



**Bible study for the week starting November 8, 2020**  
**The Judgment**

- Share with each other any eye-openers or significant reminders from the message
- Before studying the documents at the end of this LIFEwork, see if you can cooperatively identify the basics of the 4 main millennial views.
- What does the word rapture mean?
- Read and discuss pages 3-9
- What does John mean when he speaks of the “binding of Satan” for 1,000 years? If this occurred in the first century as a result of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, in what sense is Satan bound (i.e., what is he prevented from doing?) and in what sense is he still on the loose?
- Talk about the description of the final judgment in 20:11-15. Who is present at this judgment? On what basis are unbelievers judged? Why is it that Christians will not be judged on the basis of their “works” as found in the “books”? Upon what are believers judged? What does this passage tell us about the nature and duration of the punishment that will come upon unbelievers?
- Pastor Eric keeps saying again and again as we are joyfully wrestling with these texts and topics: “Remember that the purpose of revelation is to provide hope for believers under persecution.” Praise God for the good news that our names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life means ultimately that Jesus is the glorified victor and we get to ride his coattails into glory.
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- PRAY FOR AND WITH ONE ANOTHER!
- We have much about which we can pray, and time to do so. Make a list of people and petitions, and spend some time talking with God. God bless your week!



## The Judgment

Hebrews 9:24-28 - Matthew 24:37-44 - Revelation 20:4-15  
November 8, 2020 – Pastor D. R. Hilken

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### When and What

The end is near **ER** and then **THE JUDGMENT**

Through what lens are you reading God's Word?

It's not about you

it's about **GLORIFYING** Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God

I've got an appointment—Do I have a **RESERVATION**? (Hebrews 9)

When: Revelation 20:1-6 – the great debate

### MILLENNIALS

Historic **PRE** Trib/Christ returns/Jews converted/resurrection of believers only  
antichrist slayed/shared prosperous rule for 1K/Satan destroyed  
resurrection of unbelievers to judgment and hell

19<sup>th</sup>C Dispensational **PRE** – 7 dispensations/Jews rejected=plan B=Church/  
all NT believers "raptured" to heaven/7 years of Trib on earth/Christ returns

**POST** – gradual fulfillment of Mt. 28 and then Christ returns

**A** -

Year 1: (beginning of millenium) overthrow of beast and false prophet and  
casting satan out of heaven at the incarnation  
(birth/life/crucifixion/resurrection/ascension/enthronement of Christ)

The **1000 YEARS**

Year 1000: the final battle when Gog & Magog defeated and Satan into hell  
and the two judgments

### What we believe, confess, and teach here

What:

- a) The harlot (anti-christ) and the tribulation
- b) The final battle (armageddon – har-meggido)
- c) The **RESURRECTION**
- d) The Judgment(s) determined by the two **BOOKS**
  - the **PHYSICAL** earth and heavens
  - Book 1 - the unbelievers without Jesus
  - Book 2 - the believers through Jesus

See: Revelation 20:11-15 & John 5:25-29 & Luke 14:16-24  
Romans 14:10-11 & Hebrews 9:23-28 & Matthew 10:28

Your **RESERVATION** to the Banquet

## Why I Changed My Mind About the Millennium – Sam Storms

Although I grew up in a Southern Baptist church and was regularly exposed to Scripture, I can't recall ever hearing anything about a "millennial" kingdom, much less the variety of theories regarding its meaning and relationship to the second coming of Christ. Like many of my generation, my initial exposure to biblical eschatology was in reading Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* during the summer of 1970.

Not long thereafter I purchased a Scofield Reference Bible and began to devour its notes and underline them more passionately than I did the biblical text on which they commented. No one, as I recall, ever suggested to me there was a view other than that of the dispensational, pretribulational, premillennialism of Scofield. Anyone who dared call it into question was suspected of not believing in biblical inerrancy.

