what the Lord says: Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. Where could you possibly build a house for me? And where would my resting place be?

- ❖ We anticipate Heaven!
A city

Hebrews 13:14 - For we do not have an enduring city here; instead, we seek the one to come.

A country

Hebrews 11:16 - But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

A kingdom

Matthew 6:9-10 - Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- ❖ A dwelling place for God with His people in unhindered communion and unimaginable joy. **Whats the closest thing we have right now to Heaven? Church! God's people gathered together to worship God! If you don't like church, you wont like heaven at all.**

Isaiah 65:17-19 - "For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind. Then be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people. The sound of weeping and crying will no longer be heard in her.

The ultimate end of the gospel is not that we will go to Heaven, but that Heaven will come to us.

- ❖ What will it be like?
A restored earth

Genesis 1:31 - God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

Ecclesiastes 1:4 - A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

- Will the earth as we know it be the same or different?
 - Heaven is not non-earth, but new earth.
 - Heaven is not unfamiliar and otherworldly, but familiar and earthly.
 - Heaven is not foreign, but home

Romans 8:19-21 - For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.

We will enjoy God forever!

- As a bride with a husband

Revelation 21:2 - I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

- As children of a Father

Luke 12:32 - Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom

- As heirs of a King.

Matthew 25:34 - Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

- As participants in a banquet.

Luke 22:28-30 - You are those who stood by me in my trials. I bestow on you a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

We will behold Him fully!

Exodus 33:18-23 - Then Moses said, "Please, let me see your glory." He said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim the name 'the Lord' before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But he added, "You cannot see my face, for humans cannot see me and live." The Lord said, "Here is a place near me. You are to stand on the rock, and when my glory passes by, I will put you in the crevice of the rock and cover

you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take my hand away, and you will see my back, but my face will not be seen.”

Psalm 27:4 - I have asked one thing from the Lord; it is what I desire: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, gazing on the beauty of the Lord and seeking him in his temple.

Revelation 22:4 - They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

“Not only will we see his face and live, but we will likely wonder if we ever lived before we saw his face!” Randy Alcorn

- We will worship Him.

Revelation 22:3 - and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him.

- We will gather for corporate worship

Revelation 7:9-17 - After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb! All the angels stood around the throne, and along with the elders and the four living creatures they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God, saying, Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen. Then one of the elders asked me, “Who are these people in white robes, and where did they come from?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” Then he told me: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple. The one seated on the throne will shelter them: They will no longer hunger; they will no longer thirst; the sun will no longer strike them, nor will any scorching heat. For the Lamb who is at the center of the throne will shepherd them; he will guide them to springs of the waters of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

- We will sing to God

Revelation 15:2-4 - I also saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had won the victory over the beast, its image, and the number of its name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. They sang the song of God’s servant Moses and the song of the Lamb: Great and awe-inspiring are your works, Lord God, the Almighty; just and true are your ways, King of the nations. Lord, who will not fear

and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All the nations will come and worship before you because your righteous acts have been revealed.

- We will serve Him.

Revelation 7:15 - For this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple. The one seated on the throne will shelter them:

- We will be served by Him.

Luke 12:37 - Blessed will be those servants the master finds alert when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will get ready, have them recline at the table, then come and serve them.

- We will reign with Him.

2 Timothy 4:8 - There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.

Revelation 3:21 - To the one who conquers I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

- We will rest in Him.

Hebrews 4:9-11 - Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people. For the person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his. Let us, then, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

❖ Am I allowed to be excited for Heaven?

Based upon a biblical understanding of Heaven as a place of reconciliation with God ...

- to long for Heaven is to long for God.
- to love Heaven is to love God.
- to fill your heart and mind with truth about Heaven is to fill your heart and mind with truth about God.

❖ We will be:

completely free from sin

Revelation 21:27 - Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those written in the Lamb's book of life.

Robed in righteousness

Revelation 7:13-14 - Then one of the elders asked me, "Who are these people in white robes, and where did they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." Then he told me: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Untouched by temptation.

Revelation 20:10 - The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Utterly free to obey .

- sin will literally be unthinkable to us.
- sin will ultimately be undesirable to us.

Physical specimens

- We will eat and drink.

