

# Basic Eschatology (Study of Future Things)

Or, **Eschatology for Dummies** ☺

Taken from **Lesson #211** in the Weekly Genesis Bible Lesson Series, but with some additional material added:

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Eschatology comes with its own vocabulary.

## Eschatological Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Explanation
<b>First Advent</b>	The 1 <sup>st</sup> Advent is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It is when our Lord walked on this earth as a man. This is roughly between 5 B.C. and A.D. 30.
<b>Dispensation</b>	This word literally refers to the <i>administration of a household</i> . However, it has come to mean in modern theology an epoch during which God has a particular plan for that era, e.g., the Age of Israel or the Church Age. Eph. 1:7–10 3:1–10 Col. 1:23–29. For this reason, when we see the word <i>dispensation</i> in the Bible, we need to not think of it as an epoch but as the way that God administers His household. However, outside of the Bible, the word also includes the idea of a period of time. See the <b>Doctrine of Dispensations</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ) for more information.

## Eschatological Vocabulary

### Vocabulary

### Explanation

#### Dispensations (Chafer)<sup>1</sup>

Dispensations pertain to the divine administration of human affairs from Adam through the end of time. A dispensation is defined traditionally as a period of time during which a particular revelation of God's mind and God's will is operative, and during which man is tested as to his obedience to that specific manifestation of God's will, plan, and purpose. Orientation to both time and to human history is vitally necessary for understanding God's plan and God's purpose for the believer's life. Each divine administration, or Dispensation, is related to a definite period of human history.

Three major distinctives comprise the sine qua non of a dispensational theology: (1) a literal interpretation of Scripture, where possible, (2) a distinction between Israel and the Church, and (3) the glorification of God as the overall purpose of Scripture and the believer's life. Dispensationalism is in contrast to replacement theological systems.

The vast majority of the Bible deals with three such Dispensations: (1) the Dispensation of Israel, a Theocentric Dispensation from the Exodus to the birth of Christ, (2) the present Dispensation of the Church, a Christocentric Dispensation, from Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church, and (3) the future eschatological dispensation of Christ's 1000-year kingdom, theologically designated as the Millennium. There should be no blurring or confusion of Israel and the Church.

Dispensationalism is a system of interpreting human history expressed in terms of divine revelation. The inerrancy of the Word of God is the source for looking at history from the Divine Viewpoint. Therefore, dispensation is a technical theological term used primarily by the apostle Paul in the presentation of the mystery doctrine of this Church Age (Eph 3:8-10). In every dispensation, the plan of salvation is identical-God saves man by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from <http://chafer-cstn.org/BaseT/Glossary.htm> accessed November 14, 2012. See that page for all of the appropriate links.

## Eschatological Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Explanation
<b>The Dispensation of the Hypostatic Union</b>	The time period is at least 3–4 years of our Lord’s public ministry, and it may take in His entire physical life. This time period might be seen as a hinge between the Age of Israel and the Church Age. During this period of time, Jesus Christ fulfills all of the Mosaic Law and all of the prophecies of the Old Testament, while simultaneously living the spiritual life that would be utilized by believers today in the Church Age. As R. B. Thieme, Jr. used to say, our Lord <i>test drove</i> the spiritual life for us. We draw upon the exact same spiritual assets as our Lord did during His earthly ministry.
<b>Church Age</b>	This is the era in which we live right now, where God works through the church universal, which is through those who believe in Him. God also works primarily through the local church through the power of His Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. These are the means by which believers grow spiritually. Most divine good is produced in this age as a result of the correct function of the local church in guiding believers to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
<b>Mystery Doctrines</b>	Doctrines which are specific to the Church Age, e.g., the filling of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit, the universal priesthood. Like many technical words found in the Pauline epistles, Paul appropriated this word from another discipline and applied it to Christian doctrine. Originally, this word refers to <i>doctrines and principles known within a particular cult or organization, but not known to outsiders</i> . Paul used this word to apply the Church Age doctrines, which would not have been known to those in the Age of Israel. The word <i>mystery</i> simply refers to some aspect of Church Age doctrine. Rev. 16:25–26 1Cor. 2:7–8
<b>Rapture</b>	The rapture is when Jesus returns for believers in the Church Age. We will meet our Lord in the air. 1Cor. 15:51–54 1Thess. 4:15–17 2Thess. 2:1–3 <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The key Greek word in 2Thess. 2, is *apostasia* (ἀποστασία) [pronounced *ahp-os-tahs-EE-ah*], is often translated *a falling away, defection, forsaking, abandonment*; and transliterated *apostasy*; but it means *departure*. Strong’s #646.

