

The End of the World as We Know It

The end of a nine-part series on what we believe

November 14 & 15, 2009

Intro:

On Friday one of my boys talked me into *seeing a movie* with him in the theater. He said, *Come on, you're speaking on the end of the world and that's what this movie is all about. Call it research.* I don't get out to movies very often, although I did see *the first Indiana Jones film* in the theater. *It was great.* So, I said *I guess blowing \$3 won't be so bad. (I figured I'd pay for his ticket too.)* As it turned out, the movie, which is called 2012, was sold out and so was the next showing!

It seems like people are more interested than ever in *how and when the world will end.* We seem innately aware that everything we see around us is going to come to a climactic conclusion. We're fascinated with what we can expect in the afterlife. This topic has been popular in philosophy, art, and music throughout human history.

The alternative rock band R.E.M. wrote a song about the end that has become a classic. The *repetition and intensity* work together to *get our attention.* See if this [video](#) clip doesn't get you thinking about the end of the world.

T - I've broken up that refrain to use as our outline today:

1. It's the end of the world... *Christians hold different views about the specific events that will occur at the end (like the rapture, tribulation, battle of Armageddon, and millennium), but all agree that the main event is the return of Christ.*

There really is a conclusion coming. Scientists from a variety of disciplines agree that *the universe had a beginning and it will have an end.* A sudden unpredictable culmination is inevitable. The Bible calls it the "the day of the Lord." God, who has been seemingly waiting on the sideline, will enter the game to bring a decisive victory. For

some, this is hard to believe: 2 Pet. 3:3,4 - In the last days scoffers will come, saying: "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." Things won't stay like this.

1

10- The day of the Lord will come like a thief. It will take people by surprise. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Though Christians don't always agree on how all the specific events lay out on a time line, they do agree the main event will be **the return of Christ.** This is the most frequently mentioned event in the Scriptures (>300x in the New Testament). Heb. 9:28 - He will appear a second time. Jn. 14:3 - I'll come again to receive you to myself.

People could ignore Jesus the first time around. His advent was not flashy; he was born in a stable and wrapped in rags. Little attention was given to his arrival; humble shepherds alone heard the announcement.

But the next time things will be drastically different. Matt. 24:30 - All will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. No one will be able to miss this climax of history.

T - That Christ will return is very clear, but *the time* of his return, particularly in relation to the *tribulation* and the *millennium*, is the source of some speculation. I'll briefly define and describe these terms.

The Bible teaches that Jesus will come both *for* and *with* his people. Many Bible students see a seven-year period of **tribulation** between these events, culminating with the battle of Armageddon. Rev. describes this time of terror.

1 Thes 4 gives believers hope that Jesus will pull us out of this mess to be with him. 16 - For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up (Latin: rapturo)

together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Note that this does not tell us the time of Christ's appearing in relation to the tribulation. We don't have what we need in this text to argue a pre or post-trib view. What is clear is that Jesus will come to get us if we don't go to him first.

2

You've probably heard of **the millennium**, which refers to Christ's 1,000-year reign upon the earth.

Premillennialism holds that the 2nd coming of Christ will precede this establishment of Christ's kingdom here. Once the millennium is concluded, the final resurrection and judgment will usher in the eternal state. **Rev. 20:4** mentions Christians reigning with Christ for 1,000 years. This is seen as a fulfillment of many OT prophecies that the Son will have dominion as king of kings on the earth.

Amillennialism teaches that a literal 1,000-year reign on earth is not needed to fulfill these prophecies.

Postmillennialism proposes that humanity will bring about a perfect utopian society, and usher in the kingdom. This view was popular when things were looking good just after WWI. That was supposed to be *the war to end all wars*. But reality has a way of revealing poor theology. *I just don't see things getting better and better in the news.*

All these *isms* can be confusing and distracting. The clear focus should be on **the return of Christ**. The details are up to him. What is up to us is being ready.