### Questioning Premillennialism

Upon graduating from The University of Oklahoma in 1973, I began my studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. My professors were a Who's Who of dispensational premillennialism: John Walvoord (then president of DTS), Charles Ryrie (author of *Dispensationalism Today* and *The Ryrie Study Bible*), and J. Dwight Pentecost (author of perhaps the most influential text on the subject at that time, *Things to Come*), just to mention the more well-known. Anything other than the dispensational premillennial perspective as found in Lewis Sperry Chafer's *Systematic Theology* and taught in the many DTS classrooms was considered less than evangelical. The only thing I recall hearing about amillennialism, for example, was how dangerous it was given the fact that it was popular among theological liberals who didn't take the Bible very seriously.

Robert Gundry's book *The Church and the Tribulation* was released in 1973, the same year I began my studies at Dallas, and it fell like a theological atom bomb on the campus. Everyone was reading it, and more than a few were being drawn to its post-tribulational perspective on the timing of the rapture. Debates in the classroom, cafeteria, and elsewhere were abundant and quite heated. Someone obtained a copy of Daniel Fuller's PhD dissertation in which he critiqued the hermeneutics of dispensationalism, and more gasoline was thrown on the fire.

Upon my graduation from Dallas Seminary in 1977 I immediately immersed myself in a study of all aspects and schools of eschatological thought. Over the next few years, the two most influential and persuasive volumes I read were *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* by George Eldon Ladd (himself a historic premillennialist), and Anthony Hoekema's book *The Bible and the Future* (Hoekema was an amillennialist). It is worth noting here that the distinction between Israel and the church, on which dispensationalism is largely based, could not withstand either Ladd or Hoekema's relentless assault.

### My Unpardonable Sin

It wasn't long before Ladd, Hoekema, and Gundry, together with a few others, had persuaded me that there is no basis in Scripture for a pre-tribulational rapture of the church. That was, in the eyes of many, bad enough. Indeed, I distinctly recall the horror (trust me, "horror" is by no means an exaggerated term to describe the reaction I received) in my church when I made it known that I could no longer embrace a pre-tribulation rapture. More than a few were convinced that I was well on my way into theological liberalism! But when in the early 1980s I abandoned premillennialism in all its forms, public reaction was such that you would have sworn I had committed the unpardonable sin. I'm not suggesting that all or even the majority of dispensational premillennialists feel this way today (I hope and pray that few do), but the atmosphere in the 1970s and 1980s was something less than amicable for those who departed from the accepted eschatological faith.

My departure from premillennialism and embrace of amillennialism was gradual and came as a result of two discoveries as I studied Scripture. First, I devoted myself to a thorough examination of what the New Testament said would occur at the time of Christ's second coming (or parousia). What I found was a consistent witness concerning what would either *end* or *begin* as a result of our Lord's return to the earth. Sin in the lives of God's people, corruption of the natural creation, and the experience of physical death would terminate upon the appearance of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, and the inauguration of the New Heavens and New Earth would ensue. But why is this a problem for premillennialism? Good question.

## Scriptural Challenges for Premillennialists

If you are a premillennialist, whether dispensational or not, there are several things with which you must reckon:

- You must necessarily believe that physical death will continue to exist beyond the time of Christ's second coming.
- You must necessarily believe that the natural creation will continue, beyond the time of Christ's second coming, to be subjected to the curse imposed by the Fall of man.
- You must necessarily believe that the New Heavens and New Earth will not be introduced until 1,000 years subsequent to the return of Christ.
- You must necessarily believe that unbelieving men and women will still have the opportunity to come to saving faith in Christ for at least 1,000 years subsequent to his return.
- You must necessarily believe that unbelievers will not be finally resurrected until at least 1,000 years subsequent to the return of Christ.
- You must necessarily believe that unbelievers will not be finally judged and cast into eternal punishment until at least 1,000 years subsequent to the return of Christ.

