



THEN *the*
END
will come

WEEK 4: Day of the Lord

 **Maranatha**
Baptist Church

5 Truths that will shape your eschatology

As I'm sure you're aware, eschatology (the doctrine of the end times) is one of those doctrines where godly people disagree. Many of these people have spent years studying the Scripture and searching out the best possible interpretation. They have attended schools of academia. They have studied the original languages. They have read from the brightest minds in history. And yet, these men whom we respect, have been unable to find common ground on this subject.

So why study eschatology? Why waste our time looking at a doctrine at which the experts can't agree? Well, the simple answer is found in **2 Peter 1:3**. Peter writes, *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to **life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.**"* In this verse Peter says that we have access to everything we need to live the Christian life the way that God expects. It happens when we access "divine power" – the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who strengthens us for the Christian walk. And it happens as we pursue the "**knowledge of God**" that is found in the **Bible** – the **knowledge of God** from **Genesis** to **Revelation**.

So why study eschatology? We study it because it's in the Bible. We study it because we believe it will lead to greater knowledge of God. We study it because we know that in some way it will help us to live the life that God commanded us to live. And we study it because we want to grow in our worship of God.

Our approach will be a little different from other studies we have done. Rather than looking at the individual pieces of this puzzle and trying to arrange them into a cohesive picture, we're going to zoom out to the broader themes of Scripture that will help us understand the doctrine as a whole. Rather than trying to create a detailed timeline of events that lead to a final conclusion, our study will seek to provide a roadmap that so we can sort out the details for ourselves. We're going to focus on the broader truths upon which most theologians agree, and then allow those truths to shape our personal perspective of this doctrine.

We'll take those truths one at a time, and then perhaps take a closer look at how these truths relate to the COVENANTS (i.e. promises) God made to his people throughout the Old Testament. **Here's a list of the 5 truths that we'll cover in the next several weeks.**

1. God's word is clear (perspicuity) and is meant to be interpreted literally.
2. Israel and the church are one in Christ, yet distinct.
3. God will fulfill his unconditional covenants to Israel.
4. The "day of the Lord" is a time of physical judgment of the wicked on the earth.
5. Those who are "in Christ" through faith will not experience God's wrath because Christ already endured it on the cross.

The Day of the Lord

vengeance is mine, I will repay

I imagine there have been plenty of times in your life when you wanted to “get even” with someone. Maybe they ruined something that belonged to you. Or maybe they took something that was yours. Maybe they embarrassed you in front of others. We naturally want restitution. We want things to be made right.

As we’ll see through our study today, that innate desire to “right” the “wrongs” and to “correct” the “injustice” is woven throughout the pages of Scripture. We’ll see the immediate consequences that Cain had to face because of killing his brother Abel, but we’ll also see that God built JUSTICE into the promise that he made to Abraham. He says in Genesis 12:3 – *“I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you...”* Essentially, God takes it upon himself to set things straight.

This principle was also built into the Mosaic Covenant. Whenever a person was wronged, the consequence for such action was to repay that individual in the same way. This was both a form of JUSTICE and a form of MERCY. **Exodus 21:23-24** says, *“If there is harm, they you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for would, stripe for stripe.”*

When we move into the New Testament, Jesus begins to adjust our perspective a little bit. Rather than paying back *“eye for eye,”* Jesus tells his audience to *“turn the other cheek.”* We can do that as we come to terms with what we deserve and marvel at God’s mercy to us. And we can do that because we believe in a God who will ultimately take vengeance on a wicked world. *“Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord”* (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30).

G O D ’ S R E S P O N S E t o S I N

1. Think about the first several events of the Old Testament and consider the way in which God deals with sin. Answer the following questions for each narrative.
 - a. What were the immediate physical consequences for sin?
 - b. Why was it necessary for God to judge sin in such a public way?
 - c. What does all of this indicate about God’s character?

Adam and Eve - Genesis 3:22–24 (ESV) - ²² Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

a.

b.

c.

Cain and Abel – Genesis 4:9–16 (ESV) - ⁹ Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” ¹⁰ And the Lord said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. ¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” ¹³ Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵ Then the Lord said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

a.

b.

c.

Wickedness of men in the days of Noah - Genesis 6:5–8 (ESV) - ⁵ The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

a.

b.

c.

Tower of Babel – The sin of Babel was their pride and also their refusal to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” - Genesis 11:4–9 (ESV) - ⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” ⁵ And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” ⁸ So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

a.

b.

c.

2. In **Genesis 15** God confirms his covenant with Abraham and assures him that his future descendants will inherit the land of Canaan. Although they will spend some time in another country, God will bring them back. God also tells Abraham about his judgment of the people currently living in the land of Canaan.

- a. What do we learn about the future of Abraham's descendants from Genesis 15:13-14? How precise was this prediction?

Genesis 15:13–14 (ESV) - ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your **offspring** will be **sojourners** in a **land** that is **not theirs** and will be **servants** there, and they will be **afflicted** for **four hundred years**. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

- b. What do we learn about the future judgment of the people living in the land of Canaan?

Genesis 15:15–20 (ESV) - ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the **iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete**. ¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring **I give this land**, from the river of **Egypt** to the great river, the river **Euphrates**, ¹⁹ the land of the **Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites**, ²⁰ the **Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim**,

- c. Often people from culture accuse God of injustice because of commanding his people to annihilate the inhabitants of Canaan. How might this passage help us respond to such criticism?

d. What do we learn about God's character?

