

End Times (Eschatology)



Faculty Contact

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Please contact me anytime you have comments, suggestions, questions or you would like to talk about this course or your overall learning and ministry goals.

Course Description

Are we living in the last days? Are these the end times? Are current global events signs of the apocalypse as some people are saying: a global plague-like pandemic, raging forest fires, violent hurricanes, flash flooding, earthquakes, ongoing armed conflict and wide-spread social unrest? What does God want us to know from His Word about the last days and what they mean to the way we live our lives today? This course examines these questions and more from the apocalyptic writings of the Bible.

Eschatology is a compound word from the Greek for last things (eschaton) and study (-ology from *logos*, Jesus God's Word incarnate, word, account, reckoning, reason, motive, speaking).

Eschatology is the study, teachings, and phenomena, of

- the end times
- the last days
- the eternal kingdom/reign of God
- the coming of Christ
- the end of the world
- the resurrection of the dead
- the final judgment
- heaven and hell
- the new heaven and earth and
- living with God eternally.

The course will include an overview of Old Testament and Jewish eschatological and apocalyptic backgrounds and writings, the teachings of the New Testament, eschatology in church history, preaching and evangelism, hopeful living for Christians today and eschatology in relation to contemporary ethics, moral issues and culture in the 21st century. God gave us the apocalyptic Scriptures as blessings (Revelation 1:3) to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and the horizon of glory and to live holy lives of fruitful service today as we prepare to be with Him in His eternal glory.

Course Objectives

Bible

1. To magnify our knowledge of God, Father, Son and Spirit and all He does to prepare us for eternal life with Him in His glory.

2. Know the teachings and themes of each New Testament book about the last things.
3. See the overall eschatological vision and high ethical callings of the Bible.
4. Learn about apocalyptic writings of the Old Testament and the times between the Old and New Testaments.
5. Understand events at Jesus' second coming, judgment and end of time into eternity.
6. Do a brief overview of the history and spectrum of religious interpretations of the end times.
7. Examine the features of eschatological and apocalyptic texts.
8. Become familiar with definitions of terms in common use about the last things.

Ministry Skills

9. Read the New Testament with its eschatological horizon in view.
10. Enhance our prayer life through a greater awareness and appreciation of God and His presence in all realms of heaven and earth now.
11. Interpret, explain and appreciate the key eschatological/apocalyptic passages from Matthew to Revelation.
12. Meditate upon and memorise select verses in context to enhance our relationship with God and our effectiveness in ministry to others.
13. Explain the meaning of God's kingdom and the church's place in it.
14. Preach and teach eschatological apocalyptic texts.
15. Help people see Jesus as the "beginning and the end," the fulfilment of Old and New Testament prophecy.
16. Show others by our lives, deeds and words the ethical implications eschatology should have for daily living now.

Worldview

17. Integrate God's teachings of the end times into our Biblical worldviews allowing them to enrich and enliven our daily lives with hope and longing for Christ's return and living in God's eternal presence.

18. Live in light of Jesus' coming and our resurrection growing in faith, sanctification, holiness, confidence, love, joy, peace, compassion.
19. Articulate how a growing understanding of God's teaching of the end times can help answer these 12 questions about the key dimensions of our Biblical worldviews:
 1. Who is God?
 2. What is the nature of external reality, the world around us? (i.e. real or an illusion)
 3. What is a human being?
 4. Where do we come from?
 5. What happens to a person at death?
 6. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
 7. How do we know what is right and wrong?
 8. What is the meaning of human history?
 9. How do we perceive time? (i.e. linear, circular cycles, etc.)
 10. Is the worldview/culture open or closed?
 11. Is the centre of this worldview/culture its groups or individuals?
 12. Where are we going, how does the world end?
20. Articulate ways we by our thoughts, actions and words can graciously communicate God's worldview to others and fulfil His purpose for the end times and Jesus' return in their lives.

Readings

Primary Source:

The New Testament and selected Old Testament passages.

Secondary* Source:

Sauer, Val J. Jr. *The Eschatology Handbook: The Bible Speaks to Us Today About End Times*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.

