

Understanding the Future

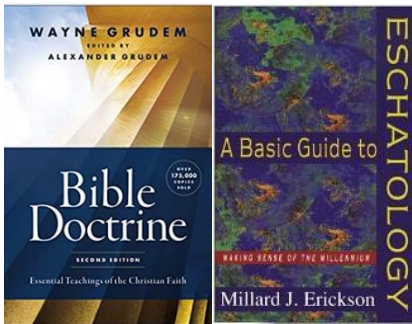
What God Says About What's to Come: The Doctrine of Eschatology

Eschatology Th401 (1 hour)

A study of the doctrine of last things, comprising both the personal and the general aspects. Reviews the history of eschatological doctrine throughout the church age and examines the interpretational foundations of the major schools of thought. Reflects on the scope of Biblical history, and gives special attention to the return of Christ, the Great Tribulation, the millennium, the final judgments, and the eternal state.

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Texts: In this course, we will use two books: Wayne Grudem's condensed theological text *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* and Millard Erickson's brief *A Basic Guide to Eschatology*. The first textbook briefly and helpfully surveys the essential elements of the doctrine of the future. The second more closely examines the millennial and rapture views in a way that balances historical perspective and scriptural analysis.

Lecture Schedule

Date	Quiz	Topic Focus
Monday, August 15 th		Why does the Future Matter? The Story of Humanity, Creation, and God
Tuesday, August 16 th	Quiz 1	Your Personal Future Death and the Place of the Dead The Undisputed Core
Wednesday, August 17 th	Quiz 2	A History of the Future How do We Understand Hard Texts? Discovering the Anchors in the Bible
Thursday, August 18 th	Quiz 3	Christ Reigns: Anchor Texts and Ideas of Amillennialism Gospel Power: Anchor Texts and Ideas of Postmillennialism
Friday, August 19 th	Quiz 4	People of God: Anchor Texts and Ideas of Premillennialism The Worst Time in History: Understanding the Tribulation
Saturday, August 20 th	Quiz 5	The Resurrection(s) The Final Judgment of the Righteous and Wicked The Eternal State: Heaven, Hell, and the Restoration

Class Work:

- Bible reading:** Read the book of Daniel, Jeremiah 30-55, Matthew 23-25, the book of Romans, the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and the book of Revelation. This is class reading, so if you have recently read any of this in your own personal reading, or for any other reason, please do read it again – though, if that is your situation, it would be profitable to read it in a different translation than the one you recently read. This is a total of about 150 pages (though that number will vary considerably depending on the translation and edition of your Bible). If you spend 30-40 minutes per day on the reading, you should be able to finish all of the assigned Bible reading in one week.

- **Textbook reading:** In this course, we will use two books: Wayne Grudem’s condensed theological text *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* and Millard Erickson’s brief *A Basic Guide to Eschatology*. The first textbook briefly and helpfully surveys the essential elements of the doctrine of the future. The second more closely examines the millennial and rapture views in a way that balances historical perspective and scriptural analysis.
 - a. **Grudem:** Chapters 25, 31, 32, 33, and 34
 - b. **Erickson:** Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and the Conclusion
 - c. I recommend that you begin with Grudem and then move on to Erickson; Grudem will give you a good framework which Erickson will explore in more depth.
 - d. As you do the readings in the textbooks, either write notes and highlight in the book as you do each reading, or to use a notebook in the same way. This will help you to read actively and be involved in a mental dialogue with the authors, so that you engage as much as possible with the ideas in the text.
 - e. Each of the chapters by Grudem has study questions, which you should answer in your notebook and turn into the teacher when you turn in the readings. For the Erickson readings, taking your own notes in your notebook is sufficient.
- **Projects:** There are three writing projects in this class.
 - a. **Devotional Project:** Compose a written prayer of praise, thanksgiving, and meditation on the return of Jesus Christ. Your prayer should be about 750 words long, and you should write it over the course of at least three separate sessions. Your prayer will receive a completion grade only (that is, I will not be critiquing it).
 - b. **Pastoral Project:** Write a sermon, challenge, or Bible study lesson (whichever is most suitable to your situation and ministry) on the topic of the Last Judgment. You should deal with the judgment of both the saved and the unsaved. Your project should be about 1500 words long.
 - c. **Theological Project:** Write a paper explaining which basic interpretive position for eschatology is most biblically convincing to you. Give clear support for your opinion with compelling reasons and strong evidence; as part of your argumentation, you must deal with the most major objections of opposing views. Your paper should be about 2000 words long and should include a simple bibliography (title and author is sufficient) of at least five works you consulted during the writing process.
- **Quizzes:** Each class day (except for Monday) will begin with a quiz on the previous day’s information.

Class Work Schedule

Reading	Best By ¹	Project Due
Daniel & Jeremiah :: All Grudem readings	August 5 th	
Matthew, Romans, & Thess. :: Erickson 3-6	August 12 th	
Revelation :: Erickson 7-Conclusion	August 19 th	
--	Monday, August 22 nd	Devotional
--	Monday, August 29 th	Pastoral
--	Monday, Sept. 5 th	Theological

¹ These are not due dates – all of the readings (textbook and Bible) are due at the beginning of class on Monday, August 15th (though the projects *are* due on the dates listed above). However, for maximum comprehension and information retention, your instructor *strongly suggests* spacing out your readings this way. It’s up to you to make the best use of your time.