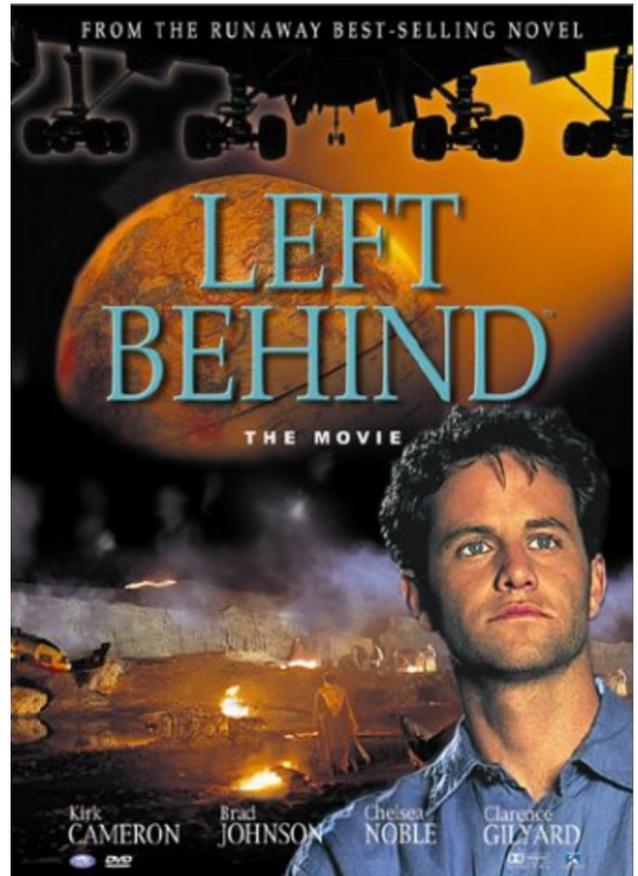


Fathom Academy: Christian Theology

WEEK 12: THE END TIMES

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Week 12: Eschatology – General and Personal



Eschatology: General and Personal

Part I: The Vocabulary of Eschatology

Part II: The Return of Jesus Christ

Part III: Death, Judgment, & Resurrection

Part IV: Final Destinies

Part I: The Vocabulary of Eschatology

General Eschatology | Preliminary Considerations

- **Eschatology** = *eschatos* [final, last] + *logos* [word, idea]

- ***Eschaton*** = the last age, when all of God’s purposes have come to consummation
- **General Eschatology** = the end of human history, the end of this current cosmos, and the consummation of all things
 - **Posture: between “eschatomania” and “eschatophobia”**
[Millard Erickson]

General Eschatology | The Vocabulary of Eschatology

- παρουσία [*Parousía*] — presence, coming, arrival
- ἀποκαλυψις [*apokalypsis*] — unveiling, disclosure, laying bare, a making known or visible
- ἐπιφάνεια [*epiphaneía*] — appearance, manifestation

General Eschatology | Rapture and Tribulation

- **Rapture** = The event in which the church is “caught up” [Latin: *raptio*] with Christ as he returns for his people [1 Thessalonians 4:15–17]
- **Post-trib? Pre-trib? Mid-trib?**
- **Tribulation**
 - **General Sense** [John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rev. 1:9]
 - **Eschatological Sense** [Revelation 7:13–14 (cf. 2:22; 3:10); Matt. 24:21–22; Mark 13:19; Luke 21:23]

General Eschatology | Antichrist

- ἀντίχριστος [*antichristos*] — antichrist
 - The prefix “anti-” can mean both “against” and “instead of”
- **Species of Antichrist (and interpretive options)**

- **General: Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ**
[1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3]
- **Specific: A counterfeit pseudo-god who opposes and attempts to deceive God’s people** [2 Thess. 2:3–10]
- *Personal / Historical figure vs. Ideal / Symbolic figure*

Part II: The Return of Jesus Christ

Return of Christ | Nicene Creed

“[We believe in Jesus Christ] who, for us for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.”

-Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed [381]

Return of Christ | Key Texts [Gospels & Acts]

Matthew 24:29–31: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear [φάινω] in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

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

Acts 1:11: “. . . and [the angel] said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’

Acts 3:19–21: “Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.”

Return of Christ | Key Texts [Pauline Corpus]

1 Thessalonians 4:15–16: “For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming [παρουσία] of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.”

2 Thessalonians 1:6–7, 10: “. . . since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed [ἀποκαλύψει] from heaven with his mighty angels . . . when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.”

2 Thessalonians 2:8: “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance [ἐπιφάνεια] of his coming [παρουσία].”

Titus 2:13: “. . . waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing [ἐπιφάνεια] of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ . . .”

