

Course of Study

January 11	Introduction to Eschatology
January 18	Dichotomy or Trichotomy, Death, The Intermediate State
January 25	A Look at Key Apocalyptic Texts
February 1	Interpretive Perspectives on Revelation
February 8	Revelation 20: Brands of Premillennialism
February 15	Revelation 20: Postmillennialism & Amillennialism
February 22	What about the Jews?
March 1	Summary & Significance

Texts from week one:

John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24;
12:48; 5:17-29
2 Tim. 3:1
James 5:3
1 John 2:18
1 Cor. 10:11
Acts 2:16-17 with Joel 2:28-32

I. Review from last week: The state of the dead prior to the final judgment

- A. When any person physically dies in the present age, his soul is separated from his body.
- B. For the Christian dead, this means a conscious disembodied experience of presence with the Lord.

1. This state is superior to life on earth.

- a. **Phil. 1:21-3:** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.
- b. **2 Cor. 5:6b-8:** We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

2. This state is conscious. Both texts above, plus the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-9) and Jesus' words to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43) imply this.

3. This state is inferior to the final state of glory after Christ's return.

- a. **Phil. 3:20-1:** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

- C. For the unbelieving dead, this means a disembodied state wherein they await the judgment and consequent condemnation to hell (the lake of fire).

1. Luke 16:19-31 interpretations

- a. This text describes the current state of dead unbelievers awaiting judgment.

Luke 16:22-4: The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

- i. In my view, the rich man's ability to speak from Hades to Abraham in paradise (Abraham's bosom) does not indicate that there must be actual conversation between them, but it does imply that their intermediate states are conscious.
- ii. Hades is torment. Not as bad as hell, but worse than earth (analogy to the believer's situation).

- b. This text is a parable meant to explain how many people will reject the gospel even after Jesus' resurrection. As such, it tells us nothing about the unbeliever's intermediate state. (It would be unique among parables in that it names Lazarus.)

2. Unbelievers will be part of the general resurrection and their status will change at the judgment.

- a. **Acts 14:15b:** there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.
- b. **Rev. 21:8:** But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

II. The Eschatology of Jesus

A. The Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven is here. (Dispensationalists claim that these two kingdoms must be distinguished. In rebuttal, see Matt. 13:11 with Mark 4:11 and like texts.)

1. The Kingdom has come and is invisible to the world.

a. **Luke 17:20-1:** Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,²¹ nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

2. Jesus confers the Kingdom to his disciples.

b. **Luke 22:28-30:** "You are those who have stayed with me in my trials,²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom,³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

B. The Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven will come when Christ returns.

1. **Matt. 7:21-3:** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

2. **Matt. 26:29:** "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

C. The Kingdom has come *in grace*, and will yet come *in power*.

1. The Kingdom is revealed surreptitiously to those 'with ears to hear.' It comes *in grace*.

a. **Matt. 13:10-11, 13, 16-17:** Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"¹¹ And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.¹⁷ For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

2. OT prophetic expectation was of a Kingdom coming in power.

a. **Dan. 2:44:** And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.

3. The Kingdom will come in power at Christ's return.

a. **Matt. 25:31-34:** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

D. Conclusions (See the Olivet Discourse, Matt. 24-5, for a fuller treatment of eschatology of Jesus.)

1. Jesus refers to two ages- this age and the age to come. The kingdom has come, but there is a consummation yet to be realized.

2. The ages are consecutive, with the second coming of Christ being the event that ends the present age and ushers in the age to come.

3. Jesus does not mention an intermediate (millennial) period.