

OUTLINE STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

by

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CHAPTER TEN

ESCHATOLOGY

TOPIC ONE: THE DISPENSATIONS

Seven different dispensations are generally recognized by all prophetic teachers.

1. **The Age of Innocence**—*from man's Creation to his Fall.*
2. **The Age of Conscience**—*from the Fall to the Flood.*
3. **The Age of Government**—*from Noah to Lot.*
4. **The Patriarchal Age**—*from Abraham to Moses.*
5. **The Age of Law**—*from Moses to Christ.*
6. **The Age of the Church**—*from Pentecost to the Rapture.*
7. **The Millennium Age**—*from the Revelation to the loosing of Satan.*

NOTE: The brief periods between the Crucifixion and Pentecost and between the Rapture and the Revelation are of the nature of parentheses.

TOPIC TWO: THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

1. Its Place in Scripture.

- a. *The Second Coming is mentioned eight times as often as the first.*
- b. *It is the theme of several whole books, e. g., Thessalonians, and of certain chapters, Matthew 24; Luke 21.*
- c. *The Old Testament prophets bear witness to it: Isaiah 45:23; Ezekiel 21[^]5-27; Zechariah 14:16.*
- d. *The angels know of it: Acts 1:11.*
- e. *The apostles preached it: Acts 3:19; I Thessalonians 4:16; I John 2:28; Jude 14.*
- f. *Jesus Himself frequently mentions it.*

2. What It Is Not.

a. *It is not death.*

The dead rise when Christ comes: I Thessalonians 4:16, 17. At death we go to Him.

At the rapture He comes for us: John 14:3. Certain verses have no meaning unless we distinguish death from His coming: John 21 =23; Philippians 3:20.

Death is an enemy. At the Second Coming we overcome death: I Corinthians 15:50-57. We are nowhere commanded to watch for death, but we are repeatedly enjoined to look for His coming.

b. *It is not the descent of the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit is a distinct person and His coming is not the Coming of Christ. Again many of the passages referring to the coming of Christ were given after Pentecost: Philippians 3:21; II Timothy 4:8; I Thessalonians 4:16, etc.

c. *It is not Universal Christianity apart from the person of Christ:* I Thessalonians 4:16.

d. *It is not the destruction of Jerusalem.* John 21: 21; Revelation 22:20, were written after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Coming of Christ is a comfort; the destruction of Jerusalem is a judgment.

3. The Signs of the Lord's Coming.

(1) The last days will be full of peril: II Timothy 3:1.

a. Physically—from pestilence, earthquake, famine, etc.: Matthew 24.

b. Socially—anarchy and socialism, lawlessness.

c. Nationally—wars and rumors of wars.

d. Religiously—seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: I Timothy 4:1.

(2) There will be apostasy of the Church: II Thessalonians 2:3.

(3) Satan's counterfeits will be circulated: Spiritualism, Christian Science, etc.: I Timothy 4:1.

(4) The Gospel will be preached in all the world: Matthew 24:14.

(5) Knowledge will be increased, and facilities for travel will be enlarged: Daniel 12:4.

(6) Riches will be multiplied: James 5:1, 8.

(7) Israel will be revived as a nation: Ezekiel 36:13-17; Acts 15:16; Mark 11:13, 14, 28.

All these signs are general and have been sufficiently fulfilled to warrant our expecting the Lord to return at any time.

NOTE: While Jesus warns us that we are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief, yet we are to be on our guard about naming days and hours. Many prophecies refer to the Revelation of Christ, which is the second event in the future. If we see indications of their being fulfilled in our day, it is evidence that the first event is being crowded that much nearer.

4. The Two Aspects of the Coming of the Lord.

a. The Rapture.

Just as the First Coming of the Lord extended over a period of thirty years, so the Second Coming includes different events. At the First Coming He was revealed as a babe in Bethlehem, later as the Lamb of God at His Baptism, and as the Redeemer at Calvary. At the Second Coming He will first appear to His own secretly and suddenly to catch them away to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb: Matthew 24 40, 41.

