

The Millennium and The End of the World – Part 3

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The Doctrine of the Last Things – Eschatology: Partially based on Christian Dogmatics, by Dr. John Theodore Mueller, pages 613-621.

1. Temporal Death:

- a. What is temporal death? The separation of the soul and the spirit from the body: Jesus “[bowed His head and gave up His spirit](#)” ([John 19:30](#)). When Jesus gave up His spirit (His life), His soul also departed from His body.
- b. What is the cause of temporal death? The fall of Adam and Eve into sin ([Gen. 3:1-7](#)), the sin we have all inherited ([Rom. 5:12](#)), and our own sins – both of commission ([Rom. 3:23](#)) and of omission ([James 4:17](#)).
- c. Who are the subjects of death? All descendants of Adam; no matter how wealthy or healthy, everyone dies: [Ezekiel 18:4](#) “[The soul who sins will die.](#)”
- d. What is true now of dead bodies? [John 11:11-14](#) ...“[Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.](#)” The disciples then said to Him, “[Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.](#)” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. So Jesus then said to them plainly, “[Lazarus is dead...](#)”
- e. Why should believers have no fear of death?
 - i. [John 5:24](#) [Jesus] “[Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.](#)”
 - ii. [Philippians 1:21](#) [Paul] “[For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.](#)”

2. The Condition of the Soul between Death and the Resurrection:

- a. What are the three parts of each person? [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#) “[Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#)”
 - i. Body – physical part.
 - ii. Soul – me, who I am.
 - iii. Spirit – worldview (*alive in Christ or dead in sin*).
- b. What is the preference of believers as they live on earth? [2 Corinthians 5:6, 8](#) “[...while we \[our souls and spirits\] are at home in the body \[when we are physically alive\] we are absent from the Lord... we... prefer rather \[in our souls and spirits\] to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.](#)”
- c. What happens when the ungodly die? [Luke 16:22-23](#) “[...the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades \[in his soul\] he lifted up his eyes, being in torment...](#)”
- d. What happens when believers die?
 - i. They immediately enter paradise: [Luke 23:43](#) “[Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.](#)”
 - ii. They are alive with God: [Matthew 22:31-32](#) “[...have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? He is **not** the God of the dead **but** of the living.](#)”

3. The Second Advent of Christ:

- a. Has the time been set for Jesus' return? Yes! **Acts 17:30-31** "...God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, [Why?] because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."
- b. What are some signs of the end?
 - i. **Matthew 24:5** "...many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many." [For example: Charles Manson; Jim Jones; David Koresh (Wikipedia).]
 - ii. ⁶ **"You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars."** ["...it's estimated that there are around 60-110 armed conflicts happening at any given time" (Today's Armed Conflicts).]
 - iii. ⁷ **"...in various places there will be famines and earthquakes."** ["Approximately 55 earthquakes occur worldwide each day, which translates to around 20,000 earthquakes per year" (NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory).]
 - iv. ⁹ **"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."** ["Open Doors' 2024 World Watch List revealed that over 365 million Christians worldwide experience high levels of persecution or discrimination" (Open Doors US).]
 - v. ¹⁰ **"...many will fall away..."**
 1. In the Western world there has been a steady decline of Christians, especially among young people. "A recent survey conducted by the Barna Group, ...found that less than 1 percent of the young adult population in the United States has a biblical worldview."
 2. The Barna Group defined a **biblical worldview** as belief in the following:
 - a. Absolute moral truth exists.
 - b. The Bible is completely inerrant [*incapable of being wrong*].
 - c. Satan is a real being, not symbolic.
 - d. A person cannot earn his way into the kingdom of God though good works.
 - e. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth.
 - f. God is the supreme Creator of the heavens and the earth and reigns over the whole universe today."
(<https://www.gotquestions.org/falling-away.html>).
- c. What is the purpose of the end time signs? "The purpose of the signs is **not** to lead Christian believers to determine the hour of the Lord's coming, **but** to incite them to perpetual watchfulness" (JT Mueller, 621).
- d. Will everyone see Jesus at the same time? **Revelation 1:7** "**BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him...**" // How is that possible? As Jesus is returning, He will raise all people from the dead (**1Cor. 15**, page 5).

