

END TIMES

1. Ubiquity.

- a. Every worldview has an eschatology, a view of the end times.
 - (1) ISIS: <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.
 - (2) Foreign Affairs: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/anthologies/2018-07-12/which-world-are-we-living>.
 - (3) Atheism:
 - (4) Pantheism:
 - (5) Islam:
 - (6) Mormonism:
- b. There is a very human need to know what, ultimately, is going to happen. It is part of the human condition. What's going to happen to us? Where is history heading? Does good triumph over evil?
 - (1) **Ec 3:11** 11 ...[God] has put eternity into man's heart....

2. Importance.

- a. What the Bible teaches about the end times is essential to the Christian faith.
 - (1) "...He [Jesus] ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in... the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."¹
 - (2) "From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology...."²
 - (3) Eschatology is a spirit, an outlook, a framework within which all of theology is to be conducted. The eschatological so interpenetrates the rest of Christianity's themes that one cannot extricate, eliminate or ignore it without ruining the whole.³
 - (a) **Ac 28:30-31** 30 [Paul] lived there [under house arrest in Rome] two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Messiah....
 - (4) "Apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology."⁴
 - (5) "If you don't have eschatology, you don't have anything. Read how the story ends."⁵
- b. God expects us to know, understand, and believe what he says about the end times.
 - (1) **Re 1:-3** 1 The revelation of Jesus Messiah, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Messiah, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the

¹ The Apostles' Creed (c. 150).

² Jurgen Moltmann (b. 1926), *Theology of Hope* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 16.

³ Jurgen Moltmann (b. 1926), *Theology of Hope* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993).

⁴ Ernst Käsemann (1906-98).

⁵ David Klingler, Dallas Theological Seminary.

words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

- c. The end times was a focus of the early church.
 - (1) "...Observe, children, what [God] finished in six days means. It means this: that in six thousand years the Lord will bring everything to an end, for with him a day signifies a thousand years. And he himself bears me witness when he says, Behold, the day of the Lord will be as a thousand years. Therefore, children, in six days—that is, in six thousand years—everything will be brought to an end. And he rested on the seventh day. This means: when his Son comes, he will destroy the time of the lawless one and will judge the ungodly and will change the sun and the moon and the stars, and then he will truly rest on the seventh day. ...Finally, he says to them: I cannot bear your new moons and sabbaths. You see what he means: it is not the present sabbaths that are acceptable to me, but the one that I have made; on that Sabbath, after I have set everything at rest, I will create the beginning of an eighth day, which is the beginning of another world. This is why we spend the eighth day in celebration, the day on which Jesus both arose from the dead and, after appearing again, ascended into heaven."⁶
 - d. Church leaders need to have answers on questions related to the details of eschatology.⁷

3. Attitude.

- a. Hope and Perseverance.
 - (1) **Ro 8:18-25** 18 ...The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.
 - (2) "In all its forms and individual themes biblical eschatology has to do with the overcoming of wickedness and evil.... The society of the kingdom of God rests on the defeat of the injustice that is the root of the lack of peace in human relations and in those between states and peoples."⁸
- b. Longing.
 - (1) **Re 22:20** 20 He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

⁶ *Epistle to Barnabas* 15.4-9, in Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 315-317. The *Epistle to Barnabas* could have preceded the book of *Revelation*.

⁷ Michael Svigel, Dallas Theological Seminary.

⁸ Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014), *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 3:637.

- c. Eschatology is the study of the interesting and exciting way God will end the antithesis between good and evil.

4. Four Basic Views.

- a. Idealism: symbols or events only represent timeless truths that continually recur.
- b. Preterism: fulfilment takes place contemporaneously with the biblical account.
- c. Historicism: At the time, the events were still future, but now they have occurred.
(1) Both preterism and histories are “realised eschatology.”
- d. Futurism: There will be an end time when all the events will come to pass. Among futurists there are three major views:

(1) Amillennialism: [].

(2) Postmillennialism: [].

(3) Premillennialism: [].

(a) In some evangelical circles, premillennialism is on the decline:

1) In August 2019, the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) voted to drop the word “premillennial” from its statement of faith.

