

**SYSTEMATIC
THEOLOGY
502
DISTANCE**

ESCHATOLOGY

THE REV'D T. L. HOLTZEN, PH.D.



ESCHATOLOGY

The word eschatology comes from Greek 'τα εσχατα', meaning 'the last things'. It is a Christian belief that as the world has a beginning, it will also have an end when Christ comes again to judge the living and the dead.

- Christian teaching hold that the world has a *telos* τέλος – completion, fulfillment, consummation
- Eschatology affects all Christian doctrines
- Eschatology in History
 - Papias (c. 60-130 AD). Papias was the Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor believed there would be a millennium or a period of 1000 years after the Resurrection during which the Kingdom of Christ would be set up in material form. In this earthly millennium Papias says among other things, 'each grape crushed will yield twenty-five measures of wine'. (Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 322)
 - Augustine (354-430), thought that as creation took place in seven days world history would take place in seven epochs as well. Six periods of toil would end with the seventh day of Sabbath rest. Then after the seventh day, the consummation of history happened and the end of the world came with God's eternal reign.
 - Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135-1202). Joachim believed in a Trinitarian conception of history with three ages, the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit. The Age of the Father was the OT period in which man lived under the Law. The age of the Son is the age of Grace and it lasted from Christ to 42 generations of thirty years each after Christ's death and Resurrection. The last age is the age of the Spirit in which Joachim believed there would be a revival of true Christianity. The world would then end with God's Triune rule at its consummation.
 - An Anglican Archbishop named James Ussher (1581-1656) tried to date the world according to biblical chronology. He believed the world began in 4004 BC. He held that there was approximately 2000 years from Adam to Abraham, and 2000 Years from Abraham to Christ.



BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

Biblical eschatology is found throughout Scripture. Since God's promise to Abraham of one through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed, there has been a messianic expectation, that, when combined with the prophetic 'Day of the Lord', created the expectation that the Messiah would deliver Israel from her enemies.

- OT Eschatology (two strands)
 - This worldly (i.e., Justice, Peace, and Prosperity Isaiah 9:2-7)
 - Apocalyptic (from the Greek ἀποκάλυψις meaning a revelation, disclosure, uncovering)
 - Son of Man in Daniel 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.' (Dan 7.13-14)
- NT Eschatology
 - Jesus will come again at the end of time
 - Prophecies of Jesus' Second Coming or Parousia (παρουσία from Greek meaning presence, coming, advent)—in Mark 13:5, 21-23, 26-36
 - A sense of urgency in preparing for the end, 'Parable of the 10 Virgins' and lamps of oil (five run out of oil and leave to get more oil before the bridegroom returns (Mt 25:1),
 - 'be alert!' Matt 24; Mark 13)
 - Jesus is identified with the Son of Man, Mt 5.11, Mk 13
 - Kingdom of God is present with Jesus (Luke 11:20), 'Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand' Matt 4:17)
- Pauline Eschatology
 - Parousia or the Second Coming of Christ
 - The 'Day of the Lord' in the OT is said to be the day of Christ's return
 - 'For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. . . . For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.' (1 Thess 4:2, 16-17)
- Johannine Eschatology
 - A series of visions about the end of the world
 - The images of the Book of Revelation are common in our culture: the number of the beast as 666, Babylon as a great harlot, Satan as a great dragon, Armageddon the final battle between good and evil, the seven seals, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, stars falling from the sky, the moon turning blood red, the sun being darkened, the last trumpet, bowls of wrath, Babylon the great, the numbers 7, 12, 1000, 666, 144,000
 - Armageddon - a cosmic battle between Good and evil, God and Satan in the valley of Megiddo from which Armageddon takes its name (Rev 16:16, Isa 13)



THE KINGDOM OF GOD

How you understand the kingdom of God will determine what eschatology you adopt.

- Is the kingdom of God a purely future event that happens when Christ returns?
 - Or is the kingdom of God realized here and now?
 - Or is the kingdom of God breaking into this world?
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- The Kingdom of God
 - Scripture teaches that while the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom that exists in this world through the Church
 - The kingdom of God is, therefore, neither to be strictly identified with the Church or the world
 - Jesus said to Pontius Pilate 'My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world (John 18:36)
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- The Presence of the Kingdom
 - Jesus teaches that wherever he is present, there is God's kingdom
 - 'But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you' (Matt 12:28)
 - 'the kingdom of God has come with power' (Mark 9:1)
 - 'you can receive the kingdom of God (Mark 10:14)
 - 'the kingdom of God has come near you (Luke 10:9, 11)
 - 'the kingdom of God has come upon you' (Luke 11:20)
 - 'whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child' (Luke 18:17)

