

Eschatology – Part 3

Jim Downing

I. Introduction.

- A. Eschatology covers all future events.
- B. One event will be covered.
- C. The main question is usually, “When?”
- D. As Christians we look forward to the blessed hope of our Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13)
 - 1. Christ has said that He will come again if He goes away (John 14:1-3), but we have more reason to believe that He’ll come again.
 - 2. Jesus left personally and will return personally. He left bodily, so He will return bodily. He left visibly, so He will return visibly. (Acts 1:11)

II. Last things described in the last week of Christ. (Matthew 24)

- A. Jesus told the disciples of the fall of the temple.
- B. They responded by asking when the end of the age would be.
- C. Jesus’ response is unclear with the exception of Matthew 24:15. The sign of the end of the age and His coming would be the coming of the abomination of desolation standing in the Temple.
 - 1. The reference in Daniel does not help to clarify. (Daniel 9:27)
 - 2. Paul seems to have set out to clarify. (II Thessalonians 2)
 - a. Paul probably saw that Jesus would return in his lifetime.
 - b. The day of the Lord would not come except when three programs are accomplished.
 - c. God divides the human race into three entities with a program for each. Before Christ comes, these programs have to be completed. (I Corinthians 10:32)

III. The programs.

A. The apostate state of the Church. This can be seen developing today.

1. The abomination of desolation will initiate this. In this event, a man will proclaim himself to the world as God.

2. He will seat himself on the throne of the Temple in Jerusalem.

B. The Jews. These are the natural descendents of Abraham through Isaac.

C. The Gentiles.

IV. When the programs will run together. (Daniel 9)

A. God would not set up the kingdom until 490 years more of discipline.

1. The king would then be set up and there would be reconciliation.

2. It begins with the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and then continues with the rebuilding of the walls by Nehemiah. Following this is a 430-year period until Messiah comes for the first time. In Luke Anna and Simeon were anticipating this by the date.

3. Messiah would be cut off the same year that He was to come.

4. There is a missing seventy years in Daniel's program (a time out). When Christ was crucified God stopped the prophetic clock and the final seven years have not been completed.

B. The three programs, however, will be completed together simultaneously with the Rapture.

C. Satan's strategy is to produce a counterfeit Christ and kingdom that is so like the real thing that it will deceive most.

D. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream interpreted by Daniel that explained the program of God throughout history.

1. Each element of the statue in the dream represented an empire that was or was to come.

2. The Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Macedonians and the Romans are described.

3. The period in which the church existed is a parenthesis - no one foresaw it or knew that it would exist.

4. An outsider would subdue the final confederacy and gain a political power base. His influence would expand across the whole world. (Revelation 13)

5. This outsider will make a covenant with the Jews, and in the middle of it he will break the covenant and proclaim that he is God. At this point Jesus will come.

E. When the Jews recognize that Jesus is the Son of God, then fellowship will resume. (Luke 13:35)

1. The Jews will first recognize another. (John 5)

2. It will be a period of warfare and tribulation before He comes. (Matthew 24:29)

F. It could only be the Temple that the abomination will enter into. (II Thessalonians 2:3)

V. Summary.

A. Christ said that He would come back.

B. Satan will launch his greatest campaign to deceive the people before Christ returns.

C. This will involve a counterfeit claim and a counterfeit Christ.

D. God's program will wrap up three peoples at the point of the counterfeit Christ: the Jews, Gentiles and the Church.

E. We do not know when God is going to start the clock again. Prophecy has a prominent place in Scripture, and it is important to have the broad outline of God's plan in mind, but it can easily get out of balance.

F. Five chapters that you need to be familiar with are: Daniel 2, 7, 9; Matthew 24; II Thessalonians 2; and Revelation 13, 17.

Application questions.

1. At what point according to the speaker will Christ return?

2. Sample three of the passages suggested by the speaker at the end of the message. What can you add to what you learned from the message?

3. What are we to do with a broad knowledge of God's plan? How might we view Him differently knowing that God sets forth to fulfill things He has promised and has done so in the past? What does this message suggest about the fundamental nature of man? Explain.
