



## Sound Doctrine: Applying Core Beliefs to Everyday Life Eschatology: How It All Ends (Revelation 22:12-13)

- The end of the story is the whole point of the story and this is true in God's four-act story:
  - 1) The creation of everything by God
  - 2) The corruption of humanity at the Fall because of sin
  - 3) The cross of redemption in Jesus Christ for deliverance
  - 4) The culmination of everything for eternity
- Eschatology is the study of last things (the word *eschatos* means last or end). Christianity is the only source in all of religion or science that knows how everything will end because God revealed it to us in His holy Word.
- God answers two questions for us about the end of the story:
  - 1) Why is the end so important?
  - 2) What does He have planned for the end of all things?

### ① Why is the end of the story so important?

Four words answer this question:

- It's a **humongous part of the story**. 27% of the Bible is predictive prophecy (8,352 of 31,124 verses that includes what has been already historically fulfilled)
  - Every time the first coming of Christ is mentioned, the second coming is mentioned eight times.
  - Christ refers to His own return 21 times.
- It's an **honor-bestowing part of the story**.
  - God's omniscience is praised in His ability to know and plan the end (Isa. 46:8-11)
  - God's sovereign control of all the end-times details is praised (Rev. 5:13; 7:9-12; 11:15-18)
  - God's supremacy as the ultimate hero of the story is praised (1 Cor. 15:20-28)
  - God's generous blessings to us (rewards) as "*the Alpha and Omega*" is praiseworthy (Rev. 22:12-13)
- It's a **holiness-driven part of the story**: The end times motivates a holy and righteous lifestyle in the here and now (2 Pet. 3:11-12; Col. 3:4-17; Jms. 5:7-11; 2 Cor. 5:9-10)
- It's a **hope-filled part of the story** that keeps us from cynicism, despair (1 Jn 3:1-3); grants us comfort (1 Thess. 4:17); warns us against sin (Col. 3:1-3); keeps us persevering in the faith (1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 10:32-38); reminds us to pray (1 Pet. 4:7); keeps us living for Jesus (Rev. 1:3; 22:7; Heb. 11:16)

### ② What does God have planned for the end of the story?

- Two major categories of end-times events are revealed: the universal and the personal.
  - 1) God's **universal** end-times plan addresses the all-encompassing matters related to the nations, the world, the material planet, the nation of Israel, the church, the Day of the Lord & its seals, trumpets & bowls; world government, the Antichrist & False Prophet, the returns of Jesus Christ, multiple resurrections, human, earthly and atmospheric judgments, the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, and eternity in the new heavens and new earth.

2) Our **personal** end-times experience:

- **Death** to believers *“in Christ”* and unbelievers *“in Adam”* (1 Cor. 15:22)
- **Accountability & judgment** for believers (to receive rewards for their deeds - 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10) and for unbelievers (to prove by the record of God’s open books their damnation for unbelief and unworthy deeds – Rev. 20:11-15)
- **The intermediate state of existence** after death between the first and second comings of Christ
  - ≈ At death. Believers are *“absent from the body and at home with the Lord”* (2 Cor. 5:8) or as Paul shares his *“desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better”* (Phil. 1:23). It appears God gives believers an intermediate body until the resurrection when they get their new body (Matt. 17:3; Rev. 6:9-11)
  - ≈ At death, unbelievers are separated from their bodies and find themselves in conscious torment, residing in Hades as the story of the rich man & Lazarus detail (Lk 16:19-31)
- **The eternal destiny** of all people is in heaven or hell based upon their response to repent of sin and place the sole trust in Christ as Savior and Lord.
  - ≈ If Christ is rejected in unbelief, eternity is spent in conscious torment in hell. Jesus said, Fear God *“who can destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matt. 10:28). Prov. 11:7 says, *“when the wicked dies, his hope will perish”*.
  - ≈ If Christ is received by faith, eternity will be *“rest from your labors”* (Rev. 14:13) in God’s heavenly *“Paradise”* (Lk 23:43; Heb. 12:23) to be forever with the Lord.