Return of Christ | Theological Meaning & Character

- **The Return of Christ is *imminent*, but no one knows the day or the hour [Matthew 24–25]**
 - ***Vigilance* but not *hysteria***
- **The character of the Return of Christ**
 - **Personal [Acts 1:11]**
 - **Visible and Public [Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26]**
 - **Historical [not *suprahistorical* or *existential*]**

Return of Christ | The Glorious Consummation of God’s Purposes

- **The second advent is the culmination of the *exaltation* of Jesus Christ**
- **The second advent demonstrates that the triune God is the living God [Rev. 1:8, 17–18]**
- **The second advent is the glorious consummation of God’s redemptive purposes, the vindication of God’s justice, and proof that God keeps his promises [from Habakkuk 2:14 to Revelation 21:22–22:5]**

The End of the Story | The New Heaven and the New Earth

“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. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with humans. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’

And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ And he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.’

Part III: Death, Judgment, & Resurrection

Death | *The Second Death*

Revelation 21:8: “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

- **The Second Death may be understood as permanent spiritual death—an eternal finalization of a state of separation from God**
- **The Second Death is the terminus of a life spent in a state of alienation from God**

The Intermediate State | Hades / Sheol

Sheol: A term used in the Old Testament to refer broadly to the realm of the dead; not necessarily with a connotation of punishment or reward

Key Texts:

- **Genesis 42:38**
- **Psalm 139:8**
- **Hosea 13:14**
- **Ecclesiastes 3:16–22**

Hades: A term used in the New Testament to refer to the temporary abode of the unrighteous dead as they await resurrection and final judgment; usually how *Sheol* is rendered in Greek

Key Texts:

- **Luke 16:19–31**
- **Matthew 11:23**
- **Acts 2:27**

The Intermediate State | Paradise / Abraham's Bosom

Paradise: A Greek term [παράδεισος] deriving from the Persian word for an oasis, a walled garden, or pleasure ground. More broadly: the temporary abode of the righteous dead where they are refreshed as they await resurrection and glorification.

Key Texts:

- **Luke 23:43**
- **Luke 16:19–31**
- **John 14:2**
- **2 Corinthians 12:3**

Eschatological Resurrection | General Resurrection in the NT

Mark 12:24–27: “Jesus said to them, ‘Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong.’”

Luke 14:13–14: “But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

John 11:24–25: “Martha said to him, ‘I know that he [Lazarus] will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live . . .’”

Eschatological Resurrection | Stages of Resurrection

“[Christ’s resurrection is understood] as the pledge of the new creation. ‘Easter’ was the prelude to, and a real anticipation of, God’s qualitatively new future and the new creation in the midst of the history of the world’s suffering.”

-Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*[1974]

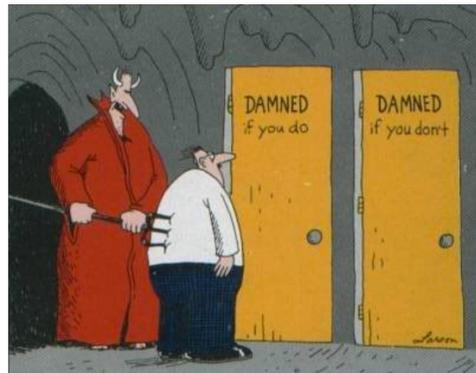


Final Judgment | Judgment before the Great White Throne

Revelation 20:11–15: “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is

the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Part IV: Final Destinies



Eternal Destinies | The Nature of Heaven

1 Corinthians 2:9: “No eye has seen, nor has any ear heard, nor has the human heart imagined, what God has in store for those who love him.”

- **God's unmediated presence without terror [Rev. 21:3]**
- **Knowledge of God as he is [1 Cor. 13:9–12; 1 John 3:1–2]**
 - **Catholic theology = *beatific vision***
- **The removal of all sin and evil [Rev. 21:4]**
- **The perfect reflection of God's unfathomable glory, splendor, and brilliance [Rev. 21:18–21; 21:23; 22:5]**

Eternal Destinies | Images of Hell

γέεννα [Gehenna]: The Greek transliteration of the Aramaic *gēhinnām*, which refers to the Valley of Ben Hinnom” —a site which was first associated with Baal worship (and its associated detestable practices) and later where Jerusalem’s refuse was dumped and burned. By Jesus’ time, it was sometimes used metaphorically for the place of permanent and everlasting condemnation of the wicked.

Images of (conscious?) torment

- Unquenchable fire [Math. 3:12]
- Fiery furnace [Matt. 13:42, 50]
- Place of condemnation [Matt. 23:32–33]
- Eternal fire [Matt. 25:41]
- Place of torment [Rev. 14:10–11]
- Fiery lake of burning sulfur [Rev. 21:8]

Images of void & isolation

- Outer darkness [Matt. 8:12]
- Eternal destruction and exclusion from God’s presence [2 Thess. 1:9]
- Eternal chains and gloomy darkness [Jude 6]
- Blackest darkness [Jude 13]
- The abyss [Rev. 9:1–2]