

## **Week 24: Introduction to Eschatology**

*Grudem<sub>ST</sub> 54-57; Grudem<sub>BD</sub> 31-34; Ryrie 77-92*

### **A. Meaning:**

1. *The theology of last things* (Gr. *eschatos*) (Grudem, 1091; Ryrie, 509)

### **B. Importance and Benefits:**

1. It's God's Word, a direct "Revelation of Jesus Christ" (*apokalupsis Iesou Christou* – Rev. 1:1)
2. "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near." (Rev. 1:3, ESV)
3. Provides joy amidst suffering (2Cor. 4:17); purifies (1John 3:3); encourages (1Thess 4:18)

### **C. Various Interpretations**

1. Regarding the interpretation of the Book of Revelation (after LaHaye, 19)
  - a. Symbolic – book should be taken figuratively or allegorically, not literally
  - b. Preterist – everything in the book was fulfilled by Roman conquest of 70 AD
  - c. Historical – prophecies in book have been fulfilled throughout church history
  - d. Futurist – prophecies in book are literal and will be fulfilled in a time yet future
2. Regarding the Second Coming of Christ in relation to His Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6)
  - a. Amillennialism – the 1,000-year reign is symbolic depicting the church age [Origen, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Hodge, B.B. Warfield]
  - b. Pre-millennialism – The 1,000-year reign is literal and will happen after His return [Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Darby, Moody, Walvoord, LaHaye, Ryrie, Grudem]
  - c. Post-millennialism – the 1,000-year reign is happening now, culminating in His return
3. Regarding the timing of Christ's return for the church (John 14:2-3)
  - a. Pre-tribulation – Jesus raptures the church before the 7-year Tribulation Period
  - b. Mid-tribulation – Jesus raptures the church in the middle of the Tribulation Period
  - c. Post-tribulation – Jesus raptures the church at the end of the Tribulation Period just prior to His Second Coming
  - d. Partial Rapture – Jesus raptures the "good" Christians while others go through the Tribulation

### **D. Historical Interpretations:** (Allison, Gregg: *Historical Theology*, 683-701)

1. Church fathers predominantly pre-millennial until about 400 AD
  - a. Including Justin Martyr (d. 165), Irenaeus (d. 202), Hippolytus (d. 235)
  - b. A notable exception was Origen (d. 254), who allegorized much of Scripture (non-literal)
  - c. Based on Ps. 90:4; 2Pet. 3:8 (1,000 years=1 day) and a calculated date for Creation of 5,500 BC, many believed the literal Millennial kingdom would start in AD 500 (6 Days [6,000 years] + 1 Sabbath Day [1,000 year reign]) based on a Creation Week analogy
2. Augustine (d. 430) began a pre-millennial, but changed to amillennialism
3. The church was predominantly amillennial through the Reformation
  - a. Luther denounced pre-millennialism
  - b. Calvin was critical of the "chiliasts" – those who believed in a literal millennial kingdom
  - c. Anabaptists were pre-millennial, but a minority
4. Pre-millennialism returned to center stage in the modern period
  - a. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) started modern "dispensational" pre-millennialism (church and Israel separate, church would be raptured before the Tribulation Period)
  - b. "*Left Behind*" series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (1995-2007) highlight modern dispensational eschatology

### **E. Outline of Events:** (according to the Pre-millennial Pre-tribulation view – *dispensational* view)

1. Rapture of the church: (John 14:1-3; 1Cor. 15:51-53; 1Thess 1:10; 4:13-18; 2Thess 2:1-7)
2. Tribulation Period ([Matt. 24:1-28; Rev. 6-18] 7-year period, one-world government ruled by the Antichrist [Dan. 9:24-27]; time of Jacob's trouble [Jer. 30:7-NKJV]; the "Day of the LORD" [Is. 13:9; Ezek. 13:5; Joel 2:11, 31; Amos 5:18; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:14; Mal. 4:5])
  - a. Tribulation (1<sup>st</sup> 3½ years) & Great Tribulation (2<sup>nd</sup> 3½ years)
  - b. Armageddon (battle at end of 7 years – Joel 3:9-17; Zech. 14:1-4; Rev. 19:17-21)
    1. Ἁρμαγεδών (*harmagedon* – from Heb. *har* [hill] of *Megiddo* [Zech. 12:11])
  - c. Second Coming of Christ (Zech. 12:10; 14:1-15; Matt. 24:29-25:46; Acts 1:9-11; 2Thess 1:6-10; 2:8; 2Pet. 3:1-14; Jude 14-15; Rev. 19:11-21)
3. Millennial kingdom of Christ (1,000 years, Satan bound – Rev. 20:1-6; Is 65:17-25? Ezek. 40-48?)
  - a. Final rebellion (Satan released for one last battle – Rev. 20:7-10; Ezek. 38-39?)
  - b. Great White Throne Judgment (final judgment for unbelievers – Rev. 20:11-15)
4. New heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1-22:5)