(b) Among premillennialists, there are three major views:

1) Pre-tribulation rapture:

2) Mid-tribulation rapture:

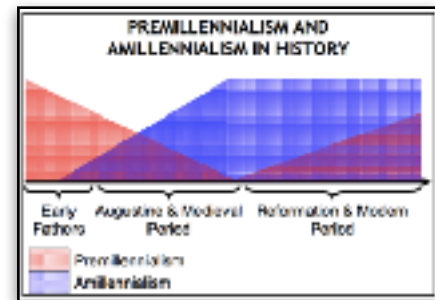
3) Post-tribulation rapture:

e. There is some room for disagreement among Christians on eschatology.

(1) “True Christians *can* hold to different (and unique) views of the end times without going out of bounds.”⁹

(2) That the heaven-born kingdom of God will one day conquer all man-made powers, nobody disputes. *How* and *when* this will happen has been disputed.

f. Every believer should come to his/her own biblical conclusions about the end times.



5. Heresy.

Heretical or Heterodox Views of the End Times

| FALSE | TRUE |
|--|--|
| Jesus returned in a spiritual sense with the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost. | Jesus' return is bodily, future and literal. |
| Jesus returns only in a personal sense to each individual who believes (Ac 9:3-5; Col 1:27). | |
| Jesus comes to take each believer to heaven when he dies (Jn 14:3). | |
| Man's resurrection is only spiritual. There is no bodily resurrection (Gnosticism). | Our resurrection is bodily, future, and literal. |

⁹ Michael Svigel, Dallas Theological Seminary.

| FALSE | TRUE |
|--|--|
| Purgatory. After death, baptized Christians undergo a further purging of sins that were not satisfied in this life. | Purgatory is a late development that neither the Eastern Orthodox nor Protestants accepts. |
| Soul sleep. Human souls are mortal, so there's no conscious existence beyond physical death. Only at the resurrection will people again experience conscious existence. The dead rest in an unconscious state until the day of judgment. | At death, believers will be face to face with Jesus |
| Annihilationism. The fires of hell symbolize the utter destruction (not eternal suffering) of the wicked (Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists). | Unbelievers will experience conscious suffering in the lake of fire forever. |
| Universalism. All people will ultimately be saved. No one will face eternity without God. | |

6. The Dispensational, Futurist, Premillennial, Pre-tribulation Rapture Viewpoint.

- a. Committed to a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic, one should come to believe in: (1) dispensationalism; (2) futurism; (3) premillennialism; and (4) pretribulationism.
- b. I am dispensational, futurist, premillennial, and pretribulationist, as defended from a biblical, historical, and theological perspective.
- c. When it comes to the fulfilment of prophecy, we are to expect supernatural, not natural events, and precise fulfilment.
- d. Premillennialism is what the early church believed.

Ask the Right Questions in the Right Order (Dr. Michael Svigel)

| | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | Is the return of Christ literal? | Yes. |
| 2 | Is the return of Christ future? | Yes. |
| 3 | Is the return of Christ premillennial? | Yes. |
| 4 | Is the tribulation period future? | Yes. |
| 5 | Is the rapture before the tribulation? | Yes. |

7. Key Events.

- a. The Rapture.
 - (1) When Church age believers die, their soul departs the body and immediately and consciously enters the presence of Jesus.
 - (a) **Lk 23:43** 43 And [Jesus] said to him, Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.
 - (b) **2 Co 5:8** 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord [Jesus].
 - (c) **Php 1:22-24** 22 If I [Paul] am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Messiah, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.
 - (2) At the end of the Church age, at the Rapture, Jesus will immediately receive to himself in the air all Church age believers, both dead and alive.

- (a) **Jn 14:3** 3 And if I [Jesus] go and prepare a place for you [disciples], I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
- (b) **Ro 2:9-10** 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory, honour, and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.
- (c) **1 Co 15:51-53** 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.
- (d) **1 Th 1:10** 10 ...And to wait for [God's] Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
- (e) **1 Th 4:13-5:11** 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord [Jesus], that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Messiah will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, There is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers and sisters, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But because we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for [tribulational] wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Messiah, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
- (f) **Ti 2:13** 13 ...Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Messiah....
- (g) **2 Pe 2:9** 9 ...Then the Lord [Jesus] knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment....

