

**Live and Walk in Hope**  
**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**      **Lesson 11 Outline**

**Exhortations Concerning Eschatology (1Thess. 4:13-5:11)**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Paul's Consolation: Live and Walk in Hope 4:13-18**

**Bruce** "Hope is one of the chief emphases of the gospel. Even in Christian environment the sense of hopelessness finds expression where the hope of the gospel *is not cherished as a lively inward conviction.*"

**Augustine** "The last day is hidden that **every day** may be regarded."

**Blessed Assurance by Fanny Crosby**

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood

This is my story, this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long  
This is my story, this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long

Perfect submission, perfect delight  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love

This is my story, this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long  
This is my story, this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long

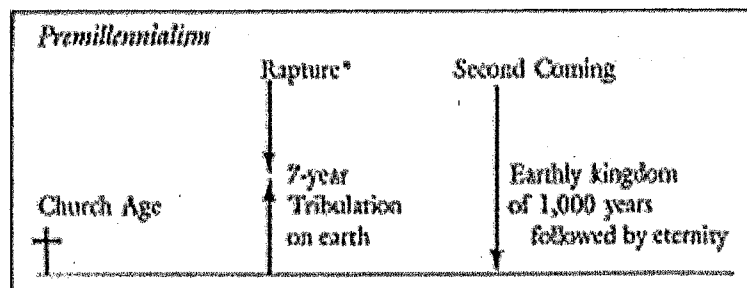
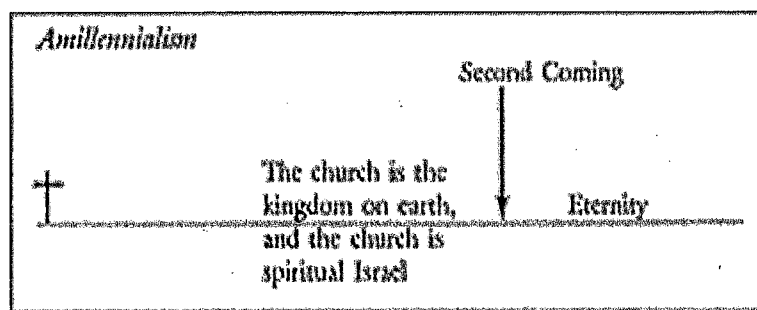
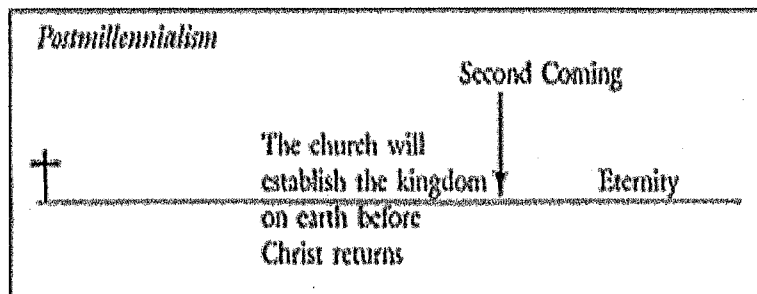
Perfect submission, all is at rest  
I in my Savior am happy and blest  
Watching and waiting, looking above  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love

## Handout Chart #1 A

- The **pre-tribulation** rapture position believes believers (the church in its entirety) are caught up before this final seven-year period called the tribulation. They will be removed for the earthy scene in the rapture before any part of the great tribulation runs its course. In this view there is a distinction between the rapture of the church and the revelation of the Lord, His return to earth in open glory. It holds the rapture; the next great prophetic event is imminent and that believers should be expectantly prepared for it.
- The **mid-tribulation** rapture position believes believers are caught up at the midpoint of this final seven-year period, at the end of the first 3 ½ years of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. It holds that the rapture is an event distinct from the revelation but does not accept that the rapture is imminent, holding that some prophetic events must first occur before the rapture can take place. This view is a compromise between the pre-trib and post-trib position.
- The **post-tribulation** rapture position believes the church will remain on earth throughout the great tribulation and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at the end of the tribulation as He comes from heaven and then will immediately return with Him to earth in open glory. While accepting that the rapture and revelation are essentially different events, this view sees no appreciable time interval between them and in effect fuses them into one eschatological occurrence.

