

deeper

word faith life

Season 3

The Doctrine of Man

The Doctrine of Sin

The Doctrine of Salvation

Eschatology

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Episode 8 – Eschatology

In this final episode on Eschatology, we will be looking at The Final Judgement and Eternal Punishment and, The New Heaven and New Earth. But before we get there let's just quickly recap.

Some may find the whole discussion around Millennial views confusing and unnecessary. We can simplify it like this: Imagine a pole in the ground, we'll call it Christ's return. Everything revolves around this, but we don't and can't know when it will happen.

Amillennialism says there isn't a Millennium, Jesus has been reigning for more than 2000 years already and He'll return in good time, could be this afternoon before tea, or in thirty years time, let's keep serving Him and leave the details to God.

Postmillennialism says He will return after the Christianizing of the world through the church. Things will get better and better as the church takes more ground and the Jesus will return. His return is "post" or after the Millennium.

Now we come to Premillennialism, here we have to put another smaller pole in the ground and we call it the Great Tribulation.

Classic or Historic Premillennialism says Jesus will return "pre" or before the Millennium but after the Great Tribulation. And that it is possible but unlikely that He could return before tea this afternoon, because there are many things that still have to happen according to scripture.

Dispensational Premillennialism says Jesus will return "Pretribulation" or before the Great Tribulation. And He could Rapture the believers before tea this afternoon because all the things that are yet to happen will come about during the Great Tribulation. Then He will return publicly with the church to start the Millennial reign on earth.

As we said in the last episode, none of these views will really amount to much because He is sovereign and will do whatever He wants, when it suits Him. We have to simply live ready.

Just as an aside note, there are five approaches to the Book of Revelation that might be helpful. The Preterist Approach - All the events of Revelation were fulfilled during the period of the Roman Empire.

The Historicist Approach - Revelation is a panorama of church history from the apostolic era to the second coming.

The Idealist Approach - Revelation is not a representation of actual events, but is rather a symbolic depiction of the spiritual warfare between good and evil.

The Futurist Approach - Beginning with chapter four, Revelation describes the future events accompanying the end of the age.

The Eclectic/Hybrid Approach - Combines the strengths of the first four. Revelation does address first century Christians. Revelation presents timeless truths for surviving the struggle between good and evil. Revelation also clearly speaks of future events still to come.

It is important to read the book of Revelation with the understanding of what type of literature we are dealing with. It is a Revelation, an opening up, a revealing - of Jesus. It's an Apocalyptic letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor written as an encouragement and a challenge. As such, it uses visions, symbols and Old Testament references to reveal the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. It brings Old Testament prophecy to its intended climax. It is not a secret cypher that unlocks the timeline for Christ's return. We can't take everything literally because a lot of references are symbolic and have prophetic meaning. Unfortunately there are so many self appointed "experts" on Revelation because of its sensational appeal, and we can get ourselves all tied up in knots. We should read it humbly and simply, and not try to read anything into it. It is a unique book of the Bible, along with the second half of Daniel, in its style or genre, which we call Apocalyptic Literature and it needs to be read as such.



The Final and Eternal Punishment

After the Millennial reign of Christ, be it metaphorical or literal, according to all the views previously discussed, and after the final defeat of Satan and His army, Jesus will judge all mankind from His Great White Throne. (Revelation 20:11-15) This is “the day of God’s wrath, when His judgement will be revealed.”(Romans 2:5) It is the day God has determined “when He will judge the world with Justice...” through Jesus. (Acts 17:31) This will be a time when believers, dead and alive, will be rewarded for their service on earth. But it will also be a time when the unbelievers, the unrighteous, will be judged.(Revelation 11:18) Paul says for the unrighteous there will be “wrath and anger.”(Romans 2:8) From Old Testament times there was an assurance that God would have a day of reckoning with mankind; Ecclesiastes 12:14 - “For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.”

This is were, for a believer, God’s declaration of Justification is so important. He regards us as counted righteous in His sight.

Psalm 103:12 - “as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

Those who have not looked to Jesus for their salvation, those who have rejected this salvation, will be judged according to what they have done.(Revelation 20:12)

Believers will also be judged, “...For we will all stand before God’s judgement seat.”(Romans 14:10) And “...each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.”(Vs12) But the Final Judgement for believers will not be for punishment, because Christ took our punishment on the cross. Instead it will be for reward.

John 5:24 - “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”

The Final Judgement should not be a source of fear for believers, but rather one of great encouragement to “make it our goal to please Him...”(2 Corinthians 5:9) Every sin we have ever committed is paid for by Christ and eternally forgiven by God. At the Final Judgement we will receive the rewards “due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”(Vs10) The evil will pass away and the good will be rewarded.(1 Corinthians 3:12-15) Although there will be degrees of reward in heaven, everyone’s joy will be complete, because it comes from our relationship with God and not our possessions or status. There is no competition here.