- (h) **Re 3:10** 10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.
- (i) **Re 12:5** 5 She gave birth to a male child [the Church], one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child [the Church] was caught up to God and to his throne....
- b. The Judgment Seat of Messiah and Wedding of the Lamb.
 - (1) In heaven, every Church age believer will stand before the judgment seat of Messiah and give an account to God.
 - (a) **Ro 14:10-12** 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.... 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.
 - (b) **1 Co 3:11-15** 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Messiah. 12 Now if anyone [any believer] builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.
 - (c) **1 Co 4:5** 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord [Jesus] comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.
 - (d) **2 Co 5:9-10** 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.
 - (e) **2 Ti 4:8** 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me [Paul] the crown of righteousness, which the Lord [Jesus], the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
 - (f) **Jas 1:12** 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
 - (g) **2 Pe 1:10-11** 10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Messiah.
 - (2) Then Jesus, the bridegroom, will marry his Church, the bride. The greatest wedding supper of all time will be celebrated.
 - (a) **Re 19:7-9** 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give [God] the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb [Jesus] has come, and his Bride [the Church] has made herself ready. 8 It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints [recognised at the Judgment Seat]. 9 And the angel said to me, Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

c. The Tribulation.

- (1) After the Rapture, the seven-year Tribulation, Daniel's seventieth week, will begin.
 - (a) **Da 9:26-27** 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one [Jesus] shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come [Antimesiah] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he [Antimesiah] shall make a strong covenant with the many [Israel] for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.
 - (b) **2 Th 2:1-12** 1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Messiah and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains [the Spirit working through the Church] it will do so until he [the Spirit] is out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power, false signs, and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
 - (c) **2 Pe 3:9-10** 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief....
- (2) The second half of the Tribulation is the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's distress, when Antichrist will rule.
 - (a) **Da 7:25** 25 He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.
 - (b) **Da 9:27** 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.

- (c) **Da 12:7** 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.
- (d) **Mt 24:15-22** 15 So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.
- (e) **Jer 30:5-7** 5 Thus says Yahweh: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. 6 Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? 7 Alas! That day is so great there is none like it. It is a time of distress for Jacob, yet he shall be saved out of it.
- (f) See Eze 38-39
- (3) There will be Jewish and Gentile believers coming out of the Great Tribulation.
 - (a) **Re 7:11-13** 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God 12 saying, Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen. 13 Then one of the elders addressed me saying, Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come? 14 I said to him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are the ones coming out of the Great Tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

XXX

d. Jesus' Second Coming.

(1) At end the Great Tribulation Jesus will return, conquer the Antichrist and his associates, and have Satan thrown into the abyss for one thousand years.

(a) Matt 24:27; Zech 14:1-8; 2 Thess 1:6-10; 2:8; Rev 19:11-21; Rev 20:1-3

e. The Messianic Kingdom.

(1) All church age believers will receive a resurrection body like Jesus' glorious body.

(a) Job 19:25-26; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2; 1 Cor 15:51-57; Phil 3:20-21; Rev 20:4-6

(b) All human beings who have died will be resurrected either at the first resurrection or the second resurrection (Job 19:25-26; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2).

(c) Jesus will then establish his future, literal Messianic kingdom on earth for one thousand years, Church age believers ruling with him.

- (d) Luke 24:4-7; Acts 1:9-11; Rev 22:20-21; Matt 19:28-30; Acts 1:3-7; 3:19-21; Rom 11:25-27
- (2) Jesus currently sits at the Father's right hand, but he is not yet ruling from David's throne in Jerusalem (2 Sam 7; Matt 19:28; 25:31; Heb 8:1-2; Rev 3:21; 11:15-18; 20:4). The Davidic covenant awaits fulfillment in the Messianic kingdom. Christ is Prophet at his first coming, Priest during the Church Age, and King as his second coming (Dr. Michael Svigel).
- (3) Regarding the New Covenant, by virtue of the Church's identification with Christ, the Church's relationship to the New Covenant is the same as Christ's relationship to it. Christ and the Church will be the mediators through which the New Covenant will be literally fulfilled toward Israel in the Messianic Kingdom (2 Cor 3:6; Dr. Michael Svigel).
 - (a) Apostles' Creed; the Nicene Creed
- (4) Jesus will regather the remnant of Jewish believers and restore them to the land of Israel.
- (5) Righteousness and peace will prevail over the entire earth. The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord.
 - (a) Isa 11:4-5; Isa 11:6; Isa 11:9; Rom 8:18-21
- f. Great White Throne Judgment.
 - (1) At the end of the Messianic kingdom, Satan will be released, defeated a final time, and then thrown into the lake of fire.
 - (a) Rev 20:7-10. Concepts such as purgatory, soul sleep, and annihilationism lack Scriptural support and must be rejected (Matt 18:6; 25:41-46; Luke 11:37-52; 16:9-13; Jude 6-7; Rev 14:9-11; 20:10).
 - (2) Then all unbelievers will be bodily resurrected, appear before God's great white throne, be judged according to their deeds, and thrown in the lake of fire to experience eternal conscious punishment.
 - (a) Dan 12:2; Matt 25:41, 46; John 5:28-29; 2 Thess 1:9; Jud 7; Rev 20:11-15
- g. New Heavens and Earth.
 - (1) The Trinity will then establish a new heaven and earth, including a new Jerusalem.
 - (a) 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 21:1-22:5.
 - (2) The Trinity will dwell with believers from all ages, wiping away all tears from their eyes.
 - (a) Rev 21:3-4
 - (3) There will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. All things will be made new!
 - (a) Rev 21:4-5. The new heavens and earth may be a renewal of the present heavens and earth or a complete recreation (Isa 65-66; 2 Pet 3:6-7).

