

# *deeper*

word faith life

## Season 3

The Doctrine of Man

The Doctrine of Sin

The Doctrine of Salvation

Eschatology

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## Episode 6 – Eschatology

The word [ESCHATOLOGY] comes from the Greek word [ESCHATOS] which simply meant the last, so Eschatology is the study of last things or the end times. It covers topics that include Death, the Return of Christ, the Rapture, the Millennium, the Final Judgement, Heaven and Hell, and the New Heaven and New Earth. Eschatology helps us to understand the Bible's prophetic passages and how we are to live our lives in response to what God is going to do in the end times. There is and has been a great deal of debate around Eschatology, but this does not mean we shouldn't study and understand what the Bible teaches about the end times. We hold these things with an open hand because, at best we can only speculate this side of eternity. We simply don't know enough, and scripture is intentionally silent on many of these issues. An understanding of Eschatology will eliminate many of the fears we have about the future, but all we can be absolutely sure of, is that our God is sovereign, He has a plan, and it will all unfold according to His perfect will and timing. This is a great encouragement to those who are in Christ! A key verse on how to approach Eschatology is:  
Titus 2:13 - "we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

### What is \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Ultimately death is not part of God's plan for humanity, death came as a result of the fall. God in His wisdom has decided that it is best for us not to experience of the benefits of our salvation all at once, remember the "now but not yet" concept. So Christians still sin, get sick, suffer from natural disasters, and fall prey to acts of evil and injustice. And yes, Christians still die. All of these are the results of living in a world that isn't right. We live in a world that isn't yet fully free from the curse of sin. All of humanity faces a universal dilemma; we will all die. But there will come a day when all of these things, and even death itself, will finally be destroyed.

1 Corinthians 15:24-25 - "Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 - "Listen, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true, "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

### When Christians Die

As believers in Christ we are not to be afraid of death, Jesus' own death has settled this for us. Hebrews 2:14-15 - "that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

Instead we are to see our own death as a graduation, something to look forward to with joy, knowing that after death, we will be with Christ and we will be like Him.

2 Corinthians 5:8-9 - "We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it."

Philippians 1:21-24 - "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two; I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body."

When Christians die, their souls immediately go into God's presence. Our bodies stay behind and decay, but our souls are instantly with the Lord. When Christ returns, we



will be reunited with our bodies in a glorified state. We “wait eagerly...for the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we are saved.”(Romans 8:23,24) For believers who have died, Christ’s return will be the final step in the application of redemption. On that day, their new perfect bodies will be reunited with their souls. Jesus led the way and was the first to be raised with a resurrection body. Paul says that, “when He comes, those who belong to Him” will be resurrected in the same way. (1 Corinthians 15:22-23)

For believers who are still alive when Christ returns, their imperfect bodies will suddenly be changed into perfect ones. Paul says, “We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.”(1 Corinthians 15:51) All believers in Jesus will receive renewed resurrection bodies that will be imperishable. They will never wear out, get old, get sick, or die. This will be a kind of return to Eden where everything was good as God created it to be.

The idea of a purgatory, where we are purged of our sin, after we die and enter heaven, is not a Biblical one. And we don’t pray for or to the dead. The dead in Christ are eternally happy, rejoicing, and blessed in the presence of God.

#### When Un-believers Die

When people who have rejected Christ during their earthly lives die, their souls go immediately to eternal punishment. Their bodies will decay until Christ returns when they will join their souls for the final day of judgement.

John 5:28-29 - “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out, those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.”

Acts 24:15 - “...that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”

Revelation 20:12 - “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”

The Bible doesn’t teach that people will have a second chance to believe in Christ after they die. We see this illustrated in Jesus’ parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:24-26. We don’t get a second chance.

Hebrews 9:27 - “...people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

However we often do not know for sure if a loved one has rejected Christ to the very end. Only God truly knows and the Bible teaches that “everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”(Romans 10:13)

#### The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ

Jesus told His disciples that He would return someday.

John 14:3 - “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

There are many other scriptural references to the return of Christ or the Second Coming as it is also called; Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Hebrews 9:28, 2 Peter 3:10. What is clear, is that, “no one knows”(Mark 13:32) the exact time of His return because “the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”(Matthew 24:44) Even though we don’t know when He will return, all of us should live ready and be gladly anticipating His return.

2 Timothy 4:8 - “...but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”

While these verses are clear that we can’t know when He will return, other passages seem to indicate that certain signs will precede the time of His return. Here is a list of some of them:

Mark 13:10 - “The gospel must first be preached to all nations.”(also Matthew 24:14)

Mark 13:19-20 - “because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now, and never to be equaled again. “If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.”

Matthew 24:23-24 - “At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or,



'There he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." (also Mark 13:21,22)

Mark 13:24-25 - "But in those days, following that distress, " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

2 Thessalonians 2:1,3,4 - "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."

Romans 11:25,26 - "...Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved."

Jesus didn't say that these signs were given so that people would think that if they hadn't seen them, then Christ could't return. Rather they were given to intensify our expectation of His return.

Luke 21:28 - "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

But the references to these signs raise two real questions:

Have these signs occurred?

If they haven't all occurred, could Christ return at any moment?

Some Christians believe that these signs haven't occurred yet, and therefore Christ won't return at any moment. But Jesus instructed His disciples to "Be on guard! Be alert! You don't know when that time will come." (Mark 13:33) The idea that Christ cannot return soon seems to dull the urgency expressed by Jesus in this verse.

Other Christians believe that Jesus could return at any moment, and they deal with the fulfillment of these signs in three different ways:

Firstly some believe in two returns, a secret return and a public return. None of the Biblical passages referring to His return speak of such occurrences.

Secondly some believe that all these signs have already been fulfilled during the early history of the church, and therefore Christ could return at any moment. But some of the signs like the gospel being preached to all nations, the great tribulation, the salvation of Israel, the appearance of the man of lawlessness, and the stars falling from heaven, do not seem to have been fulfilled in a clear and obvious way during early church history or at any time.

Lastly some believe that it is unlikely, but possible that the signs have been fulfilled and therefore Christ could return at any moment.

The last view seems to be the most plausible in that it allows us to expect that the signs preceding Christ's return will probably still happen in the future. But since we are uncertain of that as a fact, we should be ready for His imminent return.

Much of the disagreement in Christianity over the centuries has to do with the interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6. Specifically the disagreement has to do with the thousand years that John mentions in this passage, "They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years." and "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years was ended."

This thousand years is referred to as the Millennium, which is the Latin equivalent. There are three views on the Millennium:

The \_\_\_\_\_ view - The Millennium is now and when it ends Jesus will return.

The \_\_\_\_\_ - The Millennium will come gradually, and Jesus will return after it.

The \_\_\_\_\_ view - The Millennium will come suddenly, and Jesus will return before it.

We'll be looking at these in more detail in the next episode.



Memory Verses:

John 14:3

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

These two links are to the Bible Project and provide great overview of the Book of Revelation, take a look in preparation for the last two episodes of Deeper.

<https://youtu.be/5nvVVcYD-0w>

<https://youtu.be/QpnIrbq2bKo>

