

Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning

Frameworks and the Future

An Introduction to Eschatology

1. What is Eschatology?

- a. ἔσχατος (*eschatos*) = “last,” as in last days.
2 Timothy 3:1, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.”
- b. **Eschatology** = study of the last things.
- c. The term “eschatological” is an adjective used to describe matters from the perspective of future realization (e.g. “our eschatological hope” refers to our future hope, our final salvation).
- d. In one sense, the entire biblical narrative is eschatological; it is a progressive narrative that is always moving forward; it is future focused (cf. Genesis 3:15).

2. What are the key matters or events associated with eschatology?

- a. Old Testament history (what took place prior to Jesus’s 1st coming).
- b. Ecclesiology (the study of the Church), i.e. what is the relationship between ethnic Israel and the Church in respect to the end of all things.
- c. The 1st Advent of Christ.
- d. The life of Christ.
- e. The death and resurrection of Christ.
- f. Christ’s ascension.
- g. The intermediate state.
- h. The binding of Satan.
- i. The millennium – its nature and timing.
- j. Antichrist and the great tribulation.
- k. The loosing of Satan.
- l. The 2nd Advent and the Rapture.
- m. Believer’s resurrection and the general resurrection.
- n. Final judgment.
- o. The age to come or the eternal state (New Heavens/New Earth).

3. What are the most common eschatological systems?

- a. Historic premillennialism
- b. Dispensational premillennialism
- c. Preterist Postmillennialism
- d. Historic Postmillennialism
- e. Amillennialism (or realized millennialism)

4. How do these common eschatological systems put key events together?

- a. Historic premillennialism
1st Advent – Crucifixion/Resurrection/Ascension – Present church age – Antichrist/Great Tribulation – 2nd Advent – Millennial reign –Final rebellion – General resurrection/Final judgment – Eternal state.
- b. Dispensational premillennialism
1st Advent – Crucifixion/Resurrection/Ascension – Parenthetical church age – Secret Rapture – Antichrist/Great Tribulation – 2nd Advent – Millennial/Kingdom reign –Final rebellion – General resurrection/Final judgment – Eternal state.
- c. Postmillennialism
1st Advent – Crucifixion/Resurrection/Ascension – Present church age – Millennial reign –Apostacy– 2nd Advent (General resurrection/Final judgment) – Eternal state.
- d. Amillennialism (or realized millennialism)
1st Advent – Crucifixion/Resurrection/Ascension – Present church age (Millennial reign) – Apostacy (Antichrist)—2nd Advent (General resurrection/Final judgment) – Eternal state.

5. Other key matters that bear on our eschatological understanding and expectations:

- a. The nature and timing of the two ages (i.e. “this present age” and “the age to come”).
- b. The nature and work of Christ’s current reign.
- c. The nature and extent of the Great Commission, especially as it relates to social/political engagement and expectation.
- d. The nature and extent of the sanctification of the Church over time.
- e. The nature and extent of the “millennium”.