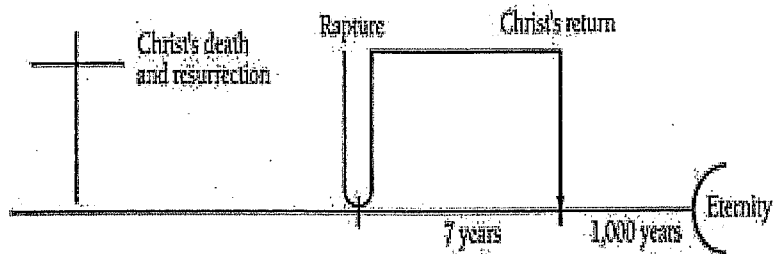
**These are the three main positions. The adherent of these different positions each believe their position is biblical, and these differences of understanding should not make dividing lines of Christian fellowship.**

## Handout 1 B

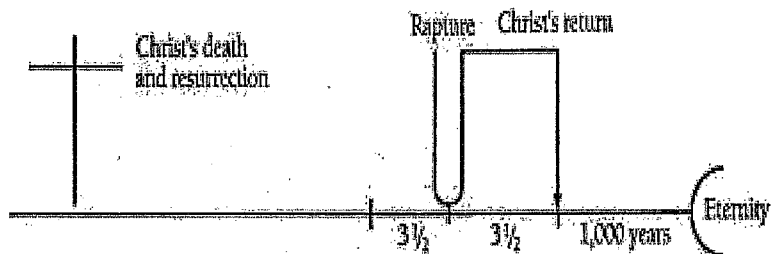


## Handout 1 C

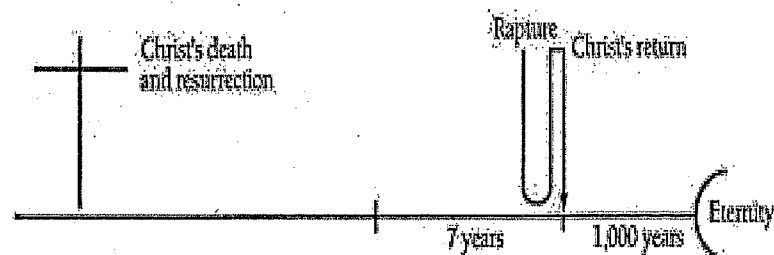
### PRETRIBULATIONISM



### MIDTRIBULATIONISM



### POSTTRIBULATIONISM



## Handout 2

### 7 Reasons Your Church Should Take Eschatology Seriously

It is concerning that some churches today don't take eschatology seriously. The very fact that God has revealed so many details about events to come in both testaments tell us that it is important. At the center of biblical eschatology is the blessed hope of the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). Not only should we be interested in prophetic events to come, we are also looking for our Savior, with whom we will spend eternity.

Why do some churches neglect serious study of eschatology? One issue is complexity. There are many eschatological details in the Bible to work through and harmonize. So, there is hard work to do in this area. Also, when we see godly men disagreeing on prophetic issues, it can be disheartening. Another reason might be that some don't want to be linked with those who have abused eschatology. There are those who have become obsessed with the end times by offering a date for Jesus' return, or treating many current events as fulfillments of biblical prophecy. Thus, some have swung from the abuse of eschatology to no interest whatsoever.

But these are not good reasons to avoid the study of eschatology. Here are 7 reasons churches should take eschatology seriously:

#### **1. Eschatology is a major part of the Christian storyline.**

Eschatology is a major part of the Bible's story. By "story," I'm not talking about fiction. I'm talking about the narrative of the Christian worldview. Since Christianity is rooted in history and real historical events, God's story includes past, present, and future events. All should be taught. We simply should not ignore prophetic events that are future from our standpoint—events such as the rapture, the Day of the Lord, the Second Coming, the Millennium, and the Eternal State. We must also talk about heaven and hell, and the coming New Earth. To avoid discussion of eschatology is to avoid an important part of the Christian worldview.

#### **2. We are called to preach and heed the whole counsel of God.**

There are large sections of Scripture devoted to prophecy, many of which still need to be fulfilled from our current standpoint. For example, the events of Ezekiel 36–48 still need to occur. In the New Testament, passages like Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, much of Luke 21, 1 Thess. 4-5, 2 Thess. 1-2, 2 Peter 3, and Revelation 6-22 describe events that still need to happen. We cannot ignore these passages. Paul says in Acts 20:27, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."

**If your church does not teach what the Bible says about the future,  
the whole counsel of God is not being taught.**

#### **3. People are interested in the future.**

Christians are interested in what the future holds. But if we do not teach eschatology, we are denying important biblical information for those who want to know what the Bible has to say about the future. We are also withholding a major source of the hope that the Scripture wants us to have.

#### **4. Eschatology is a motivation for believers.**

Eschatology changes our lives because what we do now impacts our future. Paul viewed everything he did in light of his standing before Jesus someday. In 2 Timothy 4:7-8 Paul wrote, "I have fought the good

fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

#### **5. Eschatology has a purifying effect on the believer.**

Eschatology is meant to transform our lives in the present. Why should we live sensibly, righteously and godly? Because Jesus is coming again. 1 John 3:2-3 states, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

James 5:8-9 also says, "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door."