So what's wrong with believing these things, asks the premillennialist? What's wrong is that these many things that premillennialists must believe (because of the way they interpret Scripture), the NT explicitly denies. In other words, in my study of the second coming of Christ I discovered that, contrary to what premillennialism requires us to believe, death is defeated and swallowed up in victory at the parousia, the natural creation is set free from its bondage to corruption at the parousia, the New Heavens and the New Earth are introduced immediately following the parousia, all opportunity to receive Christ as savior terminates at the parousia, and both the final resurrection and eternal judgment of unbelievers will occur at the time of the parousia. Simply put, the NT portrayals of the second coming of Christ forced me to conclude that a millennial age, subsequent to Christ's return, of the sort proposed by premillennialism was impossible.

The second factor that turned me from premillennialism to amillennialism was a study of [Revelation 20](#), the text cited by all premillennialists in support of their theory. Contrary to what I had been taught and long believed, I came to see [Revelation 20](#) as a strong and immovable support for the amillennial perspective.

My eschatological journey and biblical defense of amillennialism may now be examined in greater detail in my book, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* (Mentor, 2013).

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*This is a portion of a much longer report from our CTCR which is the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. From time to time significant issues will come up in our culture where our formal confessions have not directly addressed the issue. It is at those times that our church body assembles this team of incredible theologians to study God's word and our Lutheran Confessions and assemble a response. This document came out of a season when there was so much speculation about end times and the left behind series was so prominent.*

## **The "End Times"** **A Study on Eschatology and Millennialism**

### **A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod September 1989**

#### **Part 1 THE "END TIMES"**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The last two decades of our century have witnessed a growing interest in various aspects of Biblical prophecy. Sociologist William Martin of Rice University once observed that "Judeo-Christian history has seen numerous outcroppings of interest in biblical prophecy, usually in times of social upheaval, but few, if any, have been as widespread and influential as that now flourishing in conservative Protestant circles." [1] Public awareness of such end-time topics as the millennium, rapture, and Armageddon has been heightened through the preaching of television evangelists and the publication of widely-read books such as those authored by Hal Lindsey. Few perhaps would have imagined that a book beginning with the words "This is a book about prophecy--Biblical prophecy" would sell 15 million copies and that its author would be named by **The New York Times** as the best-selling author of the decade of the 1970s!

These developments, however, have caused great concern among many Christians who regard some of the currently popular teachings on the end times as highly speculative and even contrary to the Scriptures and therefore injurious to faith. At the presuppositional level, serious questions have been raised regarding the principles of Biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) employed by millennialist writers in their approach to and exposition of Biblical texts, particularly in those books commonly termed **apocalyptic** (e.g., Daniel, Ezekiel, Revelation). Moreover, the failure to read these texts in the context of **all** that the Scriptures teach about the last things has led to confusion and doubt regarding the content of the Christian hope. The deficiency in, and most often the absence of, sacramental theology and teaching on the means of grace in general in millennialist preaching are especially obvious to those familiar with Lutheran confessional doctrine. Equally troublesome is the failure of millennialist preachers and writers to distinguish properly between Law and Gospel.

In the context of concerns such as these and in response to a specific request of the

1983 convention of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod that the Commission on Theology and Church Relations "prepare a study of the end times (eschatology), including millennialism, for the guidance of the church," the CTCR has prepared this report on eschatology and millennialism (1983 Resolution 3-25 "To Request CTCR to Study 'End Times'"). In the first section of this study the Commission presents a brief summary of four current views of the "millennium." Section two discusses pertinent hermeneutical principles, the doctrine of eschatology and some key texts that form the basis for millennialist teachings. The third part of the document presents a summary evaluation of dispensational premillennialism.

#### **Current Millennial Views**

While there are numerous variations in millennialist teaching today, a fourfold categorization has been widely accepted: (1) dispensational premillennialism; (2) historic premillennialism; (3) postmillennialism; and (4) amillennialism. [2] Of the



first three categories, all of which hold to a millennium or utopian age on this earth, the most commonly held view is dispensational premillennialism. In the interest of narrowing the discussion that follows to manageable proportions and of seeking to assist the members of the Synod in their evaluation of such teaching, the Commission has chosen to focus on this more well-known and prevalent premillennialist view. Before proceeding with a more detailed examination of the various elements of millennialist doctrine, we offer the following summary of the categories mentioned above.