Isaiah 25:6 - On this mountain, the Lord of Armies will prepare for all the peoples a feast of choice meat, a feast with aged wine, prime cuts of choice meat, fine vintage wine.

- Our personality will be preserved.

Job 19:25-27 - But I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the end he will stand on the dust. Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh. I will see him myself; my eyes will look at him, and not as a stranger. My heart longs within me.

- Our humanity will be pure

1 John 3:2-3 - Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure.

- We will be able to think/learn/process
 - Our knowledge of God will be completely true, but never complete

1 Corinthians 13:12 - For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known

Ephesians 2:4-7 - But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

- ❖ if in pride we want to be equal to God in knowledge, this will depress us.
- ❖ if in humility we want to enjoy God in Heaven, this will delight us.

Our feelings will be entirely enjoyable

Revelation 21:4 - He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

Our cravings will be completely satisfied

John 6:35 – “I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.”

Our desires will be totally fulfilled.

- The goal of Buddhism: The elimination of all desire.
- The goal of Christianity: The gratification of all desire.

Revelation 22:17 - Both the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” Let anyone who hears, say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely

- ❖ Heaven is a place of future reunion with the church

Hebrews 12:22-24 - Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels, a festive gathering, to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been written in heaven, to a Judge, who is God of all, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which says better things than the blood of Abel.

We will recognize one another.

Matthew 17:1-8 - After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. He was transfigured in front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it’s good for us to be here. If you want, I will set up three shelters here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased. Listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown and were terrified. Jesus came up, touched them, and said, “Get up; don’t be afraid.” When they looked up they saw no one except Jesus alone.

We will love one another

John 13:35 - By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

We will be a family before our Father

Mark 10:29-30 - Truly I tell you," Jesus said, "there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundred times more, now at this time —houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions —and eternal life in the age to come.

We will be a people from every nation

Revelation 7:9-10 - After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

- ❖ Heaven is a place of complete restoration of creation
A place of physical beauty

Revelation 22:1-2 - Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations,

A place of visual beauty

Revelation 21:10-11 - He then carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, arrayed with God's glory. Her radiance was like a precious jewel, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Revelation 21:18-21 - The building material of its wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold clear as glass. The foundations of the city wall were adorned with every kind of jewel: the first foundation is jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates are twelve pearls; each individual gate was made of a single pearl. The main street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

A place of natural harmony.

Revelation 22:3 - and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him.

A place of continual worship.

Psalm 19:1-3 - The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands. Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge. There is no speech; there are no words; their voice is not heard.

“God is the saints’ treasure and happiness; Heaven is the place where they must fully enjoy Him. A heart therefore set upon Heaven is a heart set upon God; and surely a heart set upon God, through Christ, is the truest evidence of saving grace.” – Richard Baxter

not a future that’s just a consolation for the life we never had but a restoration of the life you always wanted. This means that every horrible thing that ever happened will not only be undone and repaired but will in some way make the eventual glory and joy even greater.

Objections/Questions

❖ What about purgatory?

According to Catholicism - Purgatory is the place where believers’ souls go to be further purified from sin prior to admission into Heaven.

2 Maccabees 12:42-45 - “[Judas Maccabeus, the leader of the Jewish forces] also took a collection, man by man, to the amount of 2,000 drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking into account the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.”

The penalty of minor sins can be removed by:

- The unconditional forgiveness from God
- Remorse/Feeling sorry
- Confession
- Various works of penance

Souls that are in purgatory can be helped in the process of purification by saints on earth through their participation in:

- Mass

- Prayers
- Giving
- Good works

BUT... According to scripture:

- We are saved from our sins by
 - Grace alone
 - Through faith alone
 - In Christ alone

❖ Did Christ go to Hell when He died?

1 Peter 3:18-20 - For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, in which he also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people—were saved through water

Probably referring to angelic beings from Genesis 6:1-4

Jesus proclaimed victory to disobedient angels, not sinners in Hell

❖ who are the 144,000?

Revelation 7:4 - And I heard the number of the sealed: 144,000 sealed from every tribe of the Israelites:

Revelation 14:1-3 - Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of cascading waters and like the rumbling of loud thunder. The sound I heard was like harpists playing on their harps. They sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, but no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth

A symbolic representation of the whole body of believers

- John hears "144,000" but then sees a multitude...

