

Systematic Theology

Part 7: Doctrine of the Future

Chapter 54: The Return of Christ: When and How?

When and how will Christ return? Could he come back at any hour?

Introduction & Review

Note: The primary textbook for the structure of this series is Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. The primary text for the substance of this series is the Bible.

Grudem: What is systematic theology? *Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, "What does the _____ Bible teach us today?" about any given topic.*

Explanation and Scriptural Basis

Grudem: The study of future events is often called "_____." . . . The study of eschatology, then, is the study of "the _____ things."

- A. Grudem: A _____, personal, visible, _____ return of Christ
Matthew 24:44; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:10; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7; 22:20
- B. Grudem: We should eagerly _____ for Christ's return
Revelation 22:20; Titus 2:12-13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Corinthians 16:22
- C. Grudem: We do not _____ when Christ will return
Matthew 24:44; 25:13; Mark 13:32-33; Luke 12:40
- E. Grudem: There is disagreement over the _____ of future events
- F. Grudem: Could Christ come back at _____ time?
- Grudem: Verses predicting a sudden and unexpected coming of Christ
Matthew 24:42-44, 36-39, 50; 25:13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:40; 1 Corinthians 16:22; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; Titus 2:12-13; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 1:3; 22:7, 12, 20. Grudem: Were Jesus and the New Testament authors wrong in their expectation that he would return soon? _____

2. Grudem: Signs that precede Christ's return

- a. Grudem: The preaching of the gospel to all nations. Mark 13:10; Matthew 24:14
- b. Grudem: The great tribulation. Mark 13:7-8, 19-20; Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24
- c. Grudem: False prophets working signs and wonders. Mark 13:22; Matthew 24:23-24
- d. Grudem: Signs in the heavens. Mark 13:24-25; Matthew 24:29-30; Luke 21:25-27
- e. Grudem: The coming of the man of sin and the rebellion. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10
- f. Grudem: The salvation of Israel. Romans 11:12, 25-26

3. Grudem: Possible solutions

View 1: Grudem: *Christ could _____ come at any time.* Grudem: The signs are given so that, when we see them, they will _____ our expectation of Christ's return. **Luke 21:28; Mark 13:5-6, 21**

View 2: Grudem: *Christ indeed _____ come at any time*

Reconciliation view 1: Grudem: (1) *The New Testament talks about _____ distinct returns of Christ or two second comings of Christ*

Reconciliation view 2: Grudem: (2) *All the signs have been _____, and therefore Christ in fact could return at any moment*

Reconciliation view 3 (this is Grudem's view): Grudem: (3) *It is unlikely but _____ that the signs have already been fulfilled*

Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Do you now eagerly long for Christ's return?
2. Are you ready for Christ to return today? If you knew he were going to return within 24 hours, what situations or relationships would you want to straighten out before he returned?

Scripture Memory Passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. **16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Hymn: "Lo! He Comes, With Clouds Descending" (Wesley and Cennick)

Systematic Theology

Part 7: Doctrine of the Future

Chapter 55: The Millennium

What is the millennium? When does it occur? Will Christians go through the Great Tribulation?

Scripture Memory Passage Review: 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

Explanation and Scriptural Basis

Grudem: The word *millennium* means “one thousand _____.” **Revelation 20:1-10**

A. Grudem: Explanation of the three major views

1. Grudem: __millennialism

Grudem: Revelation 20:1-10 describes the _____ church age

2. Grudem: _____millennialism

Grudem: Christ will return _____ the millennium

Grudem: Postmillennialism is . . . very optimistic about the power of the _____ to change lives and bring about much good in the world.

3. Grudem: _____millennialism

- a. Grudem: Classic or _____ millennialism

Grudem: Christ will come back _____ the millennium

- b. Grudem: _____tributational _____millennialism (or dispensational premillennialism)

Grudem: Christ will return not only before the millennium . . . but also it will occur _____ the great tribulation

B. Grudem: A consideration of the arguments for amillennialism

C. Grudem: A consideration of the arguments for postmillennialism

D. Grudem: A consideration of the arguments for premillennialism

E. Grudem: The time of the great _____ **Matthew 24:21**

1. Grudem: The entire period of the tribulation will be a time of the outpouring of God's wrath on all the earth. Therefore it would not be appropriate for Christians to be on the earth at that time.
2. Grudem: **Revelation 3:10** . . . indicates that the church will be taken out of the world before that hour of trial comes.
3. Grudem: If Christ returns after the tribulation and defeats all his enemies, then where will the unbelievers come from who are necessary to populate the millennial kingdom?
4. Grudem: This view makes it possible to believe that Christ could come at any moment (his coming before the tribulation) and yet that many signs must be fulfilled before he comes (his coming after the tribulation, when the signs will be fulfilled).

Implications (discussed by Grudem in his Sunday school lessons on this topic)

1. Jesus is _____ back
2. _____ will end
3. _____ is worth it
4. Believers disagree on the _____

Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Explain how your present view of the millennium affects your Christian life today. Similarly, explain how your view of the tribulation affects your present Christian life.
2. What might be both the positive and the negative results of a pretribulation rapture position in the everyday lives and attitudes of Christians? Similarly, what might be the positive and negative results of a posttribulation rapture position?

