

## UNTIL HE COMES

- A. Issue of Christ's return in 1 Corinthians 11:26, *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*
1. What can we know about that future hope?
  2. How can our interpretation of future events, eschatology, impact our time around the Lord's table?
    - a. When will it be?
    - b. How will it take place?
    - c. What is the role of believers in the coming kingdom of God?
    - d. What's the relationship of the church to Israel?
- B. The need for the study of eschatology (future events)
1. Prominence of prophecy in the Word of God - 20% of Bible.
  2. Importance of prophetic subjects - return of Christ.
  3. Relationship of prophecy to life
    - a. It should give hope.
    - b. It should encourage Christians to faithful service.
- C. Concerns in the study of prophecy
1. It can be a divisive issue in Christianity - be gracious to those who don't have the same understanding.
  2. Seek God's wisdom on disputed issues.
  3. Keep the right perspective - major on majors.
- D. Principles for interpreting prophecy
1. Compare parallel passages - fit prophetic passages together in a unified whole (i.e., Daniel and Revelation).
  2. Recognize principle of perspective - events separated by many years are seen together (i.e., Isaiah 9:6-7, *For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this*).
  3. Be consistent in interpreting prophecy (literal interpretation).

## THE DISPENSATIONAL POSITION ON ESCHATOLOGY

- A. Dispensational
1. Definitions
    - a. Dispensation - *a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose*, Dr. Charles Ryrie.
    - b. Dispensationalist - one who sees clear distinction in the Bible between God's program with the nation of Israel and His program with the Church.
  2. Distinctives
    - a. The purpose of God for all dispensations is the glory of God.
    - b. In every dispensation, salvation is by grace through faith, only made possible by the work of Christ.
      - 1) Old Testament saints gained approval from God by faith, Hebrews 11:1-2, *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval.*
      - 2) Paul used the examples of Abraham and David to argue for justification by faith in Romans 4:2-5, *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.*
  - c. Some key dispensations
    - 1) Law (Nation of Israel), John 1:17a, *The law indeed was given through Moses*
    - 2) Gospel (Church), John 1:17b, *grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*
    - 3) Kingdom (Millennium), Matthew 19:28, *Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

- d. Key points of Dispensationalism
  - 1) A literal hermeneutic (method of interpretation)
    - a) Historical - cultural background and circumstances of the prophets are considered.
    - b) Grammatical
      - 1] Words are taken in normal sense unless it is evident that a figure of speech or symbol is used.
      - 2] Words are considered in light of their immediate and broad context.
      - 3] Allows for figurative and symbolic language.
  - 2) Church is not Israel
    - c) God made unconditional covenants to the nation of Israel.
      - 1] Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 12:1-3, Land-Seed-Blessing
      - 2] Palestinian Covenant, Deut. 30:1-10, Land Plus.
      - 3] Davidic Covenant, 2 Sam. 7:12-16, Name-Land-House-Throne
      - 4] New Covenant, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Heart
    - b) All promises have not been fulfilled.
      - 1] They will not be fulfilled by the Church.
      - 2] They will be fulfilled in the nation of Israel.
        - a] All fulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament was fulfilled literally.
        - b] How can one say unfulfilled prophecy will be fulfilled non-literally?

## B. Premillennial

### 1. Definitions

- a. Premillennial - Jesus Christ will return bodily to earth and establish His 1,000 year earthly kingdom.
- b. Millennium - 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation 20:1-6 during which Christ will reign on earth.
  - 1) Satan will be bound for 1,000 years.
  - 2) He will be loosed for a short period of time.
  - 3) Martyred Tribulation saints are given special resurrection and share with other saints in Millennial reign.
  - 4) Wicked dead are not raised until after the Millennium.

