



Interpreting the  
**REVELATION**  
of Jesus Christ

# Eschatology

The doctrine of the “last things” (Greek eschata).

## Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Why study eschatology? Hasn't this been a place of endless debates? Hasn't this led to spiritual pride? Hasn't this led to an abandonment of our responsibilities as we debate details? Like the scholastic-era debate of how many angels can dance on a head of a pin...

## Titus 2:11-14

1. Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, will come again.
2. There is a double appearing of Christ, and one has already happened.
3. Christ's second coming will bring a visible manifestation of God's glory.
4. Hope rests on salvation by grace alone in Christ alone.
5. The good news of hope trains believers to live in holiness.

## Dangers in Studying Eschatology

1. Speculation instead of biblical study.
2. Date setting instead of watchful hope.
3. Divisiveness instead of humble meekness.
4. Theoretical ideas instead of practical doctrine.

For #2. Acts 1:7, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.”

For #3. Eph 4:1-3. We should be patient, lowly, and gentle toward our brothers in such matters.

But because of the dangers, we should not avoid the topic (which is a biblical topic), but avoid the dangers.

E.g., the disciples were astonished by Jesus’ teaching on divorce so thought it better not even to get married. They missed the point. Watch out for the dangers, preserve God’s teaching and design.

## Reasons to Study Eschatology

1. To understand the Creator's purpose (Eph 3:9, 11).
2. To see more of Christ's glory by faith (Col 3:3-4).
3. To know history's direction (Rom 8:28-30).
4. To avoid being shaken by false doctrine (2 Thess 2:2).
5. To grow in hope (Rom 15:13).
6. To nurture holiness (2 Peter 3:13; 1 John 3:2-3).
7. To comfort one another (1 Thess 4:16-18).
8. To stop loving this world (Matt 6:19-20).

Ephesians 3:9-11, “**9** and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, **10** so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. **11** This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,”

Colossians 3:1-4, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

Romans 8:28-30, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. **29** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

2 Thessalonians 2:2, “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, **2** not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a

letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.”

Romans 15:13, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

2 Peter 3:13, “But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

1 John 3:2-3, “ Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. **3** And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

Matthew 6:19-20, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

## Reasons to Study Eschatology

9. To be reminded of the fate of the wicked (2 Thess 1:5-12).
10. To be motivated to show mercy and evangelize (Jude 17-23).
11. To prepare ourselves for judgment (2 Cor 5:10).
12. To pray more for Christ's return (Rev 22:20-21).
13. To labor in ministry with anticipation (2 Cor 6:2; 1 Cor 15:58).
14. To devote ourselves to worship (Phil 2:11).
15. To exult in the expectation of God's glory (Rom 5:2).

2 Thess 1:5-12, “**5** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— **6** since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels **8** in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, **10** when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. **11** To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, **12** so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jude 17-23, “**17** But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. **18** They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” **19** It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. **20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus

Christ that leads to eternal life. **22** And have mercy on those who doubt; **23** save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.”

2 Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

Revelation 22:20-21, “He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! **21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”

2 Corinthians 6:2, “For he says,

“In a favorable time I listened to you,  
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

Philippians 2:11, “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Romans 5:2, “Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”



# Revelation 1:1-12

Approaches to Interpreting Revelation

# Preterism

1. Views most of the events in Revelation as having taken place in the ancient world. Partial rather than full preterism allows for some visions to pertain to the future coming of Christ.
2. Revelation 13:1 is a symbol of Roman imperial power.
3. Revelation 13:8, 666 נרון קסר *NRON QSR*  
(50+200+6+50+100+60+200)
4. Revelation 17:9-10 implies that Nero is on throne at John's time.
5. Immediately relevant to the churches and describes things which must shortly come to pass (1:1).

Revelation 13:1 is a symbol of Roman imperial and persecuting power under Nero. Beasts are political empires. Seven heads (Rome's seven hills cf. Rev 17:9) and ten horns referring to rulers of kings (cf. Rev 17:10 Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, NERO [one is], then Galba (who reigned only 7 months), the 10th king would be Vespasian who ruled when the temple was destroyed) . Blasphemous names describe titles like son of god, divine, and other names under the imperial cult or emperor worship.

Revelation 13:18 the number of the beast is 666.

There is a variant 616 that drops the second nun so that it appears as NRO QSR.

## Historicism

1. Views Revelation 4 and onward as revealing the chronological sequence of events in church history leading up to Christ's return.
2. The beast is typically viewed as the Roman Catholic papacy which is seen as a revived Roman imperial power. The pope is the antichrist or "man of sin" (2 Thess 2:3-4).

1. Some historicists interpret the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 as seven ages of the church.  
This view was popular in Reformed circles of the 16th to 18th

There is no clear hermeneutical guide to application. They assigned different events to different trumpets.

## Idealism

1. The book is a presentation of general principles rather than specific historical fulfillments (except those visions referring to Christ's return).
2. Seeks to make the book relevant to 1st century Christians and Christians of all ages.
3. The beast is the principle of satanic persecution of God's people by evil rulers throughout the ages.

God is continually sending judgments, natural disasters, demonic attacks, as warnings of a coming day of justice.

## Futurism

1. Interprets Revelation, especially after chapter 3, as speaking entirely of the future.
2. Revelation 1:19 is seen as an outline for the book.
3. A focus on literal rather than figurative or symbolic interpretation.
4. The beast is the end-times antichrist who will assault God's people with oppressive political power for 3 ½ years (Rev 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5). He will reign until Christ's appearing.

For 3. Revelation 8:7-9 describes a literal impact of a fiery meteor that will change a third of the seas to blood.

Challenge with this is that most of Revelation has no direct relevance for people until the final generation.

Most popular form includes the rapture of the church before the tribulation begins, making the book even less relevant.

The danger is divorce Revelation from the practical Christian life and make it the occasion of fantasy literature and movies.

## Eclecticism

1. Combines elements of preterism, historicism, idealism, and futurism.
2. Also called *inaugurated redemptive-historical symbolism* (Beeke) or *eclectic redemptive-historical idealist view* (Beale).

The beast is Nero and Rome.

The pattern is not unique to Rome but also was seen in the Papacy.

The same beastly pattern has appeared in atheistic and communistic empires (Russia, China).