T - The repeated refrain in the song is *it's the end of the world*

2. ...as we know it... *The Bible teaches that the end of this world is the beginning of something new. Each person will answer to God and spend eternity in his presence or in his absence.* The Bible teaches that our souls are immortal. The end of this world is the gateway to the next. In the end God will call the living and dead to account. We will *all rise* to stand before him. Christ's **resurrection** foreshadows our

own (1 Cor 15; 1 Thes 4). **Dan 12:2** ...those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. *In the choir of life, we can fake the words pretty well down here, but we will all have our turn to sing solo before God.* **2 Cor 5:10** - We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. That verse makes me hope for mercy, not justice! I don't want what I deserve!

3

What will **heaven** be like? When we die and arrive, we will finally *get it!* **1 Cor. 13:12** Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. Surveys reveal that over 75% of Americans believe in heaven. Why? We can't help it! Eternity is written in our hearts; it's hard to deny that there is more than *the world as we know it*. Our expectation is built in by the Creator! But even our best guesses and wildest dreams fall short of what we'll experience there. **1 Cor 2:9** - No eye has seen, nor ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him. *I can only imagine? We can't imagine!*

While living with God forever will be heaven, living forever in his absence will be **hell**. The contrast Jesus emphasized in much of his teaching will become clear in the last days. He talked about the wheat and tares, the sheep and goats, the found and the lost. Jesus divides people into two groups heading in two opposite directions.

Maybe you don't believe in **hell**. But what we believe does not affect spiritual issues any more than it affects physical laws. Disbelieving in gravity won't make you go up either. A grave inscription said, *"Here lies an atheist, all dressed up and nowhere to go."* Not so! We all have a destination. Rejecting that reality won't make it go away. The fact is, if God is holy, and if Christ is to be trusted, then hell must exist.

But, why is God waiting so long for judgment? **2 Pet. 3:9** - The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

That's what he wants, but he's given us the freedom to choose him or to reject him. And there are real consequences. C.S. Lewis - *"The lost forever enjoy the freedom they have demanded."* I wish that the Bible taught universalism, or a second chance, or even annihilation, but it doesn't. Heaven and Hell are real.

T - Back to the song one more time. How can we sing the last part of this line: *it's the end of the world as we know it...*

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3. ...and I feel fine! How can we possibly feel secure? *The only way to be confident about our eternal destiny is to awaken from complacency, tell Jesus, "I'm with you," and remain ready.* **Amos 6:1** - Woe to you who are complacent... to you who feel secure. When people are not expecting any interruption, in the twinkling of an eye, the end will come. **1 The 5:3** While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. This parallel with childbirth is a common analogy. When a woman is pregnant, you know *something is coming*, but you don't know exactly when. Women have told me about labor: *Once it starts there is no way out. While you are in the midst of it, it seems like it will never end. But it will end and the outcome will be exciting.* The world is pregnant and the culmination of the process is inevitable. Signs of the times are *discernible* but *the moment of the arrival is unpredictable.* So we must remain ready. **6** So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. This climactic conclusion will be as inescapable as it is certain.

The movie I mentioned, *2012*, was reviewed in the San Francisco Chronicle by Mick LaSalle: *Only an audience that*

feels invulnerable can enjoy watching on screen the wholesale destruction of its civilization and not take it as a threat." He then talks about how much we have changed since 9/11. Back then we were vigilant. Now we've been lulled back to sleep. *"A cloud has lifted. It's safe to be happy and brainless again."* Is it? If we really want to be able to *feel fine*, we need to *awaken from our complacency.* We are *not invulnerable.* We are totally dependent upon someone to rescue us from certain disaster. Without a savior, we won't make it.