## Eschatological Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Explanation
<b>Tribulation</b>	<p>The Tribulation will occur after the termination of the Church Age, which is the removal of all believers from planet earth via the rapture. The Tribulation will be a shortened 7 years prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, which is then followed by the Millennium. The Tribulation is actually the final 7 years of the Age of Israel, which was interrupted by the Church Age (which concept will be more thoroughly explained below). Matt. 24:15–31</p>
<b>Second Advent (= Second Coming)</b>	<p>Different from the rapture (which occurs at the beginning of the Tribulation), the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent is when Jesus returns and cleanses the earth of unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation and begins the next dispensation with His Millennial reign (which is presented in the gospels as <i>the Kingdom of God</i>). Matt. 24:27, 30–31, 36–39 Mark 14:61–62 Luke 9:26–27 17:30 Acts 1:11 Col. 3:4 1Thess. 5:2–4 Rev. 1:7 3:11.</p> <p>The 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent in connection with the Tribulation is often called, <i>the Day of the Lord</i>.</p>
<b>The Day of the Lord</b>	<p>This can refer to a portion of the Tribulation or to the return of Jesus Christ when He will destroy all of the armies who are converging upon nation Israel. Jer. 46:10 Matt. 24:3–51 Acts 2:20 1Thess. 5:2 (This phrase is also used for the end of the Millennium in 2Peter 3:10)</p>

## Eschatological Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Explanation
<b>Intercalation</b>	<p>In many Old Testament passages as well as in at least one New, the two advents of our Lord (His incarnation and then His return to this earth for judgment and reward) are presented as one event. That is, we go directly from the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent to the 2<sup>nd</sup>. However, <i>intercalated</i> between these two events is the Church Age. Examples of this: Psalm 2:6–9 22:22–23 96:11–13 110:2–3 146:7–10 Isa. 40:3–5 42:1 Jer. 33:14–16 Luke 17:22–30.</p> <p>Intercalation is the key to understanding Luke 4:16–21, where Jesus is reading Scripture in a synagogue and He stops mid-verse, and rolls the scroll back up. He stopped reading mid-verse in Isa. 61:2, and then said, “<b>Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.</b>” The rest of the verse, which Jesus did not read, continued on into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent of Christ. There are many more examples found in the <b>Doctrine of Intercalation</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (where I have color-coded the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents). If you are unaware of this concept, when you see these verses laid out—two dozen of them—where the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents are placed together but clearly distinguished by color-coding, it will be as if your eyes have just been opened. Let’s just say you will have a new-found respect for eschatology and the Word of God.</p>
<b>Baptism of Fire</b>	<p>The baptism of fire is when the earth is cleansed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent of all unbelievers. This is when all unbelievers are removed from the earth prior to the beginning of the Millennium. Malachi 3:2–3 Matt. 3:11 24:40–51 Luke 3:16–17 2Thess. 1:7–10 1Peter 1:12 4:7. Some people confuse rapture passages with baptism of fire passages. With the rapture, believers are removed from the earth, and they meet the Lord in the air. Then the Tribulation begins with unbelievers only on the earth. In the baptism of fire, which occurs a shortened 7 years later, unbelievers are removed from this earth and believers are left behind. The Millennium then begins with believers only.</p>