- 3. Right after God delivered his people from Egypt, He established a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. Attached to that covenant were blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience which we find in Deuteronomy 28. Here's a sample of the curses listed in that chapter.**

Deuteronomy 28:15–46 (ESV) - ¹⁵ *“But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. ¹⁶ Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. ¹⁷ Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ¹⁸ Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. ¹⁹ Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out... ²⁵ “The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them. And you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁶ And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away...³⁶ “The Lord will bring you and your king whom you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known. And there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone. ³⁷ And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples where the Lord will lead you away....⁴⁵ “All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that he commanded you. ⁴⁶ They shall be a sign and a wonder against you and your offspring forever....”*

a. If Israel was disobedient, what should they expect?

b. Was God faithful to carry out the details of this promise?

c. What is God's reason for discipline (v. 46)?

GOD will VINDICATE HIS PEOPLE

Built into the Abrahamic covenant is God's promise to vindicate his people. "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you..." (Genesis 12:3). So, throughout Israel's history, God judged the nations according to their posture towards the Jews. Let's look at some examples.

1. **Isaiah 10:5–6, 12-13 (ESV)** - ⁵ Woe to **Assyria**, the **rod of my anger**; the staff in their hands is my fury! ⁶ Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

God would use Assyria to judge the nation of Israel for their idolatry. But then, a few verses later we find that God will also judge Assyria for their violence towards God's people.

¹² When the Lord has **finished** all his **work** on **Mount Zion** and on **Jerusalem**, he will **punish** the speech of the **arrogant heart** of the king of **Assyria** and the boastful look in his eyes. ¹³ For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones.

Was God faithful to discipline his people? How does that compare with what we saw in Deuteronomy 28?

Was God faithful to judge Assyria? What does that say about God's character and sovereignty?

2. God also used the nation of Babylon to discipline his people. Nebuchadnezzar would conquer Israel and lead them into captivity as God promised. Yet, Babylon was still guilty for the way they treated God's people.

*Isaiah 13:1, 6, 9, 17-19 (ESV) - ¹ An oracle concerning **Babylon**... ⁶ Wail, for the **day of the Lord is near**; as destruction from the Almighty it will come! ... ⁹ Behold, **the day of the Lord comes**, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it...¹⁷ Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them, who have no regard for silver and do not delight in gold. ¹⁸ Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children. ¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.*

How is the day of the Lord described in this passage?

Did God fulfill his promise of using the Medes to destroy Babylon?

3. From Isaiah 10 to Isaiah 35, God promises to bring judgment on the nations that attacked the children of Israel [Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Cush, Egypt, Tyre and Sidon]. We find some specific reasons for that judgment in the book of Ezekiel.

a. ***Ezekiel 25:12-14 (ESV) - ¹² "Thus says the Lord GOD: Because Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended in taking vengeance on them, ¹³ therefore thus says the Lord GOD, I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast. And I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall by the sword. ¹⁴ And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel,***

and they shall do in Edom according to my anger and according to my wrath, and they shall **know my vengeance**, declares the Lord GOD.

What does God promise?

Why is he going to do this?

- b. **Ezekiel 25:15–17 (ESV)** - ¹⁵ “Thus says the Lord GOD: Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul to destroy in never-ending enmity, ¹⁶ therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the rest of the seacoast. ¹⁷ I will **execute great vengeance** on them with wrathful rebukes. **Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance upon them.**”

What does God promise?

Why is going to do this?

4. The apostle Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 32:35 when he says, ¹⁹ “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (**Romans 12:19-21**).”

Why should God’s people avoid taking vengeance?

Has God shown himself dependable to judge sin?

What should we do instead?

THE DAY of the LORD

1. The “*day of the Lord*” is also called “*the day of wrath*,” “*the day of doom*,” and “*the day of vengeance*.” Throughout the Old Testament it is used interchangeably between a present time of God’s judgment on a particular group of people, but also for a future day when God will judge the world.

Ezekiel 30:1–8 (ESV) - ¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² “Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord God: “Wail, ‘Alas for the day!’” ³ For the **day is near, the day of the Lord is near**; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. ⁴ A sword shall come upon Egypt, and anguish shall be in Cush, when the slain fall in Egypt, and her wealth is carried away, and her foundations are torn down. ⁵ Cush, and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya, and the people of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword. ⁶ “Thus says the Lord: Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down; from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword, declares the Lord God. ⁷ And they shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries, and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste. ⁸ **Then they will know that I am the Lord**, when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken.

How does Ezekiel describe the day of the Lord?

When these things actually happened to Egypt, what did it say about the Lord?

2. Isaiah describes the day of Lord this way.

Isaiah 34:1–2 (ESV) - ¹ Draw near, O **nations**, to hear, and give attention, O **peoples!** Let the **earth hear**, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes

from it. ² For the LORD is **enraged against all the nations**, and furious against all their host; he has **devoted them to destruction**, has given them over for slaughter ⁴ All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree...⁶ The LORD has a sword; it is sated with blood; it is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams....⁸ **For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.**

How would you expect this prophecy to be fulfilled (is it physical or spiritual)?

Who is carrying out this act and why?

3. Listen to the graphic language of Zephaniah.

Zephaniah 1:14–18 (ESV) - ¹⁴ The **great day of the LORD** is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of **the day of the LORD** is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. ¹⁵ A **day of wrath** is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶ a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. ¹⁷ I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. ¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the **day of the wrath of the LORD**. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Describe this day in your own words

Why is God acting this way towards mankind (v. 17)?

4. The book of Revelation provides specific details regarding this final “day” of wrath. Revelation 6:16-17 describes this period of time as a time of God’s wrath.

Revelation 6:16–17 (ESV) – ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the **wrath of the Lamb**, ¹⁷ for the great **day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?**”

The culmination of all that God promised in the Old Testament will finally play out through the events we read in Revelation.

Why is it so important that these events occur on the earth in a physical way?

What does this continue to confirm about the character of God – especially that he is “*the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end*” (Revelation 22:12)?



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