I had an opportunity recently to go to a Blazers game and sit in one of those special boxes with the unlimited guacamole. *The experience provides a fine picture of heaven.* When I approached the door at the Rose Garden, my only confidence that I would get in was based on the fact that my friend was already there and had made provision for me to enter. I had *no ticket* but *my name was on the list!*

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I could not have gotten in without that gift. I didn't earn it and couldn't afford it. *My friend's business picked up the tab.* Better yet, picture this: walking up to that door with the all-star *Brandon Roy.* You'd say, *I'm with him!* There is only one way into heaven. Jesus gets us in *if we're with him!*

Tell Jesus, *I'm with you!* If you don't want to be taken by surprise when Jesus comes to rule, then surrender your life to him now. Someday, every knee will bow and everyone will admit that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:10). I don't want to wait until it is a sorrowful recognition. I'd rather kneel now rather than fall to my knees *in painful acknowledgement* of what I should've done *before it was too late.* **Dan 2:44** - Christ's kingdom will *crush* everything else. **Phil 3:20,21** - He will exert his power to subject all things to himself. You can wait until he crushes the opposition or you can *submit right now down here.* Don't be caught off guard!

??? While speculative timetables may be fascinating, the emphasis in the Scriptures is upon living in a godly way as

we await the climax of the age: 2 Pet. 3:11-14 - Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

The point of this message on the end of the world is to inform you about what is to come and to motivate you to live for Jesus today so that you can live forever with him. Let me lead you in **Prayer** based on Heb 9:28 - Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

(Prayer team available at the end)

Song: the wondrous cross. **Communion:**

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More Meat (lots of unused extra notes and verses):

Some people study these things and overreact with fanaticism. Their lack of equilibrium leaves them ripe for disillusionment. On the other hand, disregarding prophecy isn't the answer either. We need to major on the majors.

John 5:24 - I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

1 The 5 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on

them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

How can we know what is beyond the grave? Philosophers grapple with the question of life after death, spiritualists try to reach those who have departed, and scientists study paranormal experiences, like near death occurrences.

Fortunately, Jesus has spoken on this subject (1 Thes. 4:13, 15a). What makes his word authoritative? Remember what He did; He came back to life, having "...abolished death and brought life and immortality to light..." (2 Tim. 1:10). Remember also what He said: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies" (Jn. 11: 25). Human speculation is a poor substitute for divine revelation. The afterlife doesn't need to be an enigma; Jesus has been there and back!

Jesus will come as a judge: Mal. 3:2 - "But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire..." Matt. 16:27 - He will "come in glory and recompense every man according to his deeds." He will come as a conqueror who will rule: Ps. 8:6 -

“He will rule over all and all things will be put under his feet.” Dan 2:44 - “...the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed...it will crush and put an end to all other kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.” Phil 3:20,21- He will exert his power to “subject all things to himself.”

Paul wrote that Christ will bring back from the dead all who are “in Jesus.” Concerning this resurrection, note the following based on 1 Thes 4:

oThe reality of the resurrection means death is not final (13b). Death is described in James 2:26 as separation of the body from the spirit. The metaphor of sleep is used because the separation is not permanent. While bodies return to dust, awaiting an awakening, souls remain conscious: 2 Cor 5:8 - “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” Phil. 1:23 - “To depart (his body is to) be with Christ...” Paul looked forward to immediate fellowship with Christ, not an unconscious repose.

oThe certainty of the resurrection provides hope (13c). But notice that this doesn’t say we aren’t to grieve; there is a kind of sorrow that is appropriate.

oThe precedent for the resurrection is Christ’s resurrection (14). 2 Cor. 4:14 - “The one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.” He opened the way for us (1 Cor. 15:12-20).

oThe hope for the resurrection is for those with faith in Christ (14b). To be in Christ is to acknowledge who Jesus is and accept what He did on your behalf. Rom. 10:9 - “...if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The English word rapture means “carried away,” and comes from Latin word “rapturo” used to translate verse 17. Paul wrote in Greek and used “Harpazo,” meaning to snatch or take away. It is used in Acts 8:39 to describe how

the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and brought him to Caesarea. Again in Acts 23:10 it is used again to describe being carried away from danger.