This appearance is called the Rapture or the Parousia.

NOTE: Immediately after the Rapture there comes a period of terrible tribulation known as the day of Jacob's trouble: Jeremiah 30:4-7; Zechariah 13:9.

b. The Revelation.

Following the tribulation there is another sudden but open manifestation of the Lord in Heaven with His accompanying saints and holy angels, for the purpose of establishing the long-promised Messianic Kingdom in the earth. At this time He overthrows Satan, binds him for a thousand years, and brings in the Millennial Age.

TOPIC THREE: THE MILLENNIUM

1. The Restoration of Israel.

Israel is to return to the Promised Land and become a nation again: Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 4:30, 31; Deuteronomy 30: 1-6; II Samuel 7:10; Amos 9:11-15; Isaiah 27:12, 13; Isaiah 60:1-22; Jeremiah 16:14-16; Ezekiel 20:36-44; Romans 11:11-27; Acts 15:13-16.

2. The Cleansing of Israel: Ezekiel 36:24-28.

God promises to cleanse Israel finally from all filthiness and idols, to renew them inwardly and cause them to keep His statutes and judgments.

At the revelation of Christ when He shall stand upon Mount Olivet, Israel, as a nation, will believe upon Him and will accept Jesus, the crucified Saviour, as their Messiah and Lord: Zechariah 12:10-14; Jeremiah 31:9; Jeremiah 23:3-6.

3. The Reorganization of Nations.

The governments of the earth will be overthrown and all peoples will be subservient to the King of kings: Daniel 2:44; Micah 4:1, 2; Isaiah 49:22, 23; Jeremiah 23:5; Luke 1:32; Zechariah 14:9; Isaiah 24:23; Psalm 90:11; Psalm 22:8; Revelation 11:15.

4. The Reestablishing of the Kingdom of David.

All the Old Testament prophecies that remain unfulfilled of the future glory of Israel find their consummation in the Millennium: Jeremiah 22:14; Ezekiel 37:22-28; Zechariah 12:8; Acts 15:16. Jerusalem shall become a world center and David's Greater Son shall rule not only over His own patrimony, but shall be Suzerain over the whole earth.

5. The Lifting of the Curse.

The curse which sin brought upon the whole creation of God will be finally lifted. The effects of the great catastrophe of man's fall will be eliminated from the earth. The whole earth will be filled with beauty, peace, and plenty: Isaiah 32:15, 35; 51:3; Ezekiel 36:33-36; Isaiah 11:6-9.

“No more let sin and sorrow grow
Nor thorns infest the ground,
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.”

TOPIC FOUR: THE RESURRECTION

1. The Certainty of the Resurrection.

(1) Witnesses from the Old Testament. Abraham: Genesis 22:5; Hebrews 11:19.
Job: Job 19:25-27. Isaiah: Isaiah 26:19. Daniel: Daniel 12:2, 13. Hosea: Hosea 13:14.

(2) Instances of the dead being revived.

NOTE: This is different, from the resurrection; but is corroborative evidence.

- a. *Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite*: II Kings 4:18-37.
- b. *The man who was raised by touching Elisha's bones*: I Kings 13:21.
- c. *The raising of Jairus' daughter*: Matthew 9:25.
- d. *The raising of the widow's son*: Luke 7:15.
- e. *Lazarus*: John 11:43, 44.
- f. *Dorcas*: Acts 9:41.

(3) Our strongest ground for believing in the resurrection is found in the rising of Christ from the dead. No fact in history is better attested than this. Jesus Himself told of His death and resurrection during His life: John 10:18; Luke 24:1-8.

2. The Nature of the Resurrection.

The believer's new body is related to his present one: I Corinthians 15. It is also like unto Christ's glorious body. It is spiritual not natural, incorruptible not corruptible, literal not figurative. This is the redemption of the body: Romans 8:23.