## A. Dispensational Premillennialism

Dispensational premillennialism, or simply dispensationalism, is a theological system having its origin among the Plymouth Brethren in Ireland and England in the early 19th century. This system's originator was John Nelson Darby (1800-82), one of the chief founders of the Plymouth Brethren movement. Dispensationalism arose as a reaction against the Church of England and the widely held view of postmillennialism (see part C. below).

The teachings of dispensational premillennialism on prophecy have spread widely in

Canada and the United States, due especially to the influence of the 1909 **Scofield**

**Reference Bible** and its subsequent editions. Today, dispensationalism is by far the most prominent form of millennialism. It is officially taught at the Moody Bible Institute (Chicago), Dallas Theological Seminary, and an estimated two hundred Bible institutes in the U.S.A. It has been promoted by television evangelists such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Kenneth Copeland, and Jack Van Impe, by independent ministries such as "Lamb and Lion" and "World Prophecy Ministry," and in dozens of paperbacks. Among the best known of these is Hal Lindsey's **The Late Great Planet Earth**, which has made its way into film.

Dispensationalists<sup>[3]</sup> usually divide God's dealings with humanity into seven distinct "dispensations": Innocence (Gen. 1:28-3:6), Conscience or Moral Responsibility (Gen.

4:1-8:14), Human Government (Gen. 8:15-11:32), Promise (Gen. 12:1-Ex. 18:27), The

Law (Ex. 19:3-Acts 1:26), The Church (Acts 2:1-Revelation 19), and the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20). A **dispensation** is defined as "a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God."<sup>[4]</sup> In each of these periods, a distinct revelation of God's will is dominant and tests mankind's obedience to God.

What, then, are the key elements in dispensationalist eschatology? The Old Testament, it is said, promises to the Jewish people an earthly kingdom ruled by the Messiah. When Christ came, He offered this kingdom to the Jews. The Jews at that time, however, rejected Him and the kingdom. This kingdom, then, was postponed until some point in the future. In the meantime, Christ introduced the "mystery form" of the kingdom (Matthew 13) and established the church. This "parenthesis" of God's program will end at the "rapture" when all believers, exclusive of Old Testament saints, will go to heaven to celebrate with Christ "the marriage feast of the Lamb" for seven years. Then God's promised purpose for Israel resumes. During this seven-year period, a number of events will occur on earth (Revelation 6-19):

1. The "tribulation" begins, the latter half of which is called the "great tribulation."
2. The Antichrist begins his cruel reign and in the midst of the seven years he proscribes Jewish worship at the temple.
3. Terrible judgments fall on the earth.
4. A remnant of Israel (the 144,000 of Revelation 7) believes in Jesus as the Messiah and preaches the "Gospel of the Kingdom."
5. Through their witness a multitude of Gentiles is saved (Rev. 7:9).
6. Toward the end, a number of military battles take place leading up to the Battle of Armageddon.

At the end of this seven-year period, dispensationalists teach, Christ (together with the church) returns in glory and destroys His enemies. The vast majority of Israelites will be converted. Satan will be bound for 1000 years. Believers who die during the tribulation and Old Testament saints will be raised and join the church in heaven. Christ will judge the living **Gentiles** (Matt. 25:31-46). The "goats" will be cast into hell. The "sheep": and the believing Jews still living will enter the millennium in their natural bodies. They will marry, reproduce, and die. (The resurrected believers will live in the heavenly Jerusalem hovering above the earthly Jerusalem.) The millennium will be a golden age, a time of prosperity and peace, with worship centering around the rebuilt temple. Though at the beginning of the millennium only believers will live on

earth, some of their children and grandchildren will not believe in Christ. These unbelievers Satan will gather in one last revolt (Rev. 20:7-9). Toward the end, all believers who die during the millennium will be raised. After Satan's "little season," all the **unbelieving** dead will then be raised and judged (Rev. 20:11-15). The final stage will now be ushered in, during which period there will remain a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Three presuppositions are critical for the dispensationalist system. These basic premises may be summarized in the following way:

- 1. The Distinction between Israel and the Church.** According to the dispensationalist view, throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to **earthly** goals and an earthly people, that is, the **Jewish people**; and the other related to **heavenly** goals and a heavenly people, that is, the **Christian church**.<sup>[5]</sup> The church was not foreseen in the Old Testament and therefore constitutes a "parenthesis" in God's predicted plan for Israel. In the future, the distinction between Jew and Gentile will be reestablished and will continue throughout all eternity.
- 2. The Literal Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy.** The Old Testament, dispensationalist writers argue, contains many promises that God will establish an earthly kingdom involving Israel. These promises are to be fulfilled literally. The central promise to Abraham was that Abraham's physical descendants would be given the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. The Davidic covenant contains the promise that a descendant of David (the Messiah) would rule over Israel forever from David's throne, i.e., from Jerusalem. The new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34, though containing features which also apply to believers in the present "church age," is essentially a covenant for Israel. A great many passages in the Psalms and prophets are interpreted to mean that Israel will be regathered in the land of Canaan under the perfect rule of the Messiah. These promises will be fulfilled literally during Christ's millennial reign. Similarly, much of Daniel and Revelation awaits a literalistic fulfillment in the future millennium.
- 3. The Manifestation of God's Glory as the Purpose of History** While dispensationalists agree that human beings are reconciled to God by grace alone through the work of Christ in history, "the soteriological or saving program of God is not the only purpose but one of the means God is using in the total program of glorifying Himself."<sup>[6]</sup> Thus, not salvation but the manifestation of God's glory is the main theme and broad purpose of His activity in human history in each of the dispensations.

## B. Historic Premillennialism

In contrast to dispensational premillennialism, those who hold the historic premillennialist view argue that Christ's second advent will be a one-stage event after the tribulation. Either at this time or before, the vast majority of Jews will be converted. Believers who have died will be raised, those alive will be transformed, and all believers will meet Christ in the air and then descend with Him to earth. Christ will then slay the Antichrist, bind Satan, and set up His millennial kingdom on earth. Christ and His redeemed, both Jews and Gentiles as one people of God, will reign visibly over the unbelieving nations still on earth. People in resurrected bodies and natural bodies will live together on the earth. Sin and death will still exist, but external evil will be restrained. The 1000 years of the millennial kingdom will be a time of social, political, and economic justice and great prosperity. After these 1000 years, Satan will be loosed in order to deceive the unbelieving nations into making a final assault against the redeemed. Satan will be destroyed, and the resurrection of the dead **unbelievers** will occur. Then will come the judgment of all, both believers and unbelievers, and eternity.

## C. Postmillennialism

In contrast to the above, the less common postmillennial view places Christ's second advent **after** (post) the millennium. Only then will the rapture, the general resurrection, the general judgment, and the eternal states occur. The millennium is not understood to involve a visible reign of Christ in the form of an earthly monarchy, nor is the millennial period to be taken literally as necessarily 1000 years long. In these respects postmillennialism corresponds closely to the amillennialist position (see below). But the postmillennial view does posit a recognizable millennial period, a golden age of prosperity and peace among all at the end of which Christ will return. The millennium will arrive gradually under the increasing influence of Christianity, leading to the pervasive reduction of evil and to greatly improved conditions in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres. In fact, the entire world will eventually be Christianized to the point that the Christian belief and value system will become the accepted norm for all nations. Matthew 28:18-20 will become a reality.