### 2. Purpose of the Millennium

- a. Promises made to the nation of Israel will be fulfilled in the Millennium, Jeremiah 31:31-34, *The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.*
- b. The kingdom promised David will be instituted, note Revelation 19:11-16, *Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, "King of kings and Lord of lords."*

## C. Pretribulational

### 1. Definitions

- a. Pretribulational - all Christians will be raptured by Christ to Heaven before the Tribulation.
- b. Rapture - instantaneous gathering up of the entire church to meet Christ in the air by resurrection of the dead and translation of the living from the earth.
- c. Tribulation - 7-year period before 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ during which there will be great suffering on earth.
- d. Second Coming of Christ - bodily return of Christ with His church to the earth in glory.

2. Purposes of Tribulation
  - a. Prepare the nation of Israel for her Messiah
    - 1) Jeremiah 30:7, *Alas! that day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be rescued from it.*
    - 2) Deuteronomy 4:30, *In your distress, when all these things have happened to you in time to come, you will return to the LORD your God and heed him.*
  - b. Bring Gentiles saved through preaching of saved remnant into Kingdom, note Revelation 7:9, *After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.*
  - c. Pour out judgment on unbelieving people and nations.
    - 1) Isaiah 26:21, *For the LORD comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no longer cover its slain.*
    - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, *For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.*
3. The Church and the Tribulation
  - a. The church is saved *away from* the coming wrath.
    - 1) 1 Thessalonians 1:10, *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.*
    - 2) Revelation 3:10, *Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.*
  - b. There is no reference to Church in Revelation 6-18, chapters dealing with the Tribulation.
  - c. The restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit will be removed from earth before Tribulation, necessitating the removal of the Church, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming.*
4. The Church and the Rapture
  - a. It is a comforting hope, 1 Thessalonians 4:18, *Therefore encourage one another with these words.*
  - b. It is imminent.
    - 1) Philippians 3:20, *But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*
    - 2) Philippians 4:5, *Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.*
    - 3) James 5:8, *You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.*
  - c. It is not a reward for faithful service but the fulfillment of Christ's redemptive work, Phil. 3:20.
5. Distinctions between Rapture and Second Coming
  - a. Necessity of an interval between these two events (i.e., roles of Church and Israel).
  - b. 2-stage return of Christ
    - 1) Rapture - Christ will come for His saints.
    - 2) Revelation (Second Coming) - Christ will come with His saints
  - c. Time-line
    - 1) Church is not Israel
    - 2) Rapture
    - 3) Church is with Christ in Heaven
    - 4) 7-Year Tribulation
    - 5) Revelation -Second Coming of Christ
    - 6) Millennial Kingdom/Judgment
    - 7) Eternal State

## COMMUNION IN RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST'S RETURN

### A. Institution of Communion

1. *Jesus established it in the Passover setting, Matthew 26:26-29, While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*
  - a. It reminds one of the bondage and redemption of the nation of Israel from physical captivity in Egypt.
  - b. Communion reminds one of our bondage and redemption from spiritual captivity to sin.
2. He announced He would not participate again before the 4<sup>th</sup> cup of wine.
  - a. That cup is associated with Exodus 6:7, *I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians.*
  - b. He will drink the fourth cup of wine in Millennial Kingdom when Israel recognizes Him as their Messiah.

### B. Certainties concerning Communion

1. It is reflection - which will be noted at the Table.
2. It is commemoration
  - a. Of Jesus' death - propitiation - full payment for sin.
  - b. Of Jesus' resurrection - justification secured.
  - c. Of Jesus' return - sanctification assured.
3. It is proclamation
  - a. The Gospel is visual memorial.
  - b. Augustine called it a "visible" word of atonement, a feast of liberation.
  - c. Ambrosiaster (4<sup>th</sup> c.), "It is the memorial of our redemption."
4. It is anticipation
  - a. Geoffrey Bromiley, Communion, "points beyond itself to the greater meal when all God's ways and works will be fulfilled...The Supper is a pledge, a foretaste, an anticipation of the best of God which is yet to be."
  - b. Dispensational premillennialism is a doctrinal grid by which we may fit the truths of God into His eternal perspective. God does not require me to be a premillennialist to be a Christian but He does require me to accurately handle His Word. I believe premillennialism is the means by which I can do just that. It allows me to discern more fully the words of Scripture, "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."