

# Worldview Eschatology – What Happens at the End

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. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness? And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 2 Peter 3:10-11; Revelation 21:1-4

## DEFINITION AND CHALLENGES

English – Eschatology: "The branch of theology that is concerned with such final things as death and Last Judgment; heaven and hell; the ultimate destiny of humankind and the universe."

Theological – Eschatology: The study of "last things," encompassing both individual destiny (death, judgment, afterlife) and cosmic destiny (end of history, renewal of creation). It addresses the culmination of God's redemptive plan.

Biblical – “ἔσχατος (eschatos)": The last or final; used in contexts of end times, resurrection, and judgment (1 Corinthians 15:23-26, "the last enemy"). “ἀποκαλύψις (apokalupsis)": Revelation or unveiling, often referring to the final disclosure of God's purposes (Revelation 1:1). Eschatology in Scripture reveals God's plan, His intervention, and His sovereign control over history's end, emphasizing hope, accountability, and transformation.

Eschatology is not merely futuristic; it shapes how we live now. Challenges arise when it is ignored, leading to shortsighted living or distorted thinking, fostering fear. In a world of uncertainty, pandemics, wars, and economic and political crises, eschatology provides perspective but is often dismissed as irrelevant or divisive. Without a Biblical framework, people default to secular views, resulting in anxiety or despair.

## ESCHATOLOGY ACCORDING TO OTHER WORLDVIEWS

### Secular Humanism

Secular humanism views eschatology through a naturalistic, atheistic lens: there is no plan, no afterlife, or no restoration. Humanity's end is determined by science, evolution, and human effort.

Individual Eschatology: Death is final extinction. Consciousness ceases; the body decomposes. Purpose ends at death, so life must be maximized through self-fulfillment, relationships, or legacy (e.g., “live for today,” or “Legacy” philosophies). Humanist Manifesto III states: "We accept our

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life as all and enough, distinguishing things as they are from things as we might wish or imagine them to be." Suffering and death are meaningless accidents, leading to nihilism or hedonism.

Humanity's Eschatology: The universe ends in entropy (heat death) or cosmic catastrophe (e.g., asteroid, climate collapse). Humanity may evolve, colonize space, or go extinct. Progress is self-directed via technology (cryostasis, transhumanism, or uploading consciousness into an alternate reality to achieve "immortality"). No judgment or renewal, only survival of the fittest. Philosopher Bertrand Russell captured this: "Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark."

The General Eschatology: Earthly Utopia or Nihilism

- The Utopian End: Humanity's final hope lies in the collective efforts of reason, science, and education. The goal is a future utopian society achieved through human progress, free from the restraints of traditional religion.
- The Nihilistic End: If the utopian goal fails, or if one focuses on cosmic reality, the ultimate end is the inevitable heat death of the universe or the extinction of the species. This leads to the logical conclusion that, ultimately, all human progress is for nothing.

In practice, for individuals, this leads to:

Urgency for earthly achievements (career, activism, pleasure). Despair in crises, as there's no eternal hope. Ethical relativism: If nothing ultimate matters, morality is subjective. The result is often false security in human progress or deep existential dread, as seen in modern anxieties over global threats without transcendent meaning.

Typical "Christian" View

Many professing Christians hold a diluted eschatology influenced by secular humanism, prosperity theology, or cultural optimism. It focuses on personal heaven as a vague reward, minimizing judgment, hell, or glory.

Common statements:

"Everyone goes to heaven." - Universalism

"God will fix everything eventually, so focus on your best life now."

"Eschatology is about evaluating your life and finding peace in your accomplishments."

This view borrows humanistic self-actualization, adding "God" as a guarantor of comfort or success. It avoids end-times details, seeing them as speculative or fear-mongering. Suffering is downplayed as temporary, with heaven as an eternal vacation. Global eschatology is often postmillennial optimism: Christians will "transform society" before Christ's return, blending with progressive humanism.

This is not Biblical; it centers man (comfort, success) over God's glory, ignoring both the promises of God and the accountability for unbelief and wickedness.

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## BIBLICAL OBSERVATIONS OF ESCHATOLOGY

Scripture provides vivid examples of eschatological hope shaping lives:

Isaiah 2:2-4 - Peace is the logical outcome of the Messiah's arbitration. Nations beat their swords into plowshares not because of a pacifist treaty, but because the Messiah issues binding decisions that settle disputes permanently. There is no need for war when the ultimate Judge is physically present to render the verdict.

Philippians 1:21-23 – Imprisoned, he wrote of longing for Christ, viewing death as "gain" and the resurrection body as ultimate hope (1 Corinthians 15). This eschatology drove evangelism and endurance.

Revelation – John, exiled, received visions of tribulation, judgment, and new creation (Revelation 21-22). Believers are exhorted to persevere, as "the time is near" (Revelation 1:3), turning suffering into worship.

These show eschatology isn't escapism but motivation for holy living amid trials.

## THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW OF ESCHATOLOGY

### The One Ultimate Eschatology

Scripture presents a unified eschatology: God's redemptive plan culminates in judgment, resurrection, and glory or death.

Individual Eschatology: Death leads to an intermediate state (heaven for believers, hell for unbelievers). All face judgment (Hebrews 9:27; Daniel 12:2). Believers receive eternal life in resurrected bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-44); unbelievers, eternal punishment. This is rooted in Christ's death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23), offering hope beyond death.

Humanity's Eschatology: History ends with Christ's return, tribulation, millennial reign, final rebellion, great white throne judgment (Revelation 20), and new heavens/earth (Revelation 21:1). No more sin, death, or suffering. We will have perpetual existence with God (Revelation 21:3-4).

Eschatology glorifies God by vindicating His justice, mercy, and holiness.

There is a large and growing faction in Christendom that does not have a knowledge of nor a desire for this study. They find the prophecies of end times to be allegorical, apocalyptic exaggeration, or poetic descriptions of the moral state of man; therefore, a serious study of the timeline or events seems superfluous to them. But biblically, it is a vital understanding that gives us perspective while living in an evil world

Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – Understanding what we are destined to be is a source of comfort and confidence while we are living in a world that is full of pain and affliction.

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2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:10-13 – The study of Eschatology provides information that is profitable for teaching, correction, restoring, and training so that believers are fully able to perform good works.

Hope in Christ – Living in hope gives us the ability to see past our circumstances, do good to others, and love others even in their failures.

Fear of Judgment – Knowing what lies ahead for those who are on the earth at the time of judgment should motivate the believer to do good to others by giving them the way of escape.

Isaiah 46:9-10 – Prophecy provides the proof of who YHWH is. He is the God who declares the end from the beginning.

Revelation 1:1-3 – Reading, understanding, and upholding eschatology is encouraged in Scripture.

Eschatology provides the truth about the destiny of this world; this is in contrast to how the world tells us about the world. Without a proper eschatology, we live under misconceptions and will fail in our mission to be a light to the world.

## THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CONCLUSION OF ESCHATOLOGY

Revelation 22:20 – "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." This verse encapsulates the ultimate end: Christ's return, final victory over evil, and eternal worship. All history directs "to Him" (Romans 11:36), with creation renewed for God's glory.

## THE SYNTHESIS OF ESCHATOLOGY IN LIFE

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11 – "But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation." Eschatological hope unifies faith and love, protecting the mind and heart. It transforms outlook; trials become opportunities for growth, death a gateway to glory, and life a preparation for eternity.

## CONCLUSION

The biblical worldview of eschatology contrasts sharply with secular humanism's bleak finality, offering instead eternal hope in Christ's victory. This perspective profoundly impacts behavior, fostering holiness, endurance, mission, and outlook, especially in life's end, turning fear into anticipation. As believers, let us live watchful, hopeful lives, comforted by the promise: "Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

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## Worldview Lesson 12 - Eschatology: The Hope of the Believer

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### DEFINITION AND CHALLENGES

**Eschatology** is the study of **final things** (from the Greek *eschatos*, meaning 'last', and *-logia*, meaning 'study of'). Every worldview must provide an answer to the ultimate questions:

1. **Individual Eschatology:** What happens to me when I die?
2. **General Eschatology:** Where is the world, humanity, and the cosmos ultimately heading?

The challenge in this lesson is two-fold: to **objectively contrast** the final certainty of God's plan with the ultimate uncertainty of non-theistic systems, and to **demonstrate** that what you believe about the future dictates how you live in the present. If your eschatology is built on shifting human optimism, your life will be unstable; if it is built on the fixed, revealed Word of God, your life will be one of confident hope.

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### ESCHATOLOGY IN SECULAR HUMANISM

Secular Humanism is rooted in the premise that humanity is the measure of all things <sup>2</sup> and rejects the existence of a transcendent Creator (Theism) or a divinely revealed moral order. Therefore, its eschatology is strictly confined to the material world.

#### Individual Eschatology: Annihilation

- **Death is Final:** For the individual, death is the absolute end. All consciousness, personality, and identity are annihilated. There is no afterlife, no resurrection, and no personal accountability or judgment beyond what man creates.
- **Loss of Purpose:** Since purpose is self-created, the moment of death retroactively renders one's entire self-created purpose meaningless, as the one who established the purpose no longer exists. If there is no God, then ultimately nothing matters.

#### General Eschatology: Earthly Utopia or Nihilism

- **The Utopian End:** Humanity's final hope lies in the collective efforts of reason, science, and education. The goal is a future utopian society achieved through human progress, free from the restraints of traditional religion.
  - **The Nihilistic End:** If the utopian goal fails, or if one focuses on cosmic reality, the ultimate end is the inevitable heat death of the universe or the extinction of the species. This leads to the logical conclusion that, ultimately, all human progress is for nothing.
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### BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY (PREMILLENNIAL FRAMEWORK)

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Biblical Eschatology is grounded in the Person and work of **Jesus Christ**, specifically His resurrection, which is the guarantee of the future for all who are **convinced** (*pistis*) of the truth of the Gospel.