This text says “together with them... we will be with the Lord for ever.” Concerning this reunion, note the following:

oThe duration of the reunion will be permanent (17). John 14:3 - “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. “All Christians will be together forever in the Lord.

oThe hope of the reunion provides encouragement (18). Death separates body and soul and it separates people from one another as well. Many of us have suffered the loss of loved ones. In Rom 8:17-19, Paul wrote that the suffering we experience here isn’t worthy to be compared with how good things will be in heaven. 1 Cor. 13:12 and Matt. 17:1-5 imply that we will be able to recognize one another.

oThe certainty of the reunion is based on Christ’s authority (15a). You can be sure. His word is true; he is trustworthy.

oThe timing of the reunion is according to God’s plan (15-17). An order is given. The return of Jesus is said to be immanent, but this is different from immediate. For those who are tempted to set dates, these are destined to fail (Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:7).

I remember my first open casket funeral - I looked at the body and I knew the important part was gone. The real person had departed, only a shell was left. The Bible says that what was missing was the person's spirit, which lives forever.

As pseudo-sophisticated liberal theology presents a belief in god with no afterlife, reincarnation (the current rage: an endless cycle) does the opposite, it offers an

afterlife, but without God. We make up wild philosophies because we long to believe in something.

Something big is on the horizon and it will take many people by surprise (1 Thes. 5:1-3). Joel 2:1,2, 11 - "...The day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. The Lord thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?"

1 Thes 5:3 shows that people will be complacent, congratulating themselves that all is well. They will be proclaiming a false peace. We read of efforts to unite in a single world government with a common currency. Dan. 9:27 teaches that a world ruler will "confirm a covenant" but the peace won't last. Jesus warned that people will be oblivious (Luke 17:26-30).

When people are not expecting such an interruption, in the twinkling of an eye, everything will be forever changed. Jesus won't disclose the exact time of his return any more than a burglar would call ahead and make an appointment (Matt 24:42-44; Rev 3:3).

While some are caught off guard, others will be prepared.

Those who receive salvation are to live out this contrast. 1 Pet. 2:9 - God "called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." The armor mentioned in verse 8 reminds us of a sentry on duty. We are not to be off guard. Rom 13:12 - "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." We must live in a constant attitude of waiting and watching. While we wait, we are to stay faithful

(Tit. 2:11-13). Being expectant doesn't mean we sit on a hill and wait. That is the very attitude condemned in Acts 1:10,11. It means to live with eternity's values in view. Phil. 3:20 - "Our citizenship is in heaven. We eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...."

Balance is needed. We need not be ignorant but we need not freak out.

1 Thes 4 - They apparently had a misunderstanding. They thought that those who had died would miss out at Christ's return!

Only the body sleeps until it is raised imperishable in immortality. This will require a miracle, but God specializes in miracles.

There are different ways of understanding the events related to the Day of the Lord. One theological system understands the day of the Lord to begin with the rapture of the church, to include the tribulation, the battle of Armageddon then the return and reign of Jesus for the millennium. You can read all about it in Rev. 6-19.

Contrast in 1 Thes 5: At the end a separation will take place. There will be no mistaking then. 2 - Some know something big is coming/ some do not. 3 - Some will be prepared/ some will be caught off guard. 4 - Some are aware/others are oblivious. Black and white contrast: 5 - Those in the light/ those in the dark. 6 - alert / asleep. Jesus taught about this contrast: Mk 13:33-37. 7 - sober / drunk. Reduced to lethargy by something outside of yourself. Opposite of aware. Think of more than alcohol. Is anything dulling your spiritual senses? 8 - the protected/the vulnerable. 9 - suffering wrath/salvation. Many use this verse in the argument that God's people the church will be raptured prior to the tribulation. Troubles are to be expected in the Christian life (John 16:33), but the

Tribulation is different. It involves the wrath of God being poured out on the earth. 10 - living with Him/without Him. Does he change the meaning of the metaphor? Asleep can mean dull or dead. Here he goes back to first idea: the departed. God won't forget them. The end of the age will be inevitable but remaining in the dark is optional.

