

Essentials of Christianity (pt 34)
11/7/2010

Introduction _____

Good morning to everyone! Today we will wrap up our survey on the Essentials of Christianity. The last topic left to cover is **Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things**. And the last component of eschatology to cover is **The Return of Christ**.

The Return of Christ. The second coming of Jesus is an essential part of the Christian faith. The **fact** of His coming is as important as the **fact** of His virgin birth, His crucifixion and resurrection.

I mentioned at the beginning of our study on eschatology, that there are a number of aspects in this field of study that have generated a considerable amount of debate. Many of the issues of debate are connected to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

This is not a subject that I can cover comprehensively in one or two sessions (three or even a half dozen). But we will at least do an overview of the main elements that separate the wheat from the chaff; what divides orthodoxy from unorthodoxy; eschatological hills to die on.

There has been too much laxity on the part of many groups in Christendom in dealing with aberrant teachings of eschatology. And yet, on several occasions, the apostle Paul addressed problems that arose within certain churches because of bad eschatology.

Let's quickly take a look at these.

First there was the occasion at Thessalonica. **Turn to 1Thessalonians 4:13-18:** .

^{NAU} 1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Some of us are familiar with these passages. We commonly refer to them as the “rapture passages.”

What is happening is Paul is correcting a problem that these believers had with understanding the timing of the Lord’s **gathering up** of living saints, in comparison to the fate of those believers in Christ who had already died.

Would those who died first somehow miss out on the **catching away** of the living saints.

Paul assures them that they will not miss out on anything.

*^{NAU} 1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say to you **by the word of the Lord**, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Comfort is offered to cool their concerns.

Two other places where an apologetic response is given because of eschatological heresies is in **1 & 2 Timothy**. Turn to **1Timothy 1 and 2Timothy 2**.

^{NAU} 1 Timothy 1:18 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,

¹⁹ keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

²⁰ Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

What was the nature of this blasphemy?

We are able to deduce at least one thing that was likely to be the problem that prompted this strong denunciation from the apostle. We pick up some additional information in **2Timothy 2:14-18**:

^{NAU} 2 Timothy 2:14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

¹⁵ *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

¹⁶ *But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,*

¹⁷ *and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,*

¹⁸ *men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.*

Once again Paul mentions two names. But this time he specifies what their error was (similar to Thea).

You'll notice that the name **Hymenaeus** comes up again.

It's reasonable to conclude that the problem in 1Timothy is the same as it is in 2Timothy; with Hymenaeus serving as our link.

He has a different partner on each occasion. Maybe this occurred twice. The remedy is the same on both occasions.

* In 1Timothy it says,

²⁰ *Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.*

As punishment for what they have done, Paul has delivered these two people to Satan. The expression used here also appears in 1 Cor 5:5 to describe the punishment of the Corinthian sinner. Both were delivered to Satan.

It is believed that this "handing over" was excommunication from the Christian community. It should be noted that this "handing over" was to have a remedial function: it was corrective. The word "taught" is the same word that is used in the NT for the corrective training of a child.

The purpose was to educate these false teachers and help them to get rid of their habit of blaspheming. It is believed that both men were leaders in the community.¹

* In 2Timothy 2, he says:

^{NAU} 2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

²⁰ Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

²¹ Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

The vessels of honor refers to the good that should be retained; the vessels of dishonor are those who should be rejected.

These men and their teachings should be rejected. Apparently Hymenaeus didn't get the message the first time.

Their false teaching had something to do with the resurrection of the dead and the timing of it. Since the resurrection is closely tied in with the Lord's return, it is safe to assume these

¹ My old notes

false teachings were directly or indirectly related to the Lord's coming.

There has been a fare share of Hymenaeus's in recent years, that have spread very bad doctrine relating to the Second coming of Jesus Christ.

From Harold Camping's faulty predictions about the Lord's return (he used to be popular on the radio around here); to the Jesus Seminar who just claim **outright** that Jesus never said He'd come back.

Now on to the good news.

Jesus is coming back, and there are some undeniable attributes connected to his second coming that we need to be aware of.

Let's begin with a very general comment about the second coming. **Turn to Titus 2:11-15.**

^{NAU} Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

¹⁵ These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

A great summary of what the Christian life is all about.

Vs 11-- God's grace came and saved us.

Vs 12-- His grace brought us into a new life where we became his servants--living righteously in **this present age**.

Vs 13-- yet looking forward to another age: the blessed hope and glorious appearing, when He returns to planet earth.

Vs 14-15: *“who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

¹⁵ These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

All these things we're to speak: *“with all authority.”* Pay no attention to the critics. **Speak these things.**

I hope to speak these things today with all the authority of God's word: *the essential doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ.*

Let's take a look at some vital details about the second coming of Christ.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ Will Be Personal, Bodily, Certain, Magnificent and Visible to All.

The idea, stemming in part from many liberals, that Jesus would return spiritually, as opposed to bodily, is impossible to reconcile with numerous passages in Scripture and has more to do with anti-supernatural presuppositions brought to the text.