Revelation 7:9 - After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb

❖ Who are "Gog and Magog"?

All inhabitants of the earth who follow the beast

Judgement of Gog and Magog represents God's final judgement on unrepentant sinners

- ❖ What is the mark of the beast? How do I keep myself from getting it
The model described is similar to Jews wearing the *tefillin*

Exodus 13:8 - Let it serve as a sign for you on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the Lord's instruction may be in your mouth; for the Lord brought you out of Egypt with a strong hand.

- May also refer to coins that featured the image of Caesar stamped upon them
Ultimately, the mark of the beast is a parody of the seal of God on His followers
- Therefore, true believers will not be affected

Revelation 13:8 - All those who live on the earth will worship it, everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered.

Christians are not called to fear mark of beast, but rather to “make their calling and election sure,” “work out their faith with fear and trembling,” and “abide in Christ”

- “But I won't be able to buy or sell...”

Matthew 6:33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you

- ❖ What is the “number of the beast?” 666?
Likely a *gematria* (the representation of a personal name as a number)
 - Could be referring to a number of different names including: Nero Caesar, the beast, Caesar of Rome
- Possibly symbolic of antichrist's inability to achieve divine perfection
- If 7 is perfect number, then 777 is ultimate perfect number. Therefore, 666 falls short

Living Today in the End Times

- ❖ Trust God is sovereign

Revelation 1:8 - “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Colossians 1:16-17- For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things

have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.

❖ Know Satan is subordinate

He is limited

He is doomed

Revelation 12:12 - Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you with great fury, because he knows his time is short.

❖ Have Faith Our God wins in the end

The Gospel will advance through the church.

Revelation 7:9-10 - After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

Christ will return for the church.

Ephesians 5:27 - He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless.

His greatness will be exalted across the earth.

Revelation 5:13-14 - I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever! The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

❖ See the world in all its dishonesty.

This world is full of deceptive attractions

- Sensual pleasures
- Material possessions
- The promise of satisfaction
- The hope of security
- The insatiable lust for power
- The subtle lure of pride
- Promising outcomes
 - Do not put your hope in government
 - Do not put your hope in your good works
 - Do not put your hope in false teachers/false gospels

- Do not put your hope in status/wealth
 - Do not put your hope in this world
- This world is headed to a definite conclusion
- This world will pass away completely
 - This world will pass away suddenly
 - This world will pass away eternally.
 - Clearly, love for the world and love for God cannot coexist.

1 John 2:15 - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

❖ See Christ in all His glory **HE WILL MAKE THIS WORLD RIGHT AGAIN**
As fully human and fully divine

Revelation 22:13 - I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end

As the fulfillment of all prophecy

Revelation 22:16 - "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the Root and descendant of David, the bright morning star."

As infinitely old and infinitely wise

Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

As one with no error, and power that knows no equal

Revelation 1:15 - His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters

As one with authority and a face that radiates with light

Revelation 1:16 - He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength

As the first word in creation, and the One to have the last word in creation

Revelation 1:17 - When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last,

As one dead for a time, but is alive for all time

Revelation 1:18 - and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades.

As the conquering Lion and the slaughtered Lamb

Revelation 5:5-6 - Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.

A worth that is undisputed, work that is unforgettable, and worship that should be universal

Revelation 5:7-14 - He went and took the scroll out of the right hand of the one seated on the throne. When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation. You made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign on the earth. Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands. They said with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing! I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever! The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

- As faithful and true

Revelation 19:11 - Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and with justice he judges and makes war

- As the conquer of His enemies

Revelation 19:13-14 - He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. The armies that were in heaven followed him on white horses, wearing pure white linen.

- As the ruler of the nations and the one who brings upon God's wrath

Revelation 19:15 - A sharp sword came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty.

- As King of kings and Lord of lords

Revelation 19:15 - A sharp sword came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty.

- As one who is coming back soon

Revelation 22:7 - "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

- ❖ We must see the church in all her beauty
we are His body

1 Corinthians 12:27 - Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it.

we are His bride

Revelation 19:7-8 - Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself. She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure. For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.