Scripture Memory Passage: **Revelation 20:4-6**

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. **5** But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Hymn: "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun" (Isaac Watts, 1719)

Systematic Theology

Part 7: Doctrine of the Future

Chapter 56: The Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment

Who will be judged? What is hell?

Scripture Memory Passage Review: Revelation 20:4-6

Explanation and Scriptural Basis

A. Grudem: The _____ of final judgment

1. Grudem: Scriptural evidence for a final judgment. **Revelation 20:11-15**; **Acts 17:30-31**; **Romans 2:5**; **Matthew 10:15**; **11:22, 24**; **12:36**; **25:31-46**; **1 Corinthians 4:5**; **Hebrews 6:2**; **2 Peter 2:4**; **Jude 6**; **Romans 1:18-32**; **Isaiah 13-23**; **2 Peter 2:4, 9-10**
2. Grudem: Will there be more than one judgment? **Matthew 25:31-46**; **Revelation 20:11-15**; **2 Corinthians 5:10**

B. Grudem: The _____ of final judgment. **Revelation 20:1-11**

C. Grudem: The _____ of final judgment

1. Grudem: Jesus Christ will be the judge. **2 Timothy 4:1**; **Acts 10:42**; **17:31**; **Matthew 25:31-33**
2. Grudem: Unbelievers will be judged. **Revelation 20:12-13**; **Romans 2:5-7**; **Luke 12:47-48**; **Matthew 11:22, 24**; **12:36**; **Luke 20:47**; **Ecclesiastes 12:14**; **Romans 2:16**; **Luke 8:17**; **12:2-3**
3. Grudem: Believers will be judged. **Romans 14:10, 12**; **2 Corinthians 5:10**; **Romans 2:6-11**; **Revelation 20:12, 15**; **Matthew 25:31-46**; **John 5:24**; **Romans 8:1**; **Revelation 11:18**; **1 Corinthians 3:12-15**; **2 Corinthians 5:10**; **Luke 19:17, 19**
4. Grudem: Angels will be judged. **2 Peter 2:4**; **Jude 6**; **1 Corinthians 6:3**
5. Grudem: We will help in the work of judgment. **1 Corinthians 6:2-3**; **Revelation 20:4**; **Matthew 19:28**; **Luke 22:30**; **Romans 13:1-7**; **1 Peter 2:13-14**

D. Grudem: _____ of final judgment

E. Grudem: Justice of God in the final judgment

1 Peter 1:17; **Romans 2:11**; Colossians 3:25; Romans 3:19; Revelation 19:1-2

F. Grudem: Moral application of the final judgment

1. Grudem: The doctrine of final judgment satisfies our _____ sense of a need for justice in the world. Colossians 3:25; Revelation 20:12; Malachi 3:16
2. Grudem: The doctrine of final judgment enables us to forgive others _____. Romans 12:19; 1 Peter 2:22-23; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60
3. Grudem: The doctrine of the final judgment provides a motive for _____ living. Matthew 6:20; Romans 3:18; 2 Peter 3:3-4; 1 Peter 4:4-5
4. Grudem: The doctrine of final judgment provides a great motive for _____. Ezekiel 33:11; **2 Peter 3:9**

G. Grudem: Hell

Grudem: Hell is a place of _____ for the wicked. Matthew 25:30, 41, 46; Mark 9:43, 48; Luke 16:22-24, 28; **Revelation 14:9-11; 19:3; 20:10**. *Grudem: What are we to think of this doctrine?* Romans 9:2; Ezekiel 33:11; Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 19:41-42. *Grudem: Whatever God in his wisdom has ordained and taught in Scripture is _____.* Revelation 6:10; 19:1-4

Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. How does the awareness of the fact that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ affect your life today?
2. Are you convinced that Scripture teaches that there will be eternal conscious punishment of the wicked?

Scripture Memory Passage: Revelation 20:11-13

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Hymn: “O Quickly Come, Dread Judge of All” (Lawrence Tuttiett, 1854)

Systematic Theology

Part 7: Doctrine of the Future

Chapter 57: The New Heavens and New Earth

What is heaven? Is it a place? How will the earth be renewed? What will it be like to live in the new heavens and new earth?

Scripture Memory Passage Review: [Revelation 20:11-13](#)

Explanation and Scriptural Basis

A. Grudem: We will live eternally with God in new heavens _____ a new earth
[Matthew 25:34](#); [Revelation 22:3](#); [Isaiah 65:17](#); [66:22](#); [2 Peter 3:13](#); [Revelation 21:1-3](#)

Grudem: There will be a _____ of heaven and earth in this new creation, and there we will live in the presence of God.