8. Key Truths.

- a. God made many specific promises to Israel that he will fulfill.
- b. The Church does not replace Israel. The "last days" of Israel differ from the "last days" of the Church.
 - (1) Israel.

- (a) **Dt 4:30** 30 When you [Israel] are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the *latter days*, you will return to Yahweh your God and obey his voice.
 - (b) **Da 2:28** 28 ...There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the *latter days*.
 - (c) **Da 10:14** 14 ...And came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the *latter days*. For the vision is for days yet to come.
 - (d) **Mic 4:1** 1 It shall come to pass in the *latter days* that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it....
 - (e) **Is 2:2** 2 It shall come to pass in the *latter days* that the mountain of the house of Yahweh shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills. And all the nations shall flow to it....
 - (f) **Jer 23:20** 20 The anger of Yahweh will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the *latter days* you will understand it clearly.
 - (g) **Jer 49:39** 39 But in the *latter days* I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares Yahweh.
 - (h) **Eze 38:16** 16 You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the *latter days* I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.
 - (i) **Eze 38:8** 8 After many days you will be mustered. In the *latter years* you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste.
 - (j) **Ac 2:17** 17 And in the *last days* it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams....
- (2) The Church.
- (a) **Ro 11:25** 25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers and sisters: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.
 - (b) **1 Ti 4:1** 1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in *later times* some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons....
 - (c) **2 Ti 3:1** 1 But understand this, that in the *last days* there will come times of difficulty.
 - (d) **Jas 5:3** 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the *last days*.
 - (e) **2 Pe 3:3** 3 ...Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the *last days* with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.
 - (f) **1 Pe 1:20** 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the *last times* for the sake of you

- (g) **Jud 18** 18 ...In the ***last time*** there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.
- (h) **1 Pe 1:5** 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the ***last time***.
- (i) **1 Jn 2:18** 18 Children, it is the ***last hour***, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the ***last hour***.
- (3) There will be a final judgment.
 - (a) **Jn 6:39-54** 39 And this is the will of [my Father] who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ...44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ...54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.
 - (b) **Jn 11:24** 24 Martha said to [Jesus], I know that he [Lazarus] will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.
 - (c) **Jn 12:48** 48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge. The word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.
- c. Things are going to get worse before they get better.
 - (1) "Watch over your life: do not let your lamps go out, and do not be unprepared, but be ready, for you do not know the hour when our Lord is coming. Gather together frequently, seeking the things that benefit your souls, for all the time you have believed will be of no use to you if you are not found perfect in the last time. For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters will abound, and the sheep will be turned into wolves, and love will be turned into hate. For as lawlessness increases, they will hate and persecute and betray one another. And then the deceiver of the world will appear as a son of God and will perform signs and wonders, and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will commit abominations the likes of which have never happened before. Then all humankind will come to the fiery test, and many will fall away and perish; but those who endure in their faith will be saved by the accursed one himself. And then there will appear the signs of the truth: first the sign of an opening in heaven, then the sign of the sound of a trumpet, and third, the resurrection of the dead—but not of all; rather, as it has been said, The Lord will come, and all his saints with him. Then the world will see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven."¹⁰
 - (2) "We believe that the world will not be converted during the present dispensation, but is fast ripening for judgment, while there will be a fearful apostasy in the professing Christian body; and hence that the Lord Jesus will come in person to introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; and that this personal and premillennial advent is the blessed hope set before us in the Gospel for which we should be constantly looking."¹¹

¹⁰ *Didache* 16, in Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 267-269.