- ❖ We must see our lives in proper perspective
Fight against sin

Revelation 14:4-5 - These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, since they remained virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were redeemed from humanity as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

Resist compromising your holiness

Revelation 2:14-16 - But I have a few things against you. You have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to place a stumbling block in front of the Israelites: to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. In the same way, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. So repent! Otherwise, I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Revelation 2:20 - But I have this against you: You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat meat sacrificed to idols.

Refuse becoming complacent in your sanctification

Revelation 2:4-5 - But I have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

Philippians 2:12 - Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

- God promises blessing for the faithful

Revelation 22:7 - "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

- God promises judgment for those who fall away

Revelation 3:16 - So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth.

By grace through faith, true followers of Christ will persevere to the end.

1 Peter 1:3-5 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

John 10:27-29 - My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Ephesians 1:13-14 - In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

By grace through faith, true followers of Christ work to persevere to the end.

Matthew 24:13 - But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Hebrews 10:36 - For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised.

- They endure amidst suffering

Revelation 13:9-10 - If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen. If anyone is to be taken captive, into captivity he goes. If anyone is to be killed with a sword, with a sword he will be killed. This calls for endurance and faithfulness from the saints.

- Do not be surprised by it.

Revelation 1:9 - I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- Do not be overcome in it.

Revelation 2:7 - "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11 - Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will never be harmed by the second death.

Revelation 2:17 - Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name is inscribed that no one knows except the one who receives it.

Revelation 2:26 - The one who conquers and who keeps my works to the end: I will give him authority over the nations—

Revelation 3:5 - In the same way, the one who conquers will be dressed in white clothes, and I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name before my Father and before his angels.

Revelation 3:12 - The one who conquers I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never go out again. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God—the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God—and my new name.

Revelation 3:21 - To the one who conquers I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

❖ Proclaim the gospel of Christ.

Let's pray passionately. **Not one prayer is lost**

Revelation 8:2-5 - Then I saw the seven angels who stand in the presence of God; seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel, with a golden incense burner, came and stood at the altar. He was given a large amount of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up in the presence of God from the angel's hand. The angel took the incense burner, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it to the earth; there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

- Our cries go up
 - His kingdom comes down.
- Be prepared to give sacrificially
Be prepared to go confidently
- To everyone we know
 - To the ends of the earth
- Be prepared to die willingly

Revelation 20:4 - Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

❖ Hasten the coming of Christ.

2 Peter 3:1-18 - Dear friends, this is now the second letter I have written to you; in both letters, I want to stir up your sincere understanding by way of reminder, so that you recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles. Above all, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days scoffing and following their own evil desires, saying, "Where is his 'coming' that he promised? Ever since our ancestors fell asleep, all things continue as they have been since the beginning of creation." They deliberately overlook this: By the word of God the heavens came into being long ago and the earth was brought about from water and through water. Through these the world of that time perished when it was flooded. By the same word, the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. Dear friends, don't overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be

disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming. Because of that day, the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat. But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. Therefore, dear friends, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found without spot or blemish in his sight, at peace. Also, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some things hard to understand in them. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures. Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stable position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.

God, give us unwavering holiness in this world with unshakeable hope in the world to come.

“The things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.” “The Last Battle,” C.S. Lewis

Revelation 22:20-21 - He who testifies about these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen.

Recommended Reading

For further study on the topics covered in tonight’s sessions, see the resources listed below. Please note, however, that Hope Chapel Youth ministry does not endorse everything contained in these resources. As always, we urge you to examine these resources and the topics covered in this study in light of the truths of God’s Word.

General Overview

- ❖ *Systematic Theology* – Wayne Grudem
- ❖ *A Biblical Theological Introduction to the New Testament* – Michael Kruger

Study of the End Times (Eschatology)

- ❖ *The Promise of the Future* – Cornelis Venema (heavily recommend)
- ❖ *Rose Guide to End Times Prophecy* (heavily recommend)
- ❖ *The Bible and the Future* – Anthony Hoekema
- ❖ *The Church and the Last Things* – Martyn Lloyd Jones
- ❖ *40 Questions about the End Times* – Eckhard Schnabel

Hell

- ❖ *Erasing Hell* – Francis Chan

Heaven

- ❖ *Heaven* – Randy Alcorn
- ❖ *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* – Richard Baxter

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