## Individual Eschatology

- **Salvation's Guarantee:** A believer's eternal state is secured by **grace through faith alone** (a 100% free gift). Their eternal life cannot be forfeited through human effort or works [Saved Instruction].
- **The Rapture (1 Thess 4:17):** The **Parousia** of Christ *for* His Church, where living believers and resurrected believers are **caught up** to meet Him in the air. This event transitions the believer from their earthly existence to their heavenly status.
- **The Bema Seat (Judgment Seat of Christ):** This is *not* a judgment for salvation, but a review of the **believer's works** (service, obedience) for the purpose of receiving **rewards** (1 Cor 3:11-15). This is distinct from the Great White Throne Judgment for unbelievers.

## General Eschatology

The biblical plan for humanity is sovereignly directed toward the glorification of God (Rom 11:36). This plan follows a specific, revealed timetable:

- **The Tribulation:** A future seven-year period of God's wrath and judgment poured out upon the earth.
- **The Second Coming:** The physical, visible return of Christ with the saints to the earth to defeat His enemies.
- **The Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20:1-6):** This is Christ's literal, physical, 1,000-year reign on Earth from Jerusalem. This view (Premillennialism) is derived from a **literal-normative** reading of prophecy and Scripture [Saved Instruction].
- **The Eternal State:** Following the final judgment of unbelievers (Great White Throne), God creates new heavens and a new Earth (2 Peter 3:10-13), where believers will dwell in His presence forever.

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## KEY GREEK VOCABULARY

The foundation of the believer's future is found in the certainty of the language used:

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Greek Term	Definition (Aligned with User's View)	Contextual Meaning
<b>Parousia</b> (παρουσία)	"Coming," "Presence," or "Arrival"	The official, royal arrival of a dignitary. Used to describe Christ's visible return for or with His own (1 Thess 4:15).
<b>Elpis</b> (ἐλπίς)	" <b>Confident expectation</b> " or "Certainty"	Not a mere "wish," but an absolute assurance of a future event based on God's fidelity and power (1 Thess 5:8).
<b>Pistis</b> (πίστις)	" <b>To be convinced</b> ," or "the content/substance of what is believed"	The conviction in the Gospel truth that anchors the believer's hope (1 Thess 5:8) [Saved Instruction].
<b>Parakaleo</b> (παρακαλέω)	"To comfort," "to encourage," or "to beseech"	The practical, behavioral response to the doctrine of Christ's return (1 Thess 4:18).

### IMPACT OF ESCHATOLOGY ON WORLDVIEW AND BEHAVIOR

A person's eschatology is the ultimate rudder for their life. It determines their priorities, motivation, and response to a crisis.

Aspect	Secular Humanism's Eschatology	Biblical Eschatology (Premillennial)
<b>Response to Death</b>	Ultimate loss; Despair (Grieving "as those who have no hope" - 1 Thess 4:13).	<b>Confident Hope (<i>Elpis</i>)</b> ; The <i>Parousia</i> of Christ is certain (1 Thess 4:18).

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Aspect	Secular Humanism's Eschatology	Biblical Eschatology (Premillennial)
Ultimate Motivation	Maximize temporal gain and happiness; Seek self-fulfillment.	<b>Glorify God</b> in all things (1 Cor 10:31 <sup>8</sup> ); Seek <b>eternal rewards</b> at the Bema Seat.
Focus on Life	<b>Temporal:</b> Focus is on the here and now, self-improvement, and social/political reform (as a means to Utopia).	<b>Eternal:</b> Focus is on living <b>alert and sober</b> (1 Thess 5:6) in light of Christ's imminent return.
Response to Injustice	Vengeance or despair; Reliance on corruptible human systems.	Assurance of God's ultimate justice (Luke 18:7 <sup>9</sup> ); Patiently endure and entrust to God while practicing mercy and love.
Inter-personal Behavior	Self-reliance; Competition for resources/status (since this life is all there is).	<b>Parakaleo</b> one another (1 Thess 4:18); Build up one another (1 Thess 5:11). The hope of the future should compel present encouragement.

### CONCLUSION

The doctrine of eschatology is not an abstract timeline for the future; it is the **practical foundation for present living**. The ultimate destination of secular humanists is annihilation, compelling them to live solely for temporary satisfaction. The ultimate destination of the believer is eternity with Christ, grounded in a literal **Premillennial** kingdom and secured by the finished work of grace through faith alone [Saved Instruction].

Because of the **confident expectation (elpis)** of Christ's **Parousia**, the believer is called to live in **alertness** and **sobriety**, using their present time to **glorify God** and to **encourage (parakaleo)** one another, transforming their every action into one that has eternal significance. The future is certain, so our present life should be transformed by that certainty.