The return of Christ will not be in obscurity and a “stable” in a small town in the land of Judah. While the world was largely ignorant of his

first coming (though in John's view, it too was glorious), they will not be ignorant of his second coming.²

Turn to Acts 1:6-11

^{NAU} Acts 1:6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

⁹ And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

¹⁰ And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

¹¹ They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Turn to Matthew 24:21-27

^{NAU} Matthew 24:21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

²² "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

²³ "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him.

²⁴ "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

² Bible.org

³ Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Moody, Chicago, 1989).

²⁵ *"Behold, I have told you in advance.*

²⁶ *"So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them.*

²⁷ *"For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

Jesus warns his disciples not to run after every individual who claims: "Look! Here is the Christ" or "Look! There is the Christ" (Matt 24:23). According to Jesus there is a two-fold reason why we should not bother with such idle speculation. First, many false Christs will appear to deceive many. Second, there will be no mistaking his coming. In other words, there will be no need to run here and there claiming "Here he is," for just as "lightening that flashes in the east is visible as far away as the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt 24:27). Indeed, there will be signs of cosmic proportions associated with his coming. ⁴

^{NAU} Revelation 1:7 BEHOLD, 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.

The second coming of Christ is going to be a time of great judgment.

One of the most vivid pictures of the Lord's return is found in Revelation 19. **Let's turn there.**

To prepare us to read this, let me give you a brief synopsis of other details connected this event.

First of all, the **rapture** is not the same event as the **second coming**. As we read earlier, many believers who have died, and many who are still alive on planet earth; will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus in the air.

⁴ Bible.org

This event is also recorded in **1Corinthians 15:51-52**

^{NAU} *1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,*

⁵² *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

At some point between our being caught up, and the second coming of Christ; we will be judged before the judgment seat of Christ, and then will begin to participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The church is with Christ in glorified bodies prior to His return because we return with Him (*as we'll see*).

Meanwhile, horrendous devastation is taking place on planet earth, as God is pouring forth varying degrees of wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth.

Something else that is taking place in conjunction with this period, is the Beast and False Prophet have ascended to power to assumed their roles.

It is during this season that Israel will embrace the Beast as their false Messiah (Daniel 9:27)

^{NAU} *2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,*

² *that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*

³ *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,*

⁴ *who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*

⁵ *Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?*

⁶ *And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.*

⁷ *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

⁸ *Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;*

(we'll see this in Rev 19)

⁹ *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*

¹⁰ *and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

¹¹ *For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,*

¹² *in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*

Now let's read through Revelation 19 and get the rest of the picture.

^{NAU} *Revelation 19:1 After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;*

² *BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER."*

³ *And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER."*

⁴ *And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"*

⁵ *And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great."*

⁶ *Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns."*

⁷ *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."*

⁸ *It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

⁹ *Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."*

¹⁰ *Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

So the saints are poised and ready.

^{NAU} *Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.*

¹² *His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.*

¹³ *He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*

Where did the blood come from. A number of places. As we discussed a few Wed's ago, this is a battle campaign.

Isaiah 63 speaks of this event:

^{NAU} Isaiah 63:1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

² Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press?

³ "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment.

⁴ "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come.

Back to Revelation.

^{NAU} Revelation 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

^{NAU} Jude 1:14 It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,

¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

^{NAU} Zechariah 14:3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

⁴ In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

⁵ *You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!***

Back to Revelation

^{NAU} *Revelation 19:15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.*

¹⁶ *And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

¹⁷ *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God,*

¹⁸ *so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."*

¹⁹ *And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*

²⁰ *And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.*

²¹ *And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Jesus accomplishes a number of things at this point.

He seizes control from the Beast and False prophet whose dominion was over the nations. Now, with them out of way, this scene will segue into the Millennial reign.

Another thing that is accomplished now is the restoration of national Israel to the Lord. This is when their eyes are opened and they embrace their Messiah.

The OT is replete with verses about the restoration of Israel correlating with the Lord's return. It's undeniable!!!

^{NAU} *Zephaniah 3:14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!*

¹⁵ *The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more.*

¹⁶ *In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp.*

¹⁷ *"The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.*

^{NAU} *Zephaniah 3:20 "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD.*

^{NAU} *Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;*

²⁶ *and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."*

²⁷ *"THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."*

Two of the most vital things connected with the Second coming of Christ is the Restoration of National Israel, and the establishment of the earthly reign of Christ on earth (the Millennium).

There are some other points that we can agree to disagree on regarding eschatology, but if there is an eschatological system that rejects these two things, that system should be rejected; in light of the shear weight of Biblical evidence against it.

To conclude: **Turn to Revelation 20:1-10**

^{NAU} Revelation 20:1 *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.*

² *And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;*

³ *and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.*

⁴ *Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

⁵ *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.*

⁶ *Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

⁷ *When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,*

⁸ *and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.*

⁹ *And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.*

¹⁰ *And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

Closing remarks.

The End of this series!