We had copying rights for this out of print book for our 2012 course and are waiting for authorisation to make more copies for this course. I will keep you up to date on the status of our request.

Additional Secondary* Reference Works

Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Schwarz, Hans. *Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Walls, Jerry, editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

*Secondary sources are not inspired. While they have some value as resources, not all information these books contain is in harmony with Scripture or inclusive of all relevant historical facts and developments. Please read critically with discernment.

Further Secondary Resources

Allison, Dale C., Jr. "Eschatology." In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, 206-209. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Carson, Donald A., Michael J. Moo and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Casella, Carmelo. *Last Things of This Age: A Scriptural Study of Last Things Which Exposes Many Heresies*. Burnie, TX. Carmella Casella, 1994.

Conyers, A. J. *Last Things: The Heart of New Testament Eschatology*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2009.

Cook, Stephen L. *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.

Didache. Available at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html>.

Dillard, Raymond B. and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

———. *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

———. *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries*. 3rd Edition. Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1999.

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Foster, Douglas A., Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnivant, and D. Newell Williams, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. Revised and updated. New York: Harper Collins, 2010.

- . *The Story of Christianity: Volume Two: The Reformation to the Present Day*.
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- Howard, George. "Eschatology in the Period Between the Testaments." In *The Last Things*. Edited by Jack P. Lewis, 60–73. Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing, 1972.
- Jones, Larry Paul and Jerry L. Sumney. *Preaching Apocalyptic Texts*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999.
- Koch, Klaus. "What Is Apocalyptic? An Attempt at a Preliminary Definition." In *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses*. Edited by Paul D. Hanson, 37–60. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.
- Click, Hans Josef. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Greco-Roman Religions*. Studies of the New Testament and Its World. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003.
- Kyle, Richard G. *Apocalyptic Fever: End-Time Prophecies in Modern America*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, Imprint of Wipf and Stock, 2012.
- . *The Last Times Are Here Again: A History of the End Times*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Lewis, Jack P. *The Last Things: Essays Presented by His Students to Dr. W. B. West Jr. Upon the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*. Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing, 1972.
- . *The Minor Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Livingston, A. E. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Revised 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Morris, Leon. *Apocalyptic*. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973.
- Oster, Richard E. Jr. *Seven Congregations in a Roman Crucible: A Commentary on Revelation 1–3*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013.
- Pack, Frank. *Revelation*. Two volumes: 1-11, 12-22. The Living Word Series. Austin, TX: Sweet, 1965.
- Payne, J. Barton. *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy: The Complete Guide to Scriptural Predictions and Their Fulfilment*. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.
<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n90641348/>
- Pryor, Neale. "Eschatological Expectations in the Old Testament Prophets." In *The Last Things: Essays Presented by His Students to Dr. W. B. West Jr. Upon the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*. Edited by Jack P. Lewis, 32–59. Austin, TX:

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Taylor, Robert R. Jr. *The Bible Doctrine of Final Things*. Shreveport, LO: Lambert Book House, 1977.

West, W. B. *Revelation through First-Century Glasses*. Edited by Bob Prichard. Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1997.

Books on Bible Difficulties and Evidences

Archer, Gleason L., Jr. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982.

———. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Barrett, Eric C. and David Fisher. *Scientists Who Believe: 21 Tell Their Own Stories*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1984. Available as Kindle book.

Geisler, Normal L. and Thomas Howe. *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

———. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce and Manfred Brauch. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1996.

Lewis, Jack P. *Exegesis of Difficult Bible Passages*. Searcy, AK: Resource Publications, 1988.

McDowell, Josh and Sean McDowell. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2017.

McDowell, Josh and Bill Wilson. *A Ready Defense: The Best of Josh McDowell*. 2nd edition. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992.

Ramsey, Chad. *In God's Image: A Study of the Nature of Man*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, 2013. Available as a Kindle book.

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Schroeder, Gerald L. and Zola Levitt. *Genesis One: A Physicist Looks at Creation*. Np: Zola Levitt Ministries, 2014.

Schroeder, Gerald L. *The Hidden Face of God: How Science Reveals the Ultimate Truth*. New York, NY: Free Press, 2001.

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October 4, 2021