Hebrews 10:24,25 - “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

The Final Judgement will take place so that God can display His glory to humanity by demonstrating His justice and mercy simultaneously in one great crescendo of the ages. His judgement will be entirely fair. Each person, whether destined for eternal glory or eternal condemnation, will be dealt with more fairly at this time than at any other time in their entire lives. God will judge righteously, and we will all declare;

Revelation 19:1,2 - “... Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments.”

The Final Judgement assures us that the universe is fair, and it satisfies our need for justice in the world. And that regardless of what happens, God is in control and will eventually bring a just conclusion to every situation. We should never seek revenge. We forgive freely, because we know that all accounts will be settled on that day. We can be confident that any punishment due to an offender will be carried out. It will either fall on the shoulders of Christ or on the shoulders of the offender for all eternity.

Romans 12:19 - “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.”

What About ?

At the Final Judgement, all those who have rejected salvation by rejecting Christ, will go



to a place of eternal punishment which the Bible calls Hell. These souls are not only eternally punished, but they are also eternally condemned, declared unrighteous in God's sight for all eternity. The Bible describes Hell as a real place, it's not symbolic or figurative as some would believe. It is so clearly taught in Scripture that we cannot deny it or get around it, as disturbing as the idea might be. In a universe where there is deep and profound evil, it calls for the just wrath of a righteous and holy God. This evil cannot simply go unpunished.

Psalm 92:15 - "The Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in Him."

Jesus speaks of Hell as "...the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41) He said that those who have rejected Him will also be sent there. He said it is a place where "the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:48) It is a "place of torment." (Luke 16:28) John tells us that it is a place where those who have rejected Jesus will, along with the devil and his angels, "drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath." and they will be "tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb." (Revelation 14:10) "And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night..." (Vs 11)

Hell is a real place of eternal torment, it will never end, ever!

While we as believers need not fear ever going there, the mere thought of Hell should sober us into a compassion for the lost and a renewed passion for the gospel to reach the ends of the earth. God says that He "takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked." (Ezekiel 33:11) He is, in fact, giving people exactly what they have wanted all their lives, but never believed it were possible.

The New and the New Earth

After the Final Judgement, those who belong to Christ will enter into the full joy of life that they have always longed for, and believed it were always possible. They will hear Jesus say, "Come you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world." (Matthew 25:34) And they will live for eternity in the presence of the Lord. This is referred to as heaven, but the Bible paints an even fuller picture of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

The Bible promises an entirely renewed creation. It will be "the new heavens and the new earth that I will make... declares the Lord." (Isaiah 66:22) It will be a place so rich and wonderfully good and new, that "the former things" such as death, pain, suffering, sorrow, grief and sin, "will not be remembered nor will they come to mind." (Isaiah 65:17) It will be a place where heaven and earth will join together;

Revelation 21:2,3 - "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

God will also make a New Earth, a new creation, "For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea." (Revelation 21:1)

Paul writes this;

Romans 8:21 - "that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

No longer will there be any "thorns and thistles" (Genesis 3:18) as a result of sin in the Garden of Eden. There will also be no more destructive forces of nature, cyclones, tornadoes, floods, droughts, earthquakes or tsunamis. Paradise will be restored.

Those who live on the New Earth will have glorified bodies that will never grow old, or become weak, or experience sickness or death. With the curse of sin removed, all creation will be returned to its original pre-fall state, which God said was "very good." (Genesis 1:31) The world will no longer be broken, but it will be a place of unimaginable beauty, a place where God's glory is tangible and everywhere, and all of creation functions according to His will. The people living there will no longer be broken, they will work and act and



relate to each other, as they are supposed to. There will no longer be any pain or sorrow, grief or tragedy, for God Himself will dwell with His people.

Revelation 21:4 - "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

God's fellowship with us will be unhindered, we will forever be able to interact with Him and to worship Him, and to glorify Him, as we were created to. Our greatest joy will be that we "will see His face,"(Revelation 22:4) The sight of God's face will be the fulfillment of everything we know to be good, and right, and desirable in the universe. In God's face we will see and experience the fulfillment of all the longing we have ever had. The longing to know perfect love, perfect peace, perfect joy, and to know perfect truth, and justice, holiness, wisdom, goodness, power, glory and beauty. We will discover that in God's presence these things will become our new reality. What makes this even more significant for us is that we will know for eternity that we were sinners who are saved by grace. We will be so overcome by the reality of God's grace that we will never cease from worshiping Him.

Memory Verses:

Revelation 19:6

"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns."

