

APPROVED UNTO GOD

DOCTRINE OF END TIMES – “The End of History as We Know it”

Today's lesson will focus on four key components about the end times: what, how, when, and where.

Definitions¹

Heaven	1) The <u>dwelling place of God</u> and those closely associated with him. 2) The physical atmosphere, sun, moon, stars etc.
Eschataology	The study of end times or last things – from the word <i>eschaton</i>
Paradise	Its original meaning is of a <u>beautiful garden</u> in which there is enough of everything—the perfect place. It is used to describe Eden and the New Heaven & Earth. This term is also used to describe the dwelling of believers with God before Jesus return.
Shalom	The <u>Hebrew word for peace</u> , its root meaning denotes wholeness or completeness. It's when everything is relationally perfect between an individual and himself; an individual with God, an individual with others and an individual with creation.
Kingdom of God	<u>The rule and reign of God</u> . Today it exists in Heaven and imperfectly within the lives of individual believers and the Church collectively. Following Christ's return the Kingdom of God will perfectly include all of Heaven and earth.
Hell	The place of the <u>unbelieving dead, Satan, and his angels</u> (demons). God and all of his good gifts will not be present in Hell. It is also called <u>Hades</u> , the <u>Lake of Fire</u> .
Judgment	<u>All</u> will stand before Jesus as judge. The righteous (<u>believers</u>) will receive rewards and go to <u>Heaven</u> ; the unrighteous (<u>unbelievers</u>) will be sent to <u>hell</u> .
Human History	The period of time between the Fall and the Christ's return (The New Heaven & New Earth is established)
Millennium	The <u>thousand-year</u> reign of Christ on earth. Some biblical scholars believe it is an actual 1000 years and some believe it is symbolic.
Second Coming	Christ's <u>return to earth</u> for His people.

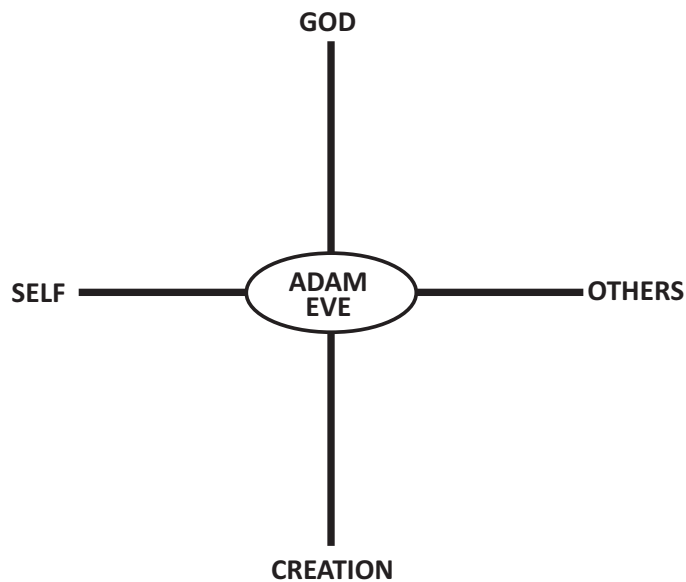
¹ Definitions taken from: *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*

WHAT & WHERE

Question: Let's do a little review. When God created the heavens and the earth, where did Adam & Eve live and what was life like for them?

A. Before the Fall

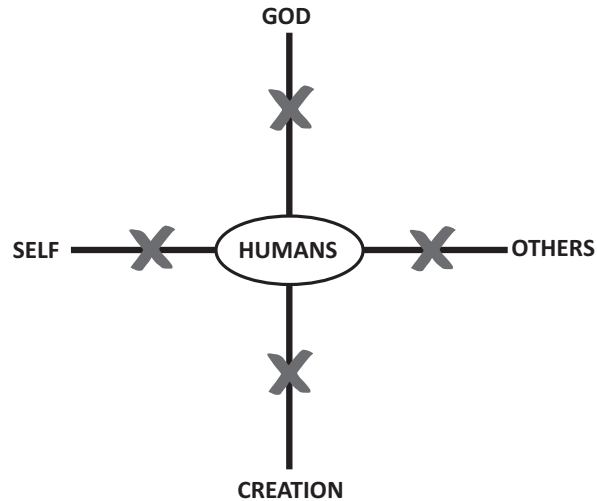
1. Adam & Eve lived in a beautiful Garden which supplied everything they needed.
2. They lived with God—they could walk and talk with him. Heaven and earth were one. We call this Paradise—the perfect place to live.
3. They lived at peace with each other, with God and with creation. We call this Shalom—the perfect way to live.



Question: What happened to Adam & Eve that changed their lives forever?

B. After the Fall

1. Adam and Eve were ashamed and afraid to be seen by God; they blamed each other, then the snake. Shalom was destroyed
2. They were cast out of the Garden—out of Paradise. Earth and humans became separated from God. Satan invaded Earth and became its ruler
3. Adam, Eve and all their descendants became sinners.