¹¹ Niagara Bible Conference Creed (1878).

- d. We won't be here when it gets really bad.
- e. God is going to create a new universe for us to dwell in with him forever.
 - (1) Our Christian hope is horizontal, not vertical.¹² “The Christian hope is not all the good things minus the world but the world minus all bad things.”¹³

The Three Universes

| First Universe | Second Universe | Third Universe |
|---|---|---|
| Genesis 1-8 | Genesis 9-Revelation 20 | Revelation 21-22 |
| Past | Present | Future |
| 2 Peter 3:5-6 5 ...By the word of God heavens existed long ago and earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. | 2 Peter 3:7 7 ...By [God's] word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 2 Peter 3:12 12 ...Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! | 2 Peter 3:13 13 ...According to [God's] promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. |

9. Tips.

- a. Don't avoid eschatology.
- b. Don't be embarrassed by eschatology.
 - (1) “In earlier eras, the interpretation of prophecy challenged the intellectual leaders of successive ages. From the nineteenth century on, and certainly by the late twentieth century, this was no longer the case. Prophecy remains of absorbing interest to millions of Americans, but those who expound the prophetic scriptures are no longer the era's intellectual or even theological leaders. It is not to disparage the ingenuity or earnestness of the television evangelists and paperback writers who are today's principal prophecy expositors to observe they hardly bear comparison to Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Joachim, Hildegard, Mede, Milton, Newton, the Mathers, Edwards, and Dwight—intellectuals all. Fully to explore the reasons for that profound shift, however, would involve nothing less than writing an intellectual history of the modern world.”¹⁴
- c. Don't overplay eschatology.
- d. Don't spiritualise or sensationalise what Scripture says about the end times.
- e. Distinguish between facts, assumptions, and speculation.
- f. Avoid date-setting and sign-seeking.
 - (1) Our focus is to be proclaiming the gospel message, making disciples, and being ready for Jesus' return.
- g. Distinguish between biblical trends and the fulfilment of prophecy.

¹² Michael Svigel.

¹³ Michael Svigel.

¹⁴ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992.

- h. Dr. Svigel's Seven Eschatological Dangers to Avoid¹⁵
 - (1) Heinous heresy.
 - (2) My way or the highway.
 - (3) End-times agnosticism.
 - (4) This-is-that syndrome.
 - (5) The dating game.
 - (6) End-times obsession.
 - (7) Fearful fretting.

10. Application.

- a. Believe what the Bible teaches about the end times.
 - (1) "We are living at time when everything the Bible says about the end times no longer seems bizarre."¹⁶
- b. Watch over your life and be ready.
 - (1) **Heb 10:24-25** 24 ...Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging, and all the more as you see the **day** drawing near.
 - (2) **2 Pe 3:11-14** 11 Because all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the **day of God**, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless....
 - (3) "Every time there is an exhortation to holy living in the epistles, nearby there is a reference to Jesus' return."¹⁷
 - (4) "Watch over your life: do not let your lamps go out, and do not be unprepared, but be ready, for you do not know the hour when our Lord is coming. Gather together frequently, seeking the things that benefit your souls, for all the time you have believed will be of no use to you if you are not found perfect in the last time."¹⁸
- c. Live for the line, not the dot.
 - (1) **Mt 6:19-20** 19 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.
- d. Reject the utopian dreams of autonomous man.
 - (1) "Stand against all standards lower than perfection and against all the romantic concepts of perfection in this life."
- e. Don't be crushed by present suffering. Be comforted by future glory.

¹⁵ Michael Svigel, Dallas Theological Seminary.

¹⁶ Geoff Smith.

¹⁷ David Klingler, Dallas Theological Seminary.

¹⁸ *Didache* 16, in Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 267-269.

- (1) **Jn 16:33** 33 In the world you [disciples] have tribulation. But take courage—I have overcome the world.
 - (2) **Ro 8:18** 18 ...The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
- f. Rejoice in God’s ultimate victory that is coming.

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