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all mankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into the spiritual world, and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. Unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. God's judgment will reveal His justice in consigning them to perpetuate in eternal retribution because of their own rejection of God. Believers will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in this life.

"May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. •" (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

Rough notes on:

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

I. Defining the Doctrine of the Millennium: What is it?

This doctrine describes the biblical teaching that Christ will reign upon the earth for 1,000 years.

Our view is called premillennialism because it holds that the 2nd coming of Christ will precede this establishment of His kingdom on this earth. Once the millennium is concluded, the final resurrection and judgment will usher in the eternal state.

Rev. 20:1-6 [survey 7ff]. Not the only text used to substantiate this doctrine, but it is the capstone, the final link. Doesn't start here, but this is the climax. Issue = How

to take this? Remember, Rev = a disclosure, not an obscurer.

Sounds like a new doctrine? Good historical backing. Jewish expectation, based on the OT was for earthly, national, messianic, moral, future kingdom. The disciples expected it [Acts 1:6], they just didn't know when! Works of the early Christian church writers show that they also held a belief in the visible reign of Christ with the risen saints on the earth for a thousand years. Died out as the church and the state were wed under Constantine. Has not been the dominant view since.

Not to say it is weird, currently held by guys like Chuck Swindoll, John MacA., Chuck Smith, Charles Stanley, David Hocking... Doesn't make it correct, just goes to show its not unusual or uncommon today among respected conservative expositors of Scripture.

II. Explaining the Doctrine of the Millennium: What will it be like?

Jesus will personally and visibly reign over the earth. Dan 7:13,14 a theocracy - The Ancient of days will grant the Son of man dominion, glory and honor. He will actually be the king of kings over all the earth. Ps 47:2 - reigns over all nations while seated on the throne. Ps. 86:9 - All nations will worship Him.

Benevolent ruler Is 11:1-9. Jerusalem at center of government Is 24:23; 33:20; Zech 14:10. Political peace -Is 19:23-25. - Israel, Egypt and Ass. will get along together! Productivity and joy Is 35: highlights.

III. Defending the Doctrine of the Millennium: Why is it needed?

Universal rule of God was challenged. Rebellion in the spiritual sphere. Creation of man, given dominion, yet failure. Sovereignty must be shown in the overthrow of evil and the rule of God through a perfect King on the earth. Son of God came as a man with a kingdom to offer but was rejected. In that rejection God paid the price to purchase

His people back from sin. Earthly history still awaits its consummation in a theocratic kingdom on earth.

There are yet unfulfilled promises about the earthly kingdom. They must either be canceled, or fulfilled in one way or another.

Abrahamic Covenant Gen 12:2,3 - Personal promises to Abe. [Not conditioned upon willingness to be a blessing to others, that consequence is expected. Our position in Christ makes us heirs to aspects of this covenant.] Gen 15:18 - Several parts of this have been literally fulfilled already, but the aspect concerning the land, from the Nile [probably] to the Euphrates, has not. We have every reason to expect it to be. No one seriously questions that this has not yet happened in human history. God swore to fulfill this promise, the obligation is on Him.

Davidic Covenant 2 Sam 7:12-16 - also necessitates the establishment of the millennial kingdom for its fulfillment. [Content - David's kingdom would be established by his son Solomon. The right to rule would remain in David's dynasty, fulfilled in JC. See Royal Ps. 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72... common in OT] To claim that Christ set up this Davidic kingdom at His first advent requires a deliteralizing of the promise. Still valid? Ps 89:30-37 did sin invalidate the promise?

IV. Explaining away the Doctrine of the Millennium: Are there alternative explanations?

A. Amillennialism

No millennium. Very little agreement in camp. Unified not by common positive assertions, but by their common denial of a literal reign of Christ on the earth. View = a criticism of premil position rather than a cohesive system.