## D. Amillennialism

An eschatology which does not teach a literal thousand-year earthly reign of Christ may be called "amillennialist" (sometimes called "realized millennialism" because the period spoken of in Revelation 20 is now in the process of realization). Although the detailed exegesis of the pertinent texts may vary somewhat among amillennialist Christians, those who adhere to this position agree that the "thousand year" reference in Revelation 20 is a figurative expression for the present reign of Christ which began upon His ascension into heaven and will be fully manifested at His second coming. Christ's second coming will be one event at which time He will, in the words of Martin Luther, "raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life" (Explanation to Third Article of the Apostles' Creed). The eschatology presented in The Lutheran Confessions is clearly amillennialist (AC XVII).

## The END and ANTICHRIST

The "Battle of Armageddon", the number "666" and the "Antichrist" send a chill up the spine by the very mention of the words. For many, these words conjure up a dramatic image of some end of the world holocaust. With images that include fire, mass destruction, and the Devil himself taking political control of the world through the United Nations etc. etc. all massively fueled by the book, tape, and video series, "Left Behind".

Speculations about who the "antichrist" is have included about every US president and any "evil" world leader. I remember a speculation that the "antichrist" would be a demon possessed super-human that was a genetically engineered clone. Recent favorites include Saddam Hussein of the Gulf war. I personally know of several individuals who believed the Gulf war was the beginning of the end of the world. In fact, many were absolutely terrified by the Gulf war, fearing what the outcome would be. TV evangelists love to talk about the "antichrist", but in the end it is all nothing more than idle speculation designed more to keep a TV audience sending in their donations.

Now don't get me wrong. The word "antichrist" is found in the Bible. But that is where the Bible parts ways with modern speculationists. The rhetoric regarding the "antichrist" is so loud, that the average person has been misled to believe that the book of Revelation talks about nothing else but the "antichrist". In fact, the word "antichrist" is not found even once in the book of Revelation. That in itself should send warning bells off. In fact, the word "antichrist" is only found in 4 passages. All were penned by Apostle John within the books of first and second John.

So exactly what does the Bible have to say about the "antichrist"? Here is an exhaustive study on the word. I, personally, have such a high regard for the Bible, that by reading the scriptures for yourself without my comment is all you need to have a clear understanding of the "antichrist".

### THE 4 BIBLE PASSAGES:

*1 John 2:18–19 (ESV) --- <sup>18</sup> Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*

*1 John 2:21–23 (ESV) --- <sup>21</sup> I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.*

*1 John 4:2–3 (ESV) --- <sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*

*2 John 7 (ESV) --- <sup>7</sup> For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.*



From the Bible we can clearly see 3 things. First, the "antichrist" is defined as anyone who doesn't believe Jesus is the divine son of God. Second, "antichrists" appear to actively teach against Christ. Third, there were many "antichrists" in the world when John wrote the book. This directly contradicts the teaching of many who say, necessarily, that one antichrist will arise at some still future time.

The Greek word from which our English word "antichrist" is translated is very simple to understand. It is a simple compound word and means "anti" + "Christ" = "antichrist". We use the same compound word every day. We have people who are "anti-smoking" or "anti-gay" or "anti-hunting" or "anti-Semitic" or "anti-abortion". There really is no big mystery as to what the word means. "Anti-Christ" is anyone who opposes Christ.

Take this test to see if you are an "antichrist": 1. Do you actively teach or simply believe that Jesus Christ never walked the earth, but was a mythological figure? 2. Do you actively teach or simply believe there was a man named Jesus Christ, but he did not actually rise from the dead? 3. Do you actively speak out against or simply believe Christianity is a false religion? 4. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters" Matthew 12:30. Are you an atheist or agnostic who is indifferent and non-religious? Then you too are an "antichrist"! The "antichrist" then, has no horns or red glowing eyes. Neither is the "antichrist" some demon possessed super-intelligent human clone. Rather, the "antichrist" is anyone who is a "non-believer" who deceives by teaching anything other than the biblical Gospel that Jesus is the Triune God and the Savior of the world who lived, died, rose again, ascended and is one day coming back.