C. This situation grieved God. His plan is different. **Read Revelation 22:12-23 & John 14:1-4)**

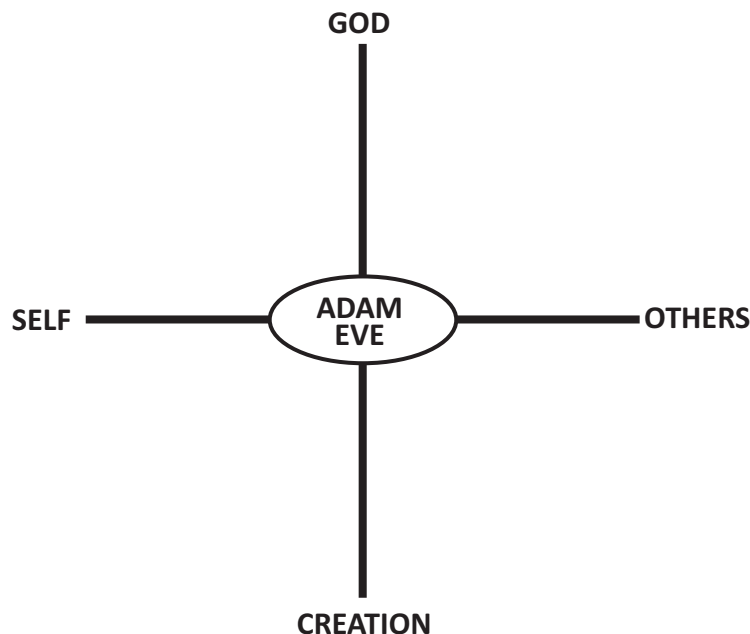
The goal as we see in Revelation is to get back the concept of Eden yet in a more beautiful and profound way; a New creation complete with the glorious city of God. So, how do we get to this perfect place of Shalom & Eden?

God has a wonderful Plan to get people back to Paradise with him: The Plan is Jesus!

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. (Galatians 4:4-5)

HOW

1. God invades Satan's territory by sending Jesus who declared that God's Kingdom had come. *Mark 1:14-15 Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"*
2. Jesus innagurates His Kingdom
 - a. He recruited disciples – Definition of a disciple: Someone who is following Jesus, and being changed by Jesus.
 - b. He told them to go and make more disciples
Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)
 - c. Jesus army of disciples are the Church; it is us.
 - d. Jesus tell them (and us) that they will face persecution; they will experience tribulation; and they will encounter false teaching (antichrists) *"Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things*



E. Two big questions:

1. When will Jesus return?

Answer: We do not know and anyone who says they do is wrong.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:36)

But we know that four things that will happen before Christ returns

- a. Gospel preached to the World *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Mt. 24:14)*
 - b. Persecution
 - c. Tribulation (John 16:33)
 - d. False Teaching
2. What will the transition look like? What actually will happen; and, will it happen over time or all at once? It is important to note that there are items about which sincere, godly biblical scholars disagree. To put it bluntly the Bible gives some very clear answers and leaves some matters to interpretation.
- a. What we know:
 1. Jesus will return to earth.
"Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen. (Rev. 1:7)
 - a. It will be physical.
 - b. It will be visible (to all).
 - c. It will be triumphant and glorious.
 2. Christ followers will be given a new resurrection body (like Jesus after his resurrection)

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

- a. Less limited by time and space
- b. Free from death, sickness, decay
- c. Our character will be like that of Jesus: committed to obeying & following Jesus, loving our neighbor as ourselves; no desire to sin nor vulnerability to temptation.

3. Judgement: And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:12-13)

- a. Christ followers will be given rewards (crowns) and ushered into heaven.
- b. Those who are not Christ followers will be sent to hell.
- c. Satan and his angels (demons) will be cast into hell.

b. What is in question? - The timing and sequencing of events associated with Jesus' return.

1. **Amillennialism** – A view suggesting the thousand year reign of Christ should be interpreted metaphorically.
2. **Millennialism**: Views about the "thousand year reign" of Christ that will end the present age.
 - a. **Premillennialism**: The belief that Jesus will return prior to the one thousand year reign.
 - b. **Postmillennialism**: the View that Jesus will return after the thousand year reign.

F. **Summary**: Jesus will come again and usher in Paradise or the New Eden. Sadly, not all will be part of that; thus, our call to honor God by making more disciples for Jesus Christ.

Group Discussion Question:

1. What will we do? Vocation?
2. What will we look like?
3. How will we relate to God; and one another

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2. What will we look like?
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MEMORY VERSE #10

“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

Revelation 22:12-13

Commentary

The Bible teaches us that Christ is going to return. We do not know when. The Bible uses words such as “soon”, but how that translates into time increments is a debate for the theologians. Consider, however, the book of Revelation was written approximately 1800-1850 years ago.

When Christ does return, he will come to judge mankind, both Christian and non-Christian. Christians will not be judged to determine their salvation. They will be judged for the quality of their actions after becoming Christians. This is judgment based on works and can be seen in Christ's teachings (Matthew 16:27) as well as the Apostle Paul's teaching (Romans 2:6).

What does this mean for us? It means that we cannot just float through life without any major changed in our lifestyles. It means that God expects us to be productive, growing Christians. He will judge us. He will hold us accountable for the time he has allotted us here on earth. We need to work on becoming mature Christians, become involved in Christian service, and be “Good Samaritans.” At times, this may be difficult and costly. However, God promises to reward us according to what we have done.

Verse 13 is, basically, a description of Christ's credentials. Christ says, “I will judge you! But that is my right, for I have always been and always will be!” Therefore, he knows all, including everything we do!

Easy memorization breakdown

- ⇒ Revelation 22:12-13
- ⇒ Look, I am coming soon!
- ⇒ My reward is with me,
- ⇒ and I will give to every person
- ⇒ according to what they have done.
- ⇒ I am the Alpha and the Omega,
- ⇒ the First and the Last,
- ⇒ the Beginning and the End.
- ⇒ Revelation 22:12-13

Practice writing the verse

(Remember to write the reference, too! There is writing space on the back of this page.)