## Eschatological Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Explanation
<b>Baptism of Fire (Chafer)</b> <sup>3</sup>	<p>The baptism of fire is the judgment of the Tribulational unbelievers at the Second Advent (2Thessalonians 1:7-9). They are removed from the earth and placed in fire for 1,000 years until the Last Judgment. Both Jews and Gentiles who are tribulational unbelievers are involved in this Second Advent judgment. This judgment takes place before the Millennium and includes unbelievers only. (Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17) There are five parables which describe the baptism of fire:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The wheat and the tares, (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-40);</li> <li>(2) The good and bad fish, (Matthew 13:47-50);</li> <li>(3) The ten virgins, (Matthew 25:1-13);</li> <li>(4) The sheep and the goats, (Matthew 25:31-46); and</li> <li>(5) The talent test, (Matthew 25:14-30).</li> </ol>
<b>Millennium</b>	<p>The Millennium is the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. This is the Kingdom of God which Jesus offered to the Jews and which they rejected during His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent. This is a time of perfect environment. However, at the very end of the Millennium, Satan will be loosed from his bonds and he will lead a rebellion against God and against perfect environment. Psalm 72 Isa. 11:1-9 John 8:44 Rev. 20:1-3.</p>

Explaining each of these words completely and going over the passages where they are found would expand this one lesson by 10-fold. However, notice which two predilections of man are dealt with. Have you known unbelievers who think that their lives would be so much better if God was removed from it? They will go to all sorts of trouble to keep even crosses from being seen (in [Skinner Butte](#), at the [site of 9/11](#)). In the Tribulation, unbelievers will have the chance to show how they can, with Satan's help, run the world. Although this time period will begin with unbelievers only; believers will emerge (something that unbelievers will try to stamp out). Another concern of mankind is the idea of perfect environment. We tend to think that, if we could just make our environment better, then our lives would be good. In the Millennium, mankind will live in perfect environment some will still rebel against Jesus Christ in the end.

There are some believers who do not believe in dispensationalism. However, it is very difficult to explain the use of the words *mystery* or *dispensation* or *epoch (age)* in the Bible without using dispensational theology. However, the very fact that your pastor does not haul a baby lamb in front of the congregation and slice his throat open every Saturday should offer the simple observable proof that things are done differently in the Old and New Testaments, in the Age of Israel as over against the Church Age.

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<sup>3</sup> Taken From <http://chafer-cstn.org/BaseT/Glossary.htm> accessed November 14, 2012. See that page for the links.

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You will notice that some of these words and phrases are used in the Bible (*day of the Lord*) and some are not (like *intercalation*). It is not unusual for theology to develop theological terms not found in the Bible (such as, the word *Trinity*).

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One of the more thorough listings of Scripture for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent:  
<http://www.jesuiscoming.com/Scripture.htm> accessed July 4, 2012.

The **Doctrine of Intercalation**, which includes not only a listing of all the Scripture, but how it is broken down between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Advents: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

The **Doctrine of the Baptism of Fire** is found [here](#) and [here](#).

**Eschatology (future events), in a nutshell:** Jesus was born of a virgin, had a 3 year public ministry and died on the cross for our sins—this was His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent. His life is sometimes called the *Dispensation of the Hypostatic Union*. After Jesus died physically, was resurrected and finally ascended, the *Church Age* began (Acts 1:7–9). The *church age* continues until believers in the Church Age are *raptured* from this earth, where we meet the Lord in the air (1Thess. 4:17). Because there are no believers left on the earth, the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit is removed (2Thess. 2:7). The *Age of Israel* is then continued<sup>4</sup> and concluded, and the final 7 years of the *Age of Israel* occurs, which is known as the *Tribulation* (Matt. 24:21). This era is known as the Tribulation because all believers have been removed from the earth and the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit with them (Luke 21:9–12). There is nothing to hold back unbelievers anymore. At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus will return to the earth, to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4), which is His 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent (the *Tribulation* and 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent together are known as the *Day of the Lord*). At this time, He will cleanse the earth with fire (the *baptism of fire*) after killing millions who have come to destroy Israel (Rev. 14:20).<sup>5</sup> In the Old Testament, there was no clear separation between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Advents of our Lord; however, *intercalated* between these advents is the *Church Age*. After the *baptism of fire*, the *Millennial* reign of Christ will commence.

These two events are often confused and parables designed to teach one are often mistaken for the other.

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<sup>4</sup> I have glossed over this part, but there is a reasonable explanation [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). These all give roughly the same explanation, based upon Daniel's 70 weeks (or, Daniel's 70 sevens).