Until the end there will be parallel development of both good and evil. After the 2nd coming, the world will end and there will be a general resurrection and judgment. Not heretical - many believe in the infallibility of the Scriptures.

As conservatives, they use normal or plain interpretation elsewhere.

Many suggest that the covenants were conditional and that the conditions were not met, others suggest that the promises are only fulfilled spiritually. Some see fulfillment of millennial passages in the church on earth, others see the fulfillment accomplished by the saints in heaven. Problem - Is 42:4; Jer 23:3-6; Dan 2:35-45; Zech 14:1-9, Mic 4:1-3 (to name just 5 different prophets) describe Christ's reign as being on earth. Neither present age nor heavenly realm.

Historically had its origin in the 3rd C with a fellow named Origen, although it was popularized by Augustine. He used the allegorical method of interpretation - spiritualized the coming kingdom.

B. Postmillennialism

The view of last thing which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world and that eventually and progressively, all will come to be Christianized. The gospel will win universal acceptance and there will be great prosperity. The second advent of Christ will take place at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace. Because JC has all authority, the gospel will triumph and all nations will be converted. His return will be followed immediately by the general resurrection and judgment. Some posties expect a golden age to come through human efforts. They vary on length and nature of beginning of the period [abrupt or gradual], but Christian principles will be the rule, not the exception. Most has been of the liberal variety - seeing the potential for the world getting better and better with the advancements of 20th C technological achievements. This requires some serious optimism. Also neglects that the end of the age will be a time of intense persecution Mt 24; 2 Thess 2; Rev. 13, etc.

Some cite evidence that the world is getting better. Role of women around the world, Bible is a best seller, many Christians are financially prosperous, Christianity is able to use mass media... Each of these has its down side!

May be true, but the contemporary increase in evil is much more notable!

Recently, more have taken this view = Reconstructionism - Church's purpose is to take the world by force. Bring about a perfect utopian society, usher in the kingdom, achieve His dominion by means of the arts, science, etc. Claim the institutions in culture - emphasis on salvation of society, not upon salvation of individuals. Enforce the law of God - Theonomy. Subdue through the imposition of OT law.

Sum Very subjective in interpretation. Takes some verses literally and spiritualizes others.

V. Applying the Doctrine of the Millennium: What difference does it make to us?

Apply it to our times, in fact, to this week's Time! Wars in culture!

A. God's word is true.

The prophecies that have already come to pass precisely as predicted cannot be accounted for by chance. We have proof of the reliability of God's word.

Solid Rock where I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

B. Christ will reign.

Is 32 :1-5 Things will be different. He will reign righteously, and "No longer will the fool be called noble!"

To read of all things in subjection to Christ [Heb 2] leads us to worship. God is in control and will accomplish His will in history. He will be triumphant in the same arena in which He appeared to have been defeated. Ps. 2:7-8 - the begotten Son will receive from God the nations as His inheritance. Even to the ends of the earth as His possession. This will come true for our Lord!

C. We will rule.

Rev 20:6, 3:21- those who overcome will be invited to sit with Him on the throne; 5:10 - those purchased with the blood of Christ will be called priests and will "reign upon the earth." Authority over 12 tribes will be vested in the 12 apostles. - Mt 19:28 - "...in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon...thrones..." Lots in OT as well - Jer 30:9; Ez 37:24-25 - Daniel will be a regent.

Subjects will be the saved people who survive the tribulation and who enter the millennial in earthly bodies. All will be redeemed, for there will be a judgment of the unrighteous at the return of Christ [Mt 25:31-46. "...when did we see you hungry..?"].

Judge angels - 1 Cor 6:3.

Lk 19:11-27 Theocracy, yet much will apparently be carried out by subordinates. Disciples were mistakenly thinking that the kingdom was to appear immediately. Christ answers them with a parable - Master gives each slave 10 minas then goes away to receive a kingdom, saying, "Do business with this until I get back." Upon His return He calls each slave to Himself asking for accountability. Responsibilities are rewarded according to faithfulness with what had been entrusted into their care, "with ten you made ten more? Take charge over ten cities. Again, our theme of faithfulness.