**The study of biblical eschatology is a motivation for godly living.**

#### **6. Eschatology gives perspective to the troubles and trials of this age.**

We live in a fallen and tragedy-soaked world. We are all physically decaying and dying. Evil seems to triumph. Without Jesus there is no hope, only despair. But for the Christian there is the hope of resurrection and the restoration of all things (1 Cor. 15:20-28; Acts 3:21). Romans 8:18 states, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

**The sufferings of this present time are real, but they are not comparable to the glory that is to come.**

2 Peter 3:13 says, "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." The coming of Jesus and the restoration of all things are future realities that give Christians hope and the joyful realization that the turmoils and trials of this age will not last forever. Righteousness and goodness win in the end. Christians need that message.

#### **7. Eschatology warns the unbeliever of coming judgment.**

Biblical eschatology does not teach that the story ends well for everyone. It exists as a frightening warning to those who have not believed in Jesus. Eschatology warns all people that there is eternal punishment and banishment from God's kingdom and the presence of God for those who do not repent. We should do what John the Baptist did—warn people to flee the wrath that is to come (Luke 3:7-8). Just as there is both judgment and resurrection for the righteous, there is also resurrection and judgment for the unbeliever.

In sum, biblical eschatology is an important part of Christianity. For these reasons, all true churches should embrace the importance of biblical eschatology and share its truths with Christians and unbelievers alike.

## **Handout 3**

### **Good Resources for Further Study**

#### **Three Views on the Rapture Paperback – September 2, 1996**

by Gleason L. Archer Jr. (Author), Stanley N. Gundry (Series Editor), Paul D. Feinberg (Contributor), Douglas J. Moo (Contributor), Richard R. Reiter (Contributor)

#### **Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus**

Paperback August 27, 2017 by Michael Vlach (Author)

#### **Christ's Prophetic Plans: A Futuristic Premillennial Primer**

Paperback – March 1, 2012 by Richard Mayhue (Editor), JohnMacArthur (Editor), Nathan Busenitz (Contributor), Matthew Waymeyer (Contributor), Michael Vlach (Contributor)



## Handout Chart #4

· 1 Thessalonians 1:10 shows believers waiting for the return of Jesus. The clear implication is that they had hope of His imminent return, not the expectation of a great tribulation. If they have been taught that the tribulation, in whole or part, must first run its course, it is difficult to see how they could be described as expectantly awaiting Christ's return. They should have rather<sup>a</sup> been described as bracing for it and the painful events connected to it.

· 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 One of the main texts that fits the model of a pre-trib position. It assures us that those believers who died would share equally with the living in the rapture, answering their fear that somehow the dead in Christ were at a disadvantage. But if Paul believed Christians would go through the great tribulation, he would count the dead in Christ as more fortunate than those living Christians who might very well have to endure the great tribulation. It would have been logical for Paul to comfort the Thessalonians with the idea that the dead in Jesus were better off because they won't have to experience the Great Tribulation, they would have escaped this great period of suffering. We would also expect the Thessalonians to be grieving over their own impending trial rather than grieving over loved ones. They would be inquisitive about their future doom, but they have no fear or question about the coming tribulation. We could also expect Paul to have provided instruction and exhortation for such a supreme test like the tribulation, but there is not one indication of any impending tribulation.

· 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 appeals for appropriate conduct on the part of the readers in view of the coming "day in the Lord". If it is recognized that this term denotes a prophetic period which begins with the rapture and includes the return in glory, the passage clearly offers no proof that the church must pass through the great tribulation, in whole or in part. The entire paragraph appeals to the readers to live a godly life, NOT because they must be prepared to face the prospect of enduring the great tribulation but because God's purpose for them is NOT wrath but salvation.

· 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 comforts Christians enduring hardship, promising them a coming rest, while their persecutors will face certain judgment. But if Paul knew that the church was destined to pass through the great tribulation, it would have been more appropriate for him to warn these Christians about worse trials and suffering ahead, rather than hold the promise of a coming rest.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 The Thessalonians had received the erroneous idea that the day of the Lord had already begun but that they were urged, in their interest of the hope of the rapture, not to be shaken by this teaching. Paul assured them that the prophetic day of the Lord could not yet be running its course since 2 events still had to be fulfilled. Paul's description of the events during the prophetic period demonstrated that the predicted day of the Lord was still future. The view that they were already in the day was inconsistent with the hope of their gathering together with Him at the rapture, v. 1, the hope so clearly set before them in our passage 1 Thess. 4:13-18.