3. The Time of the Resurrection.

(1) The Resurrection of the righteous, or the Resurrection of life, will occur when Christ comes again, at the end of this age: I Corinthians 15:22, 23; I Thessalonians 4:14-17; John 5:28; Revelation 20:4.

(2) The Resurrection of the wicked will occur at the end of the Millennium: Revelation 20:13.

TOPIC FIVE: JUDGMENTS

1. The Judgment of believers for their sins at Calvary: John 5:24; Romans 6:8; 7:4, showing His estimation of its character by the terrible penalty inflicted on His Son. God judged all sin at Calvary.

We are identified with Christ in His crucifixion. We take our place under condemnation as worthy of death before ever we can claim forgiveness and the privilege of rising in Him to newness of life.

2. The Judgment of Rewards for Believers: II Timothy 4:8; Revelation 11:18. Believers do not earn their salvation, for it is a free gift of God, but after they are saved they earn their crowns and rewards by faithful service through the Spirit.

There are at least five crowns spoken of in the New Testament that are bestowed upon the believer.

- a. *The incorruptible crown:* I Corinthians 9:25.
- b. *The crown of righteousness:* II Timothy 4:8.
- c. *The crown of life:* James 1:12; Revelation 2:10.
- d. *The crown of glory:* I Peter 5:4.
- e. *The crown of gold:* Revelation 4:4.

Rewards are according to the works that are built upon the foundation of Christ. It is possible to be “**saved yet so as by fire**” (I Corinthians 3:15) and be ashamed before Christ at His appearing.

On the other hand, one may build gold, silver and precious stones which will abide the testing day and bring additional reward.

3. The Judgment of the living nations.

Since nations have their existence in this world only, it is necessary that they be judged here.

In a sense God is always judging the nations by ordaining great calamities or blessings in accordance with their national deserts. But there is to be a final judgment of the nations before the judgment seat of Christ: Matthew 25.

4. The Judgment of the wicked dead.

This is the great day of judgment that is spoken of most frequently in Scripture and that occurs after the Millennium. It is called the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: Romans 2:5; the day of destruction, etc.

The saints will sit with Christ, who will administer this judgment: John 5:22. All men will be gathered together, both small and great, the quick and the dead: Revelation 20:12; II Timothy 4:1. God's books will be opened: Daniel 7:10, and He will judge in righteousness the actions, words, and thoughts of men: Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36, 37; Jude 15; I Corinthians 4:5.

NOTE: To the above are often added the judgment upon the race in Adam, the judgment of self by believers, the judgment of angels by the saints, and the judgment of Satan by God.

TOPIC SIX: THE CLOSING SCENES OF TIME

1. Satan is loosed for a little season.

After the Millennium, there is a final uprising of the forces of evil against God and His Christ. Satan is overthrown and cast into the lake of fire. Then follows the last resurrection, that of the wicked dead; the judgment of the great white throne; and the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire: Revelation 20:11-15.

2. The New Heaven and the New Earth.

The old order of creation has been destroyed by fire, and God fulfils His promise of making all things new: II Peter 3:12, 13.

The New Jerusalem comes down from God out of Heaven and becomes the tabernacle of God with men: Revelation 21:2, 3.

3. God's revelation to men of His plan for the ages is nearing its close.

We know that in ages to come He will shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus: Ephesians 2:7.

In I Corinthians 15:24 we see the ringing down of the curtain upon the great drama of the world's history and then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, and the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all and in all: I Corinthians 15:24-28.

Thus our Bibles begin with **"In the beginning God,"** and the verse that looks farthest into the dim future closes with **"God all and in all."**

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent mat ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless”: II Peter 3:14.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Name the different dispensations.
2. Show the position of the Second Coming of Christ in Scripture.
3. Give the erroneous explanations of the Second Coming of Christ.
4. Enumerate the signs of the Lord’s Coming.
5. Differentiate between the Rapture and the Revelation.
6. Give the prominent characteristics of the Millennium.
7. Describe the two resurrections.
8. Name and describe the four principal judgments.
9. Mention the events that follow the Millennium.

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