What alternatives can be given for the method in which the particulars of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants can be fulfilled?

Here's a list of passages which speak of a yet unfulfilled triumphant reign of Christ on the earth: Ps 2:8; 22:27; 47; 72; 86:9; Is. 2:2-4; 11:6-9; Jer. 31:34; Dan. 2:35,44; Mic. 4:1-4. Look up these references and decide if a millennial kingdom best explains the meaning of each.

The death of Christians is referred to as sleep several times in the Bible [Mk. 5:39; Jn. 11:11, etc.], are we to view this

as soul sleep, or sleep of the body? [Please see 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor 5:1-9; Phil. 1:23.]

For more information on the Day of the Lord, see Is. 2:12-21; 13:9-11; Joel 2:28-32; Zeph. 1:14-18; 3:14-15.

The Certainty of the Bodily Resurrection

Is this all there is? ...or will we rise from the dead?

Belief in the afterlife has been considered unsophisticated. A liberal scholar at Brown U - "I don't think that there can be any future for heaven and hell."

Commentator in Newsweek article - "The idea of life after death is clearly an embarrassment to modern thinking. Most modern philosophers have ridiculed it, but [he continued] it is just as clearly the touchstone of all religion."

Modern pulpits have forgotten it; they sound no warning, yet the people yearn for information on the eternal. While many ministers smirk with sophisticated superiority at the idea of fire and brimstone preaching, the people are concerned about their spiritual future. Maybe more so as the world turns less meaningful and less satisfying.

Job 19:25-27; Ps. 16:8-11; Is 26:19; Dan 12:2. "Those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

In Mt 22:31,32, JC used Ex 3:6 in an argument with the unbelieving Sadducees. [God identified Himself to Mo associating Himself with the departed patriarchs Abe, Isaac and Jacob in a living relationship.]

NT - Jn 2:19-20; 11:25,26; Details in 1 Cor 15:20-24, 35-50; 2 Cor 5:1-4; Phil 3:21; 1 Th 4:13-18. If not true... 1 Cor 15:14,17,19. Our confidence of res is based upon His.

Heb 9:27 - few biblical statements are less open to challenge. We are all on a collision course with death. We

will all run smack into it someday. Death is a very democratic experience! Unpopular topic. People don't like to talk about it. We are so caught up in things here on earth. We like to think that they will always stay as they are, but they don't. People age, they grow weak, others are in accidents or fall to sudden illnesses. You can try to deny death, or try to postpone it, but it is coming and it will overtake us all.

What's worse, everyone will give an account. In the choir of life, we can fake the words pretty well down here, but we will all have our turn to sing solo before God. 2 Cor 5:10 - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..."

Newsweek article - "In rejecting heaven and hell, the rationalist modern consciousness also rejects the awesome seriousness of moral and immoral behavior." If God will not judge, then there is no God as the Bible reveals Him to be: righteous and holy.

Ps 75:7 - terrifying and comforting words: "God is the judge." Fortunately, Gen 18:25 - "The judge of all the earth will deal justly" Justly means He will not give more or less than what is due. He will acquit some and condemn others.

Jn 5:28,29; Rev 20:4,5 - 2 directions in resurrection. One to life, called the res of the righteous in Lk 14:14, one to condemnation! [Great White Throne described in Rev 20:11-15 - every one judged according to their deeds, those whose names are not found written in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire. Brimstone is also mentioned in 21:8 - where the res to judgment is called the second death.]

Heb 10:28-31. His wrath is "against all that forsake Him"[Ezra 8:22]. Not just OT, see Jn 3:36. Seems like it belongs in the dark ages. God's wrath is not a popular topic for books as is love. Tolerance is our contemporary idol. Our sin has broken our relationship with God, but it also serves to blind us from the fact that we are under

condemnation. We refuse to admit our culpability! We think of God's treatment of sinners as unfair.