1. Grudem: What is heaven?
[Isaiah 66:1](#); [Matthew 6:9](#); [1 Peter 3:22](#). Grudem: *Heaven is the place where God most fully makes known his presence to bless.*
2. Grudem: Heaven is a _____, not just a state of mind. [Acts 1:9](#); [Luke 24:51](#); [Acts 1:11](#); [7:55-56](#); [John 14:2-3](#)
3. Grudem: The physical creation will be _____ and we will continue to exist and act in it. [2 Peter 3:13](#); [Revelation 21:1](#); [Romans 8:19-21](#); [Hebrews 1:11-12](#); [12:26-27](#); [2 Peter 3:10](#); [Revelation 20:11](#); [21:1](#); [Genesis 1:31](#)
4. Grudem: Our resurrection _____ will be part of the renewed creation. [Genesis 1:31](#); [Hebrews 2:8](#); [Matthew 5:5](#); [Revelation 19:9](#); [Luke 22:18](#); [Revelation 22:1-2](#); [21:21-26](#)
5. Grudem: The new creation will not be “timeless” but will include an unending succession of moments. [Revelation 21:24-26](#); [22:2](#)

B. Grudem: The doctrine of the new creation provides a great motivation for storing up treasures in _____ rather than earth. [2 Peter 3:11-13](#); [Matthew 6:19-21](#)

C. Grudem: The new creation will be a place of great beauty and abundance and joy in the presence of _____. **Revelation 21:2, 4, 6, 11, 18-21, 27; 22:5**
Revelation 21:3-4, 23; 22:3-4; Psalm 16:11; 27:4; 73:25-26; 4:8; Revelation 21-22

Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. What positive effects on your Christian life do you think would come about because of a stronger longing for the life to come?
2. What are some ways in which you already have stored up treasure in heaven?
3. What is a good answer to the objection that the eternal state will be boring?
4. Can you describe at all what you think you will feel like when you finally stand in the presence of God and see him face-to-face?

Scripture Memory Passage: Revelation 21:3-4

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.
4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Hymn: "The Sands of Time Are Sinking" (Anne R. Cousin, 1857)

The sands of time are sinking, the dawn of heaven breaks,
 The summer morn I've sighed for, the fair sweet morn awakes;
 Dark, dark hath been the midnight, but dayspring is at hand,
 And glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land.

The king there in his beauty without a veil is seen;
 It were a well-spent journey though sev'n deaths lay between:
 The Lamb with his fair army doth on Mount Zion stand,
 And glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land.

O Christ, he is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love!
 The streams on earth I've tasted, more deep I'll drink above:
 There to an ocean fullness his mercy doth expand,
 And glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land.

The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face;
 I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace;
 Not at the crown he giveth, but on his pierced hand:
 The lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land.

Systematic Theology:

A Brief Review of What We Learned

Why did we do this? Where did we go? What did we learn?

Scripture Memory Passage Review: **Revelation 21:3-4**

A. Review of the beginning

1. Where did we start? Week 1: An introduction to systematic theology (February 16, 2014)
Grudem: Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, "What does the _____ Bible teach us today?" about any given _____.
2. Why did we, as a class, study systematic theology?
 - To fulfill the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:19-20**)
 - To confront _____ in our lives
 - **Grudem: To be able to make better decisions later on _____ questions of doctrine that may arise**
3. Why did we pick this systematic theology book?
 It is based on the Bible. It is clearly written. It has a lot of _____ to life

Grudem: It is inevitable that someone studying a systematic theology text or taking a course in systematic theology for the first time will have many of his or her own personal beliefs challenged or modified, refined or enriched.

B. What did we as a class learn?

1. **Part 1: The doctrine of the Word of God**
 Key text: **2 Timothy 3:16**

 Takeaway: the Bible is our basis for understanding God. Stay _____ to the text!
2. **Part 2: The doctrine of God**
 Key text: **Revelation 5:11-12**

 Takeaway: do not make analogies for the Trinity—nothing in the universe is like them.
 _____ it!

3. Part 3: The doctrine of man

Key text: **Genesis 1:26-27**. Takeaway: open-handed and closed-fisted issues exist. _____ them and behave accordingly!

4. Part 4: The doctrines of Christ & the Holy Spirit

Key text: **1 Corinthians 15:20-23**

Takeaway: imitate the work and active nature of Jesus & the Holy Spirit. _____ them!

5. Part 5: The doctrine of the application of redemption

Key text: **Galatians 2:20**

Takeaway: the Trinity works together for man's salvation-& God desires me. Praise _____!

6. Part 6: The doctrine of the church

Key text: **Ephesians 4:11-13**

Takeaway: the church is a complex organism devised and sustained by God. Treat her _____!

7. Part 7: The doctrine of the future

Key text: **Revelation 21:3-4**

Takeaway: God will demonstrate His goodness through ending this age. Look _____!

C. What did Jim learn?**1. The deepness of God and His Word**

Romans 11:33

2. And ___ or

1 Corinthians 12:12

3. Theology helps me live right now

Psalms 119:105

4. God is ____ active

Genesis 1:2; Revelation 21:23

5. I was reminded

Nehemiah 8:5-8.

6. The priority of desiring _____ over desiring information _____ God

Psalms 37:4