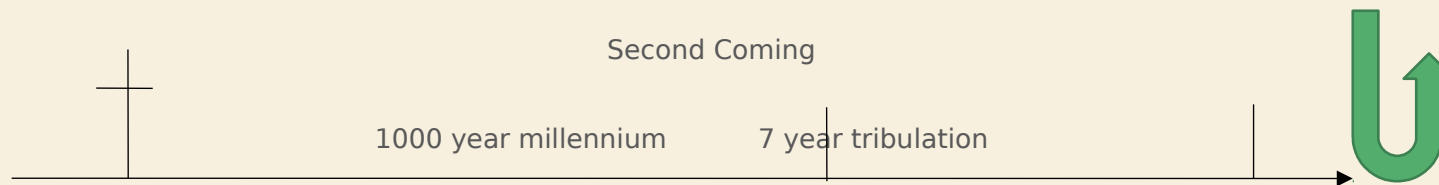


FUTURIST ESCHATOLOGY

Futurist eschatology understands the kingdom of God to be a future reality associated with the Second Coming of Christ.

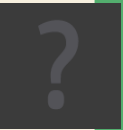
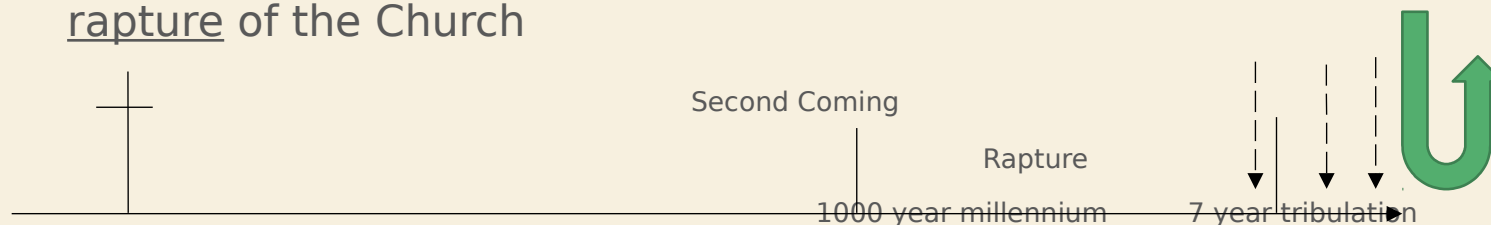
1. Understands the kingdom of God as a future spiritual kingdom beginning at the Second Coming of Christ
2. Belief in a literal millennium of 1000 years
3. Belief in a literal 7 years of tribulation

- Classic Futurist



- Dispensationalism

- Dispensationalism holds either a pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture of the Church



REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY

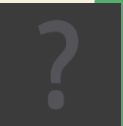
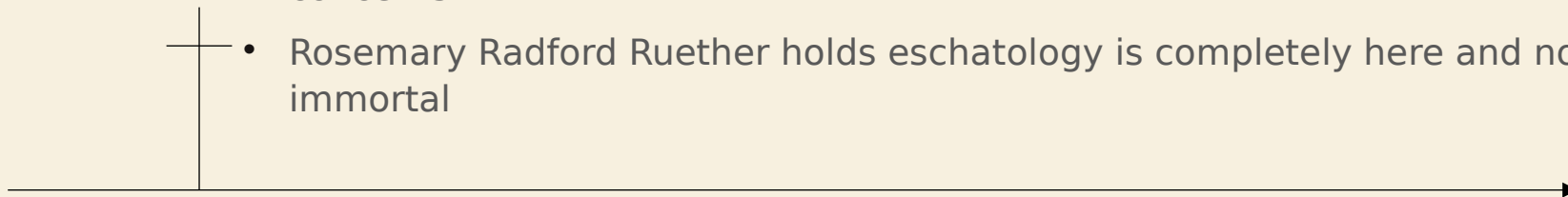
Realized Eschatology holds that the kingdom of God is realized in time and that Christ will not return again and there is no Second Coming.

1. Existentialist Realized Eschatology (Bultmann)

- Live in such a way as to bring out the kingdom of God in our own life (no social dimension to the kingdom of God)
- Apocalyptic writings are based on ancient Mythology and do not apply to today's cosmology
- The Kingdom of God has already been realized in the coming of Jesus
 - a) meaning of Kingdom of God is subjective, there is no divine judgment, only our judgment of ourselves about what has taken place for us in Christ matters
 - b) We have an existential trust in the Kingdom of God above all things

2. Liberationist Realized Eschatology

- Kingdom of God is here and now and exists as in political, economic, and social concerns
- Rosemary Radford Ruether holds eschatology is completely here and now, soul is not immortal



INAUGURATED

Inaugurated eschatology means that the kingdom of God has begun in history yet it is not complete fulfilled until the return of Christ.

ESCHATOLOGY

- ‘Already but not yet’—Christ has already started his kingdom spiritually but it will not be consummated until the wedding supper of the Lamb when Jesus receives the Church as the bride of Christ
- Apocalyptic images are symbolic
 1. Literal symbolism 1000 year millennium is real, just not literal—the millennium refers to the Church age
 2. Non-literal symbolism, good triumphs over evil