We forget **God's righteous demand** - Matt 5:22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty {enough to go} into the fiery hell." Jesus is getting uncomfortably personal: I've done that! James 2:10 "Whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles in one point...."

How high is the standard? God says, "Be holy as I am Holy." We can't do that, can't He be more flexible? Mt 7:13,14 - the path to destruction is called the broad way, the way of life is the narrow path, [tight, inflexible] and there are few who find it. How narrow? The way is limited to a single means. A burning building, confusion about which way to go to safety. The architect is there. "One way out." Acts 4:12; Jn 14:6. Not fair that there is only one way? I agree - Jn 3:16 - that one way cost God His only Son. If we reject - there are consequences to our decisions and actions in this world [Gal 6:7]. Jn 3:36. Sounds unsophisticated? Prov. 14:12 "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." [However nice and politically correct.]

We want justice for others, but when we run afoul of the law, we hope to cop a plea, or escape on a technicality, or be excused through some sly bargaining. But with the righteousness of God, there are no loopholes. Even our thoughts and intentions are visible to Him. Who can stand before such a judge? No one. Sensing this, we resent the idea of God's righteous justice and reject it as a reality. But denying it is unhealthy. If we put it out of our minds, we will never see our spiritual need as we must in order to come to Jesus for salvation.

Remember, Ezek 33:11 "God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked." 2 Peter 3:9 - "He is patient with

you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

The Agony of Hell:

Lk 16:23 - torment Mk 9:48 - eternal torment, fire is never quenched Mt 25:46 - eternal punishment. 2 Thess 1:7-9. Eternal destruction= away from the presence of the Lord.

Mt 13:42 - a furnace of fire with weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mt 22:13 - total darkness.

Mt 25:41 - eternal fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels."

Much of this may be using symbolic language - but to say that does not let us off the hook at all; we do not devalue or disregard them. The symbols are still God-given; they are not intended to mislead us.

Therefore, Matt 10:28 "...do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Is God ready at any moment to send sinners to their rightful place in hell? Ready to condemn the ungodly? No, although He hates sin, He loves the sinner.

Suppose a person is ill. They go to the doctor for a diagnosis and receive a prescription. If the solution is rejected, the person can't blame his demise upon the doctor.

Found myself agreeing with a self-proclaimed liberal modernist theologian who was quoted in Newsweek: "One damns himself by what one neglects to do and thus alienates himself from God."

The Glory of Heaven

A recipe: Start with the presence of God, add the deepest joy you've ever known, and multiply by infinity.

What to expect? Pudgy naked cherubs on clouds with wings and harps?

Different - Free from limitations brought about by the fall.
"We shall be changed." 1 Cor 15:50ff. Like blossoms from a dried up bulb.

Yet the same - there will be continuity.

God will be there - He'll welcome us. Jn 14:1-33. We can't spend 20 minutes alone with Him now? Opposite - "Depart from me..."

Beauty - Rev 4:1-6. Emerald, glass, crystal, gold, pearl...

New body - 2 Cor 5:1-5. 1 Cor 15:42-44 - Immortal - won't wear out. Glorious - won't complain, powerful - won't get tired. 1 Jn 3:2.

Catechism - "Chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Will we like it? Higher joy than anything that we've ever experienced. 1 Cor 2:9 - "No eye has seen, nor ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him."

Rev. 21:3-6; 22:17b.

When will Christ return? Those who are tempted to set dates, these are destined to fail (Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:7).

Eternal separation from God is an excruciating fate.

The end will take many people by surprise (1 Thes. 5:1-3).

The second law of thermodynamics: entropy - everything will wind down.

Being expectant doesn't mean we sit on a hill and wait. That is the very attitude condemned in Acts 1:10,11. It means to live with eternity's values in view. [Phil. 3:20 - "Our citizenship is in heaven. We eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ...."](#)