

7. Eschatology – An Overview

1. Definition of Eschatology

- 1) Derived from "eschata" (last things) + "logia" (study)
 - 2) The doctrine concerning the end of the world, the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, including Christ's second coming, resurrection, final judgment, and new heavens and new earth
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2. Major Components

1) The Second Coming of Christ (Parousia)

- (1) Jesus promised to return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11)
- (2) Paul emphasized the second coming as the believer's hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18)

2) Resurrection and Eternal Life

- (1) Believers will be transformed with glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15)
- (2) Christ's resurrection is the firstfruits and a guarantee of ours (1 Corinthians 15:20)

3) Final Judgment

- (1) God will righteously judge both the righteous and the wicked
- (2) Those in Christ will enter eternal life, those who reject will face judgment

4) New Heaven and New Earth

- (1) Revelation 21 describes God's new creation with no more pain or tears
 - (2) Paul also says creation is eagerly waiting for liberation (Romans 8:19–22)
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3. Features of Eschatology in Pauline Theology

1) Already and Not Yet

- (1) The kingdom of God has already begun but awaits future consummation e.g.,
- (2) The Holy Spirit as firstfruits (Romans 8:23) and guarantee (Eph 1:13–14)

2) Eschatological Salvation

(1) Salvation is not just a past event but a present process and future fulfillment

(2) "In this hope we were saved" (Romans 8:24)

3) Christian Living in Light of the End

(1) Believers should live in holiness, patience, and spiritual alertness
(1 Thessalonians 5:1–11)

4. Modern Theological Debates

View	Description
Dispensational Premillennialism	Emphasizes rapture, 7-year tribulation, and a literal future millennium
Historic Premillennialism	Christ returns after tribulation to reign
Postmillennialism	The kingdom will expand and bring peace before Christ returns
Amillennialism	The "thousand years" is symbolic of the present church age, and the end will come suddenly

5. Practical Message

1) Eschatology is not just about predicting the future

2) It motivates faithfulness in the present

Provides meaning to life, purpose in suffering, and ultimate hope