

“That Blessed Hope”
Approaches To Eschatology

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday:
 - We Looked At Why *Eschatology Matters!*
 - That Is - Why We Should Study:
 - What The Bible Says:
 - About The End Times:
 - As Christians & As A Church!
 - If You Remember:
 - There Were 7 Main Reasons:
 - Which You Can Review:
 - By Watching The Lesson:
 - On Our Website!
 - Which - Even Though We Are Not Streaming:
 - We Will Be Posting:
 - Each Week - So - If You Happen To Miss A Lesson:
 - You Can Catch Up - Or Invite Others To Join Us In Our Study!
2. Of Course - One Of The Main Reasons:
 - Is So That We Will Keep:
 - Watching & Praying:
 - As We Await The Coming Of The Lord:
 - Back To This World!
 - And That Is Why:
 - Our Theme Verse Is:
 - **Titus 2:13 - “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!”**
 - Let’s Say This Together Once Again!
3. Well - This Morning:
 - We Are Going To Turn From:
 - The **What**:
 - Of Eschatology:
 - That Is - What It Is - The Biblical Study Of The End Times!
 - And From:
 - The **Why**:
 - Of Eschatology:
 - And The Reasons:
 - For Us To Study It!
 - And We Are Going To Turn To:
 - **The How**:
 - Of Eschatology:
 - And The Different Ways Of Approaching This Study!
4. And - Just Like Any Doctrine That We Find In The Bible:
 - There Are Two Main Approaches:
 - To Eschatology As Well!
 - **The Systematic Approach!**
 - The Biblical-Theological Approach!

* The First Approach Is:

1. **The Systematic Approach:**
 - Which Is What We Often Think Of:
 - When We Study Any Theological Truth:
 - Like The Different “Ologies” That We Looked At:
 - Last Year:
 - Theology - The Study Of God
 - Bibliology - The Study Of The Bible
 - Soteriology - The Study Of Salvation

- Etc.
- The Systematic Approach:
 - Is Often Used When:
 - You Want To Find Out **All** That The Bible Has To Say:
 - About A Particular Topic Or Theme!
 - A Good Example Of This:
 - Is The Doctrine Of The Trinity:
 - Which Is Categorized Under:
 - **Theology** Proper:
 - The Study Of God!
- So - You Start Out With A Question:
 - Like - "Who Is God"?
 - **And You Start Searching & Studying:**
 - All Of The Relevant Verses & Passages In The Bible:
 - That Answer This Question!
 - After You Search Out & Study:
 - All Of Those Texts:
 - You Have A Lot Of Good Information!
 - But - Some Of Those Verses Might Say The Same Things:
 - About Who God Is!
- So - After The First Step Of:
 - Searching & Studying The Texts:
 - You Move On To A Second Step Of:
 - **Synthesizing The Teachings:**
 - Of Those Texts!
 - And - When It Comes To The Doctrine Of The Trinity:
 - You Will Find That:
 - Not Only Does The Bible Clearly & Emphatically State:
 - That There Is Only One True & Living God!
 - Deuteronomy 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD!"
 - You Will Also Find That:
 - The Bible Calls & Describes Three Different Persons As God!
 - The Father Is God!
 - The Son Is God!
 - The Spirit Is God!
 - And This Leads To The Third Step:
 - **Which Is The Summarizing Of The Truth:**
 - Of The Teaching Of Those Biblical Texts!
 - And - This Is Where It Can Sometimes Get Difficult!
 - How Can There Be:
 - Only One God - And At The Same Time:
 - There Are Three Who Are Referred To As God?
 - Well - In The 3rd & 4th Centuries:
 - The Churches Got Together:
 - To Debate This Important Question, And To Define Biblically Who God Is!
 - And - That Was The Process By Which:
 - We Can Now Hold To The Biblical Doctrine Of The Trinity!
 - That There **Is** Only One True & Living God, But That One God Eternally Exists As Three Distinct Persons – The Father, The Son, And The Holy Spirit!
 - Well - This Is One Of The Main Approaches:
 - Used In The Study Of Eschatology As Well!
 - However - When It Comes To What The Bible Says About:
 - The End Times - It Proves To Be:
 - Even More Difficult!
 - Because - We Are Not Just Talking About:
 - Facts - We Are Talking About:
 - Events!
 - And Not Just Any Kind Of Events:

