

“Our end-times perspective must come from exegesis of the text, not from a theology of a system.”
(John Walvoord)

- **BIG PICTURE / STORYLINE**

- **HOW DO WE GET TO THIS? HOW DO WE ARRIVE AT THESE CONCLUSIONS?**

- 1) Proper starting point — OT [begin w/ OT & then the NT builds on, supplements & adds to but the NT doesn't replace, redefine or supplant the OT]. = progress of revelation.
- 2) Proper hermeneutics — grammatical historical hermeneutic (historical, grammatical, literary interpretation; authorial intent; we go back to what the author intended by what he wrote at that time; what do the “words” mean in context in the progress of revelation.
- 3) Proper framework — we get our conclusions exegetically not theologically (we interpret the text; not our theological system). Our *exegesis* drives/shapes our theology; Our eschatology must be exegetical from the text, not from a theological framework.
- 4) Proper goal — the glory of God; it's magnifying His glory & His worth.

- **ANOTHER IMPORTANT CLARIFICATION // to summarize:**

- We are arguing the **NEED** for the rapture b/c of the differences of the 2nd coming & rapture
- We are arguing the **COMFORT** for the rapture b/c Christ rescues & receives His people before judgment breaks
- We are arguing the **TIME** of the rapture before the Day of the LORD/the day of wrath comes upon this world
- We are arguing the **SWIFTNESS** of the rapture b/c all believers are instantly changed, in a moment, when Christ comes
- We are arguing the **UNEXPECTEDNESS** of the rapture b/c the coming doesn't come with signs or warnings
- We are arguing the **IMMINENCY** of the rapture b/c it could happen at any moment.
- We are arguing the **PURPOSE** of the rapture b/c it's exegetically sustainable and theologically consistent with God's character & His plan & purpose

- **THE RAPTURE SIMPLIFIED** — the rapture is a kind of “phase 1” of the 2nd coming.
 - **What** takes place - John 14 (Jesus ‘receives’ us & takes us to heaven)
 - **How** it takes place - 1 Thess 4 (Jesus comes down & catches up his saints)
 - **For whom** it takes place - 1 Thess 4 “in Christ” (all those in Christ/believers/Church; dead NT saints & living saints; the rapture concerns **believers only**)
 - **When** it takes place - 1 Thess 5 (before the Day of the LORD/Trib)
 - **Where** it takes place - 1 Cor 15 (on earth/all believers will be changed instantly)
 - **Why** it takes place - Rev 3:10 (so the Church escapes the hour of testing that comes upon the whole world to judge unbelievers)
 - **Hope** that it’ll take place - 1 Cor 15 - raised with a new body; like Christ; eternally; victoriously over death Forevermore!

- **WHY DOES ALL THIS MATTER? WHY STUDY PROPHECY ANYWAY?** [Nearly 1/4 of the Bible was prophecy the time it was written!]
 - Prophecy **comforts**
 - Prophecy **purifies**
 - Prophecy **instructs**
 - Prophecy **emboldens**
 - Prophecy **clarifies**
 - Prophecy **encourage**

Background of 1 Corinthians 15 (in context of the book as a whole):

- Paul went to Corinth on his 2nd missionary journey - Acts 18:1-18
- He stayed there 1 1/2 years teaching the Word of God among them (18:11)

➔ 1 COR 1.7-8 — believers wait eagerly the **revelation** of the LORD Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 — “The Mystery of the Rapture: All Will Be Changed in a Moment!”

➔ **1 COR 15 - resurrection chapter**

1. The **FACT** of Christ’s resurrection (1-19)
2. The **ORDER** of future resurrection (20-34)
3. The **LIKENESS** of our resurrection (35-41)
4. The **BODY** of our resurrection (42-49)
5. The **MYSTERY** of our resurrection (50-57)
6. The **BEHAVIOR** in light of our resurrection (58)

➔ **1 COR 16.22 - Maranatha — OUR LORD COME!**

So in summary:

- A. **Expectation** of the Lord’s Coming (1 Cor 1:7-8)
- B. **Explanation** of the Lord’s Coming (1 Cor 15)
- A. **Expectation** of the Lord’s coming (1 Cor 16:22)

THESIS — Journey with me thru this text on the *resurrection*:

I. This resurrection is MYSTERIOUS (51)

II. This resurrection is TRANSFORMING (51b)

III. This resurrection is INSTANTANEOUS (52a)

3 phrases:

1. In a moment —

2. in the twinkling of an eye —

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 — “The Mystery of the Rapture: All Will Be Changed in a Moment!”

3. at the last trumpet —

IV. This resurrection is GLORIFYING (52-54)

NOTE: Both groups of believers (dead believers *in Christ* and living believers at the time of the rapture) receive the same type of eternal body (=glorified), but they get it in two different ways - glorified, perfect bodies (Phil 3.20-21).

- a) Dead – resurrected with new bodies.
- b) Living – translated with new bodies.

Verse 54 — then will it come about the saying that is written: **DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY:**

- The quote is from **Isaiah 25.8 — we must understand it *in context* of Isaiah 25.**
- After the Judgment on the whole earth (Isa 24 [describing the future “Tribulation period”]); then the Kingdom on earth dawns (Isa 25 [describing the subsequent earthly kingdom]); and those with new bodies will be prepared to enter!
- 1 Cor 15 shows this is PREPARATION AND NECESSARY for us to be ready for that earthly kingdom (soon to come!).

V. This resurrection is VICTORIOUS (54-57)

1 CORINTHIANS 15 TEACHES THAT “DEATH IS DEFEATED!”

VI. This resurrection is SANCTIFYING (58)

I'm exhausted *IN* the work but not exhausted *OF* the work... I would rather burn out than rust out for God!
(George Whitefield)

❖ **Christian:** a proper understanding of eschatology, end-times, the catching up of believers:

- ❖ *fuels holy living, and*
- ❖ *motivates urgent evangelism, and it*
- ❖ *animates heavenly-mindedness!*

Why has the rapture not occurred? The Bible tells us that God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9). He wants people to hear the gospel who have not heard. He wants people to respond who have heard. He is waiting for the work to be completed. That is His plan. But one of these days, time will run out. Paul gives us good advice for living while we wait: "Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). So Church — be strong, be steadfast, be immovable > about in God's Work!

— John Walvoord

7 Reasons Your Church Should Take Eschatology Seriously

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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 tells 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.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 — “The Mystery of the Rapture: All Will Be Changed in a Moment!”

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.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 — *"The Mystery of the Rapture: All Will Be Changed in a Moment!"*