<sup>5</sup> When I first heard this as a young Christian, it seemed odd that so many powers on this earth would combine to attack Israel. Then, after seeing the [racial changes](#) occurring in Europe (search Muslim Demographics in YouTube if this has been removed) and the incredible hatred expressed by the various Muslim nations, this is not so difficult to believe any more.

## Chief Differences Between the Rapture and the Baptism of Fire

	Rapture	Baptism of Fire
Description	Jesus Christ returns for believers and takes them up. That which was corruptible becomes incorruptible. John 14:3 1Cor. 15:52–54	Jesus Christ removes unbelievers from the earth, which begins the Millennium. Ezek. 20:34–38 Matt. 3:11–12 25:31–46
Association	A part of Church Age mystery doctrines. 1Cor. 15:51	Found in the Old and New Testaments and associated with the Day of the Lord and the Kingdom of Heaven. Psalm 21:9 Isa. 66:15–16 Micah 4:12
Blessing vs. cursing	The rapture is associated with blessing. 1Thess. 4:18	The baptism of fire is associated with cursing and judgment. Matt. 3:11–12 25:31–32, 46 Luke 3:16–17 2Thess. 1:8–9 Jude 15 Rev. 6:15–17
The location of the Lord	He will meet us in the air. Acts 1:11 1Thess. 4:17	His feet will rest upon the Mount of Olives. Zech. 14:4
Where	We meet the Lord in the air. 1Thess. 4:17	This occurs on the earth. Nothing is said about meeting the Lord, as these are unbelievers who are removed. Matt. 24:37–
When	At the end of the Church Age before the Tribulation begins. 2Thess. 2:1–4, 7 John 4:1	Seven years later at the end of the Tribulation before the Millennium begins.
Symbolized by...	John being “called up” between the Church Age and the Tribulation in Rev. 4:1	Symbolized by the people of the earth being destroyed by the flood, while Noah and his family were preserved. Matt. 24:37–41
What happens on earth	The Tribulation begins with unbelievers only. Believers are removed from the earth. The Holy Spirit that restrains will be taken out of the way. 2Thess. 2:7	The Millennium begins with believers only. Matt. 25:34
End result	We join with the Lord and will always be with Him as a part of a heavenly kingdom. Philip. 3:20–21	Unbelievers are cast into eternal judgment. Matt. 8:11–12 24:50–51



It is the baptism of fire that is associated with many parables. The wheat and the tares (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43); the good man of the house (Matt 25:1-13); the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13); the sheep and goats (Matt 25: 31-46); the talent test (Matt 25: 14-30).

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If the rapture is confounded with the baptism of fire or with the second coming of our Lord, then the dispensations themselves are confounded. The Tribulation would not be the end of the Age of Israel; it would also be the culmination of the Church Age, so that these eras would overlap.

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There is also a certain logic in separating the rapture from the baptism of fire. Removing believers from the earth, and therefore the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit, logically results in things on the earth going awry (which is a subtle description of the Tribulation).

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There are two alternatives given to the pre-tribulational rapture: (1) a mid-tribulational rapture or (2) a post-tribulational rapture.

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In the middle of the Tribulation, when the abomination of desolation occurs (the raising up of the statue of the beast in the Temple), there are very specific directions given to believers at that point in time. Now, if they are about to be raptured, this makes less sense for them to receive these directions, which are given apart from a promise of an impending rapture (Matt. 24:15–21 Luke 21:20–21).

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Let's logically look at a post-tribulational rapture. First of all, what brings about the Tribulation in the first place? Does it just start happening? Is there an actual day that it begins? In a pre-tribulational rapture, we have the Church Age, the rapture (which includes the removing of the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit) and the beginning of the Tribulation. All very neat and orderly, which is typical of God. Also, logical, as the removal of the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit would be coterminous with the removal of believers who are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.

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If there is a post-tribulational rapture, then believers are removed from the earth to meet the Lord in the air—I suppose to remove them all from imminent danger?—but then, the Lord then returns immediately (1 minute later? 5 minutes? A few days?) to the earth with all of these believers, to destroy the armies around Israel and, soon thereafter, to remove the unbelievers from the earth. Here is where the baptism of fire is confusing. How do you begin separating the wheat from the chaff or why do you need to separate the wheat from the chaff if all of the wheat is already with you; and all the chaff is on the earth. How does it make sense for two workers to be working in the field and one of them is taken? Whereas the baptism of fire is both a separation and a judgment, that separation would have already taken place with the rapture.