- e. What is the white throne judgment? **Revelation 20:11-13** “Then I saw a great white throne and [Jesus] [Matt. 25:31; John 5:26-27] who sat upon it... And I saw the dead, the great and the small [everyone], standing before the throne, and **books** were opened; and **another book** was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged [evaluated] from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.” // Think about the scene of the sheep and the goats in **Matthew 25:31-46**. From TLSB:
- i. *dead, great and small*. This presupposes a bodily resurrection of all people, including those who rejected Christ.
 - ii. *books*. Records of human conduct.
 - iii. *the book of life*. The book that lists all who have received Christ and God’s gracious gifts of salvation.
 - iv. *according to what they had done*. The righteous do not earn salvation by their works, but their good works were recorded so that they might now be rewarded by the One who was at work in the saints (Phil. 1:6; 1Th 2:13), causing them to produce good fruit.
- f. What is the rewards ceremony? It’s the **bema seat judgment**. This judgment applies *only to those who believe in Jesus*. This judgment is like a judge in an ancient Olympic-type game; he watches the contest; then he determines the winner and gives the reward.
- i. Regarding believers **who lived for Jesus** by **denying** themselves and **acting** for the eternal benefit of others, *Jesus will reward them!*
 - ii. Regarding believers **who lived for themselves** by **not** denying themselves, and **not** acting for the eternal benefit of others, *they will lose their reward (see below)*.
- g. What are some key passages on the topic of rewards?
- i. The OT speaks about the coming rewards: **Isaiah 62:11** ... “Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him...”
 - ii. When will the rewards be given? When Jesus returns: **Revelation 11:18** “...the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time to reward* Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name...”
 - iii. All believers must appear before the bema seat: **2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment [βήματος - bēmatos] seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed [rewarded] for his deeds in the body [while living on earth], according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”
 - iv. Which works will be rewarded? *The ones that pass the test of fire!* **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** “Now if any man builds on the foundation [that is, on Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day [the day of Jesus’ return] will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it [the foundation of Jesus Christ] remains, he will receive a **reward**. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” // “When you build into others spiritually, no one may even notice or care—but God cares!”¹

¹ John Burke, *Imagine Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 258.

1. "The Lutheran Church, on the basis of Holy Scripture, rejects the doctrine of the MILLENNIUM as a figment of the human mind."
 2. The *Augsburg Confession* (Art. XVII) voices its disagreement with millennialism when it says: "They condemn [those] who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed."
 3. "The 'Jewish opinion' ([Acts 1:6](#)) appeared early in the Christian Church and was known as chiliasm (an earthly reign of Christ lasting a thousand years)." [Rev. 20:2](#) describes Satan being bound for a χίλια ἔτη (chilia ete), that is, a thousand years.
 4. "It is a characteristic of the fanciful dream of chiliasm that its advocates never agree among themselves on particulars; the various theories are so contradictory that the whole subject becomes repulsive to the student of doctrinal aberrations [*irregularities*] because of its very complexity and inconsistency."
 5. "Millennialism... has no Scriptural foundation whatever. The passages which are usually quoted in its favor ([Is. 2:2–4](#); [11:6–9](#); [Zech. 9:9, 10](#); [Joel 3:2](#) ff; [Micah 4:1–4](#); [Rev. 20:1–10](#)) do not predict a millennial reign at all, but describe the spiritual glory of the Church of the New Testament, which is brought about through the coming of the Messiah and the preaching of the Gospel throughout the whole world, [Luke 2:13, 14](#); [1:76–79](#); [1:46–55](#)."
 6. "Chiliasm is not only **unscriptural**, however, but also **anti-Scriptural**. It expressly contradicts Holy Scripture, which plainly teaches:
 - a. that the time of the New Testament, and especially the last days before Christ's coming, shall be a period of great persecution and suffering for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, [John 16:33](#); [Matt. 24:9–13, 21–27](#); [Luke 21:16, 17](#); and
 - b. that Christ's kingdom is not earthly and external, **but spiritual and internal**, [John 14:27](#); [16:33](#); [Rom. 5:1–5](#); [Luke 17:20, 21](#); [Mark 1:14, 15](#); [Luke 10:9–11](#); [Rom. 14:17–19](#).
- Moreover, by directing the Christian hope to a worldly reign of Christ, chiliasm misdirects and thus destroys the true Christian hope, which steadfastly looks for that wonderful glory of heaven, [Phil. 3:20, 21](#); [1 Cor. 1:6–8](#), into which the Church Militant shall be gathered at Christ's second coming, [Matt. 25:34](#); [5:3, 10–12](#)."
7. "To the objection of chiliasts that the small earthly Church of Christ which we see now certainly does not represent the glorious Church of our Lord, we reply that our Savior deliberately foretells and describes the small size ([Luke 12:32](#); [Matt. 20:16](#)), the distress and tribulation ([Acts 14:22](#)), and the apparent defeat ([Matt. 24:37, 38](#)) of His Church on earth in order that His followers may be kept from the deceitful snares of all chiliastic delusions, [Matt. 24:42–51](#)."
 8. "Again, millennialism opposes other clearly established Scriptural truths; for it affirms:
 - a. **a twofold visible coming of Christ**, contrary to the express teaching of [Heb. 9:28](#), and
 - b. **a twofold resurrection**, contrary to [John 6:40](#)."

