

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

"...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE..." ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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## WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT ESCHATOLOGY?

*By Andrew Dow*

Eschatology is simply the study of the end times. A level of captivating mystery accompanies death and the end of our world. It is no wonder that books and movies have tried to depict the end of the world in every way imaginable. With all of the confusion surrounding eschatology, we need to prepare to defend the Biblical perspective of the end of time (1 Peter 3:14-15). This should be reason enough to do a thorough study of eschatology, but let me suggest some more pressing reasons to study the end times.

**First, the Bible is an eschatological book.** The Bible's opening words, "**In the beginning**" (Genesis 1:1), set the stage for the end to come. In the last few words of the Bible Jesus calls us to look to the future by saying, "**Yes, I am coming quickly**" (Revelation 22:20). The entire Bible looks forward to the end of time. Consider some examples.

After the serpent deceived man, God said to him, "**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel**" (Genesis 3:15). This, the first Messianic prophecy, finds fulfillment in Christ's sacrificial death. Yet, it points beyond that to the time of Satan's total and final defeat in the end. From the beginning God's people looked forward to the end.

The Hebrew author described Abraham as one who **“was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God”** (Hebrews 11:8-10) Abraham was seeking something greater than the physical promised land. We are told that he (and others like him) **“desire a better country, that is a heavenly one”** (Hebrews 11:13-16). Abraham looked for ultimate fulfillment in the end.

The man named Job also looked to the end when he said, **“I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God”** (Job 19:25-26). Job looked forward to a time he described as, **“the last.”** He recognized that this will be long after his **“skin is destroyed,”** but it brought him hope.

When we read the Bible we should recognize that it is a book that looks forward. Just as the Old Testament pointed forward to the coming of the Messiah (Luke 24:44-46), now the New Testament points forward to the return of the Messiah (Acts 1:11).

**Second, eschatology is fundamental.** There seems to be a misconception that a study of the end times should be reserved for mature Christians. This is probably due to the difficulty of the Bible verses involved and the conflicting interpretations of those texts. With so much uncertainty many prefer to avoid it altogether.

Paul, however, had a different idea about when to approach these topics. In fact, he saw eschatology as something crucial for new Christians to understand. For example, Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians were urgently written after he was prematurely run out of the city (Acts 17:2, 5). After spending only a few months in Thessalonica he

was forced to leave these new Christians behind.

However, notice the words of Paul to these brand new Christians, **“Now as to the times and epochs, brethren, you have no need for anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night”** (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2). He wrote extensively about the end times in these two epistles. In fact, he already expected them to know much of what he was writing to them. Paul didn’t wait until these Christians were mature to explain the end of time to them. They needed to know it from the start!

**Finally, eschatology offers hope.** As Christians our hope is in what God has promised for our futures. This is why the Bible is full of eschatological language. This is why eschatology is such a fundamental part of our faith. A proper understanding of our hope (i.e., eschatology) should change the way we live our lives right now.

The book of Revelation is filled with some of the most fantastic imagery in the whole Bible, yet its message is simple: **“To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God”** (Revelation 2:7, cf. 2:11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). This is the hope of all who are living for Christ—to overcome and dwell with God. This hope is not something that can be achieved in this world or in this time. It is a hope that can only be fulfilled in the future—in the end!

Paul reminded those spiritually young Christians, **“We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober”** (1 Thessalonians 5:5-6). Our understanding of the end affects how we live now. If there is no future resurrection, judgment,

and reward, then continue living as you please. But if there IS a future resurrection, judgment, and reward, then “**be alert and sober.**” If more people recognized what the future holds, fewer people would live for the moment. A proper understanding of the end of time offers far more than mere knowledge, it offers hope.

In the end, we have to understand the importance of eschatology. We must remember that even though those around us live for the moment, the Bible points us to the future. This subject is not just for the older, wiser, more mature Christians. Young Christians must be taught about the end of time in order for them to have the proper worldview. Most importantly, eschatology provides hope to an otherwise hopeless world. When we come to realize the truth about what the future holds, we will recognize the need to live in expectation of that future.

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**AM LESSON:**  
“Why Do We Offer  
Invitations?”

**PM LESSON:**  
Eschatology?

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”**  
**(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**