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[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

And so that we can not confuse the rapture with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent. This chart probably came from R. B. Thieme, Jr. notes originally.

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## The Rapture Distinguished from the Second Coming

The Rapture	The Second Coming
Jesus returns for believers on, whom He meets in the air. Acts 1:11 1Thess. 4:17	Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation to execute judgment on the earth. 2Thess. 1:7-9
Only believers see Christ. The rapture is private. Heb. 9:28 Acts 1:11	Every eye shall see Him. The Second Coming of Christ is public. Matt. 24:37 Rev. 1:7
Christ meets believers in the air. 1Thess. 4:17	Christ sets foot on the Mount of Olives. Zech. 14:4
Believers are taken off the earth. John 14:3	At the Second Coming, unbelievers are taken off the earth. Mt. 24:37f
Believers go to heaven. 1Thess. 4:17	At the Second Coming, believers come back to earth with Christ. 1Thess. 3:13 Col. 3:4 2Thess 2:10 4:13 Zech. 14:5
There is no timetable for the rapture. When it happens, the Church Age is suddenly ended, because believers are removed from the earth and the Holy Spirit no longer acts to restrain. 2Thess. 2:6-7	The Second Coming is seven years after the rapture, although no man knows the day or the hour. Matt. 24:29-30
Believers are rewarded. 1Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 22:12	Unbelievers are judged at the Second Coming; the Baptism of Fire takes place, Matt. 25:31,32,46
The Rapture is a source of comfort to the believer. 1Thess. 4:18	The Second Coming of Christ is a source of terror for the unbeliever. Rev. 6:15-17
There are no changes in nature associated with the Rapture	There are many changes in nature associated with the Second Coming. Isa. 35
The world is not judged at the Rapture.	The people of the world are judged at the Second Coming. Jude 15
The Rapture is a mystery of the Church Age. 1 Cor. 15:51	The Second Coming is the subject of extensive prophecy in the Old Testament.
The unconditional covenants such as those with Abraham and David are not fulfilled at the Rapture.	The covenants are fulfilled at the Second Coming; Israel inherits her possessions.
There is no dealing with Satan or demons at the Rapture.	At the Second Coming, Satan is bound for a thousand years. Rev. 20:2

Notes from <http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/rapture.html> accessed November 14, 2012. These are probably notes from R. B. Thieme, Jr. originally.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

**For Additional study:**

<b>Dispensations</b>	(Robby Dean: <a href="#">HTML</a> ) (Kukis: <a href="#">HTML</a> <a href="#">PDF</a> <a href="#">WPD</a> )
<b>Doctrine of Intercalation</b>	(Kukis: <a href="#">HTML</a> <a href="#">PDF</a> <a href="#">WPD</a> )
<b>Doctrine of the Church Age</b>	(Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries: <a href="#">PDF</a> )
<b>Doctrine of the Mystery</b>	(Bible Doctrine Resources: <a href="#">HTML</a> )
<b>Doctrine of the Rapture</b>	(Maranatha Church: <a href="#">HTML</a> ) (Bible Doctrine Resources: <a href="#">HTML</a> ) (Bible Topics Library: <a href="#">HTML</a> <a href="#">DOC</a> )
<b>The Baptism of Fire</b>	(Sonnet: <a href="#">PDF</a> )
<b>Doctrine of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent</b>	(Bible Topics Library: <a href="#">HTML</a> <a href="#">DOC</a> ) (Bible Doctrine Resources: <a href="#">HTML</a> ) (Wenstrom: <a href="#">PDF</a> )
<b>Doctrine of the Millennium</b>	(Bible Doctrine Resources: <a href="#">HTML</a> ) (Maranatha Church: <a href="#">HTML</a> )

If for any reason you need some convincing on these topics, explore first the Doctrine of [Dispensations](#) and then the Doctrine of [Intercalation](#).