- But - Future Events!
- And So - There Have Been Many Attempts:
 - By Christians To:
 - Search & Study, Synthesize, & Summarize:
 - All Of The Biblical Texts That Tell Us Something About The End Times!
 - And - To Noone's Surprise:
 - They Are Quite Different:
 - From Each Other!
- And Also - To Help Others Understand:
 - Their Summaries Of Eschatology:
 - They Have Developed:
 - Charts & Diagrams:
 - Based On What They Find In The Bible!
- Now - I Do Plan - In A Couple Of Weeks:
 - To Look More Closely At Those Different Approaches!
 - But - This Morning:
 - I Just Want To Introduce Them To You:
 - Briefly!
 - But - One Thing We Need To Keep In Mind:
 - Is That ***All*** Of The Approaches To Eschatology:
 - That We Will Look At:
 - **Have The 3 Fundamental Truths** About The End Times In Common!
 - They All Believe In These Fundamental Truths!
 - They All Believe In:
 - As We Looked At Already:
 - The ***Return*** Of Christ!
 - Physically & Visibly!
 - The Reception Of Christ:
 - Of His People!
 - Through Both Rapture & Resurrection! And:
 - The ***Reign*** Of Christ:
 - As King Of Kings & Lord Of Lords!
 - They Also All Believe In:
 - One Final Point - And That Is:
 - The Restoration Of All Things:
 - And The Eternal State:
 - In A New Heaven & A New Earth!
 - Now - There Will Be Differences:
 - In The Order Of These Things:
 - As Well As The Timing - And:
 - Other Details!
 - But - They All Hold To Those:
 - 3 & 4 Key, Fundamental Truths!
 - And - Also Remember:
 - As Brothers In Christ - It Is OK For Us:
 - To Debate & To Disagree:
 - On Those Other Details Of Eschatology!
 - But - We Must Not Let It Bring Us To:
 - Division & Discouragement!
 - Which Is Contrary To God's Purpose!
 - So - There Are 3 Main Systematic Approaches:
 - To Eschatology - And:
 - They Are All Based On Their Understanding Of:
 - **Revelation 20:1-5** - "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. / 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, / 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. / 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word

- of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. / 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection!”
- 4 Times In 5 Verses - We Read The Phrase:
 - “Thousand Years!”
 - From This - We Get The Idea Of:
 - **A Millennium Or A Millennial Kingdom!**
 - Now - Even Though:
 - This Is The Only Place In The Bible:
 - Where A Thousand Years:
 - Is Associated With:
 - A Reign Of Christ!
 - There Are Many Other Passages In The Bible:
 - That Describe His Reign:
 - As Well!
 - But - In The Rest Of Revelation 20 & 21:
 - We Find The Restoration Of All Things!
 - 20:7 - “When The Thousand Years Are Expired!”
 - 20:10 - The Devil Is Cast Into The Lake Of Fire - Finally & Forever!
 - 20:12-13 - All Stand Before God And Are Judged!
 - 21:1 - “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea!”
 - And - This Is The Beginning:
 - Of Eternal State!
 - One Main Approach To The End Times:
 - Is Known As:
 - **Amillennialism! (Inaugurated)**
 - Now - This Does Not Mean That:
 - They Don’t Believe In:
 - The Reign Of Christ:
 - Because They Do!
 - They Just Believe:
 - That Jesus Is Reigning & The Millennium:
 - Is Right **Now**:
 - And - The Millennium Is A Symbolic Way To Describe:
 - The Age Of The Church!
 - **Here Is A Diagram:**
 - That Shows The Timeline Of The Future:
 - As They See It!
 - But - They Still Believe:
 - In The Physical & Visible Return:
 - Of Christ To This Earth:
 - To Receive His People & Then To Reign In His Eternal Kingdom!
 - A Second Approach To The End Times:
 - Is Known As:
 - **Postmillennialism!**
 - They Too Believe That The Millennium:
 - Is A Symbolic Number:
 - That Simply Means:
 - A Long Period Of Time!
 - But - They Believe That:
 - It Is The Church That Will:
 - Usher In A Spiritual Kingdom:
 - That Will Bring Unprecedented Peace, Prosperity & Most Importantly Worship Of The One True God!
 - They Believe That:
 - The Millennium Is **Coming**:
 - Through The Church!
 - And So - The Future Of The Church:

- In This World:
 - Is Still Very Bright!
- And That - After A Predetermined Time:
 - A Thousand Years Or Eve More:
 - Jesus Will Return:
 - Physically & Visibly:
 - And Finish What He Started In This World!
 - And Then - Eternity Begins!
- **Here Is A Diagram:**
 - That Shows The Timeline Of The Future:
 - As They See It!
- A Third Approach To The End Times:
 - Is Known As:
 - **Premillennialism!**
 - This Is What You Are Likely Most Familiar With!
 - Premillennialists Believe That:
 - Jesus Will Return To This Earth:
 - Physically & Visibly:
 - In Order To Establish:
 - A Kingdom Over Which He Will Reign:
 - For A Thousand Years!
 - So - The Millennium Is **Future** & Literal!
 - Though - Even Some Premillennialists:
 - Allow For The Number To Be Symbolic:
 - Of A Long Period Of Time!
 - It Is Only After:
 - His Reign Over This World:
 - That Jesus Will Then Usher His People:
 - Into Eternity!
 - Now - There Are A Couple Main Understandings:
 - Of Premillennialism As Well!
 - **Historic Premillennialism:**
 - In Which The Church Goes Through The Great Tribulation:
 - Before Being Raptured & Received By The Lord!
 - Here Is Their Diagram!
 - And - **Dispensational Premillennialism:**
 - In Which The Church Is Raptured Sometime Before Or Within The Tribulation:
 - And Comes With Christ When He Establishes His Kingdom!
 - Here Is Their Diagram!
 - Now - For All Of The Differences:
 - In These Diagrams:
 - Did You See What Each One Has In Common?
 - **The Very End!**
 - In Each - There Is:
 - A Return Of Christ!
 - A Reception Of His People!
 - Through Rapture & Resurrection!
 - A Reign Of Christ!
 - A Restoration Of All Things:
 - For Eternity!
 - Now - These Approaches:
 - Having Nothing To Do:
 - With Church **Affiliation:**
 - Even Though Some Denominations Seem To Hold To One Approach Over The Others!
 - But - There Are:
 - Amillennial Baptists - And:
 - Premillennial Presbyterians!

- Also - These Approaches:
 - Have Nothing To Do:
 - With A Person's Belief In & ***Fidelity*** To:
 - Christ & His Word!
 - Those Who Hold Different Approaches:
 - Hold Christ & His Word:
 - In The Same High Esteem!
- All Of Us Are:
 - **Titus 2:13 - Christians!**
 - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!"
- So - We Are Free To:
 - Debate & Disagree - But Not:
 - Divide & Discourage!

Conclusion:

1. So - How Do We Make Sense:
 - Of All These Charts & Diagrams:
 - And Differences Of Understandings:
 - About The End Times!
2. Well - We Need To:
 - Ourselves - First & Foremost:
 - Search Out & Study The Texts:
 - That God Has Given Us:
 - About The Future!
3. And The Best Way For Us To Do That:
 - Is Through The Biblical Theology Approach:
 - Which We Will Start Considering More:
 - Next Week!

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