9. "If chiliasts contend that millennialism is at least a beautiful hope, which ought not to be weakened or destroyed in those who hold it, we answer that nothing is good or beautiful that is opposed to the teaching of Scripture. Eve, too, regarded the fruit of the forbidden tree as beautiful, [Gen. 3:6](#); but the beautiful thought of eating of the tree was a delusion of Satan..."
10. "Similarly, many regard the thought of having a vicar of Christ on earth to rule over the Church as very beautiful, [2 Thess. 2:9–12](#); but the result is Antichrist, a servant of Satan, [2 Thess. 2:3, 4](#), who misleads thousands into eternal damnation, [2 Thess. 2:12](#), through his very external piety [reverence]."
11. "Chiliasm is Satan's most subtle way of inducing believers to regard the crucified Christ as a stumbling-block and foolishness, [1 Cor. 1:23](#); for their chiliastic dream is really the effect of their inward dissatisfaction with the lowliness of Christ's Church on earth."
12. "To the objection that at least [Rev. 20:2](#) teaches a millennium, we reply:
 - a. that this passage does not teach a millennium at all, since those '[who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years](#)' are clearly described as '[the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God](#),' [Rev. 20:4](#), so that the vision depicts not an earthly, but a heavenly scene;
 - b. that the whole passage, [Rev. 20:1–10](#), is so obscure, that it cannot be a [*seat of doctrine, that is, a primary source of a particular doctrine*] for chiliasm, especially since hardly two interpreters will explain it alike;
 - c. that the '[little season](#)' (μικρὸς χρόνος) together with the '[thousand years](#)' embraces the entire time of the New Testament (Luther), since immediately after this '[little season](#)' the last Judgment will follow, [Rev. 20:10](#); and
 - d. that, since the Apocalypse [*Revelation*] is a prophetic book, 'so full of obscure visions as well as allegorical and [*mysterious*] forms of speech, extremely difficult to be understood, it must be expounded according to the analogy of faith or the clear and [*easily understood*] Scripture passages' (Hollaz), which foretell the eschatological events in clear and unmistakable language."
13. "As the millennium, so also the 'GENERAL CONVERSION OF THE JEWS' is a figment of human reason. The champions of this error base their doctrine on [Rom. 11:26](#): '[And so all Israel shall be saved](#).' But that this passage does not teach a general conversion of all Jews is clear:
 - a. from the context, which shows that the apostle understands the expression *all Israel* (πᾶς Ἰσραήλ) in the sense of '[the elect of Israel](#)' ...; and
 - b. from the fact that in other passages he clearly states the fact that not all Jews, but only the elect will be saved.
 - i. [Rom. 11:5](#): "[There is a remnant according to the election of grace](#)."
 - ii. [v. 7](#): "[The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded](#)."

14. “St. Paul thus clearly distinguishes between **spiritual Israel** (Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ πνεῦμα), which shall be saved, and **carnal Israel** (Ἰσραὴλ κατὰ σάρκα), which shall be damned.” Cp.
- Rom. 9:6: “They are not all Israel which are of Israel.”
 - v. 7: “Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but, In Isaac shall thy *seed* be called.”
 - v. 8: “They which are *the children of the flesh*, these are *not the children of God*; but the *children of the promise* are counted for the *seed*.”
 - v. 27: “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a *remnant* shall be saved.”
 - v. 31: “Israel, which *followed after the law of righteousness*, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.”
15. “From this we conclude that the ‘all Israel that shall be saved’ (Rom. 11:26) [reference] is the **spiritual Israel** (the elect in Israel), just as the expression “*fulness of the Gentiles*” (Rom. 11:25) denotes the elect of God among the Gentiles. The determination of time “until” (Rom. 11:25: ‘*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*’) stresses the truth that, as long as Gentiles shall be converted and saved, so long also shall the elect in Israel be brought in, that is, until the end of the world. Matt. 24:14. The words ‘and so’ (Rom. 11:26: καὶ οὕτως) describe the manner in which ‘all Israel shall be saved,’ namely, by the divine calling of the elect in Israel through the Gospel, by which also the ‘fulness of the Gentiles shall come in,’ Rom. 10:13–18.”
16. “In accord with this principle the apostles preached the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, Acts 13:14–52, that during the same New Testament time of grace ‘all Israel’ and ‘the fulness of the Gentiles’ might come in, Rom. 10:1–4. Just so the Church of Christ must preach the Gospel of salvation to every creature and make disciples of all nations till the end of time, Mark 16:15, 16; Matt. 28:20; for through the blessed proclamation of the Gospel the elect among both Jews and Gentiles will be saved, Acts 13:43–49” (Cp. *Christl. Dogmatik*, III, 584 ff).
17. “The return of the Jews to Palestine, which is [naturally associated with] the general conversion of the Jews, is based upon a bare literalism in interpreting Old Testament prophecies (Is. 11:11, 12; Amos 9:11–15; Ezek. 40–48; Zech. 6:12; etc.), which is as unscriptural as it is ridiculous. (Cp. St. L., XIV, 53.) These passages of course foretell and describe the building of the New Testament Church in Old Testament phraseology.”
- ➡ Thanks for attending this study of The Millennium and The End of the World!
- ➡ Now, let us ✦stay in God’s word, ✦focus on Jesus, and ✦invite others to repent and believe!
- ➡ All three parts of this series are available under the “Studies” tab at www.BLC7500.com