



Drink Your Milk-Part 3

A Crash Course in the End of the Book

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Well, if you've been paying attention, God has certainly been challenging us to grow up in the book of Hebrews. And it came to a real apex in chapter 5 by saying, you ought to be teachers by now. I mean, maybe not of the deep things of God, but if you've been a Christian for a while, you ought to be teachers at least about the basics.

So if someone came in here and said, hey, we need a teacher downstairs real quick, there ought to be at least five or six topics we ought to be able to go off on and talk about and fill in the gaps for a brand new Christian or maybe for our junior high or high school group downstairs. You say, yeah, I can teach on that. And the Bible says in chapter 6 of Hebrews, here's at least six things. And you ought to be able to stand up and articulate what these things mean and something about how they're applied.

And we saw them naturally fall into pairings. We saw the first two in Hebrews chapter 6 verse 2 — that we ought to know something about repentance and faith. Actually the end of verse 1. And then verse 2 we ought to know something about what he calls the instructions about baptisms and the laying on of hands. And then lastly this week we see our final pairing.

The first pairing was something about how to enter the Christian life. We ought to know that. We ought to know what it means to turn from sin and to trust in God, specifically in a new covenant perspective in Jesus Christ for what He's done for us on a cross. Last week, we looked at the concept of baptisms, our standing before God, being in Christ. We ought to be able to articulate that. We ought to be able to have some knowledge of that. And we ought to be able to, as distinguished by that first century ceremony laying on of hands, know something about making progress in the Christian life to the place of being commissioned into fruitful ministry.

So we ought to know something about repentance and faith and justification and sanctification. And then take a look at chapter 6, verse number 2, as he gives us the third category, the third pairing on the basic curriculum, item number 5 and 6. Bottom of verse 2 says the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. There ought to be a knowledge that we have about these two things that lie beyond this life. They lie beyond the in-life. We ought to be able to have those things settled in our mind enough so that if someone said, hey, I need some instruction on that, you say, okay, I can do that. Let me tell you a little bit about resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.



The Bible goes so far to say, if you don't have these things clear in your mind, what are you doing calling yourself a follower of Christ? I mean, literally, that's where we go in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. If you're not clear about the basics of what happens beyond this life, the Bible says, man, people ought to pity us if we have that figured out and settled in our own mind. And if it's called into question and you're thinking, man, you know what? You're not even really qualified to call yourself a Christian because we've got to have this figured out at least well enough to say we know what this Christian life is headed toward. We know what's going to happen beyond the grave, at least the basics.

So tonight what I want to do is make sure we have those things mastered. And we're going to look at these two words and again in context remind ourselves the goal is to get past this, not to dwell on this and not to be constantly ingesting these basics, but they ought to be settled so that we can move past them. Look at verse 1 again, where he says, guys, let's leave the elementary teachings about Christ. Let's get past it, and let's press on or go on to maturity, and let's not lay again — look at the word — the foundation. These are foundational things. Repentance from acts that lead to death, faith in God, entry into the Christian life. Instruction about baptisms, our standing before God. And the laying on of hands, commissioning into ministry, justification, sanctification, position, progress. That was last week. And then these two, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And then this little caveat, he says, and God permitting, we'll do so.

Now, he's not going to do so in the book. He's going to press on to talk about Melchizedek, but I think the advantage we have in going through this book, a chapter at a time, a verse at a time, a section at a time, we can stop and say, are we sure we have these things covered? So tonight, what I want to do is to step back and say, okay, what are these basics and what do they mean?

And if you found the worksheet, let's just start by figuring out how the subtitle connects with the subject. Do you see the subject up there? I always put the subject, at least one or two topics, basically, that this message is about and where to file them in your file cabinet. Next to the topic or subject or whatever we call it, what do we call it? Topic? It says *eschatology*. Let's just make sure we have that down, because here's a category that books — if you buy a book about Christian belief or Christian doctrine or Christian theology — it's going to have a section that's labeled *eschatology*. Let's just make sure we know how that connects to the subtitle, because what we're going to do tonight is what we're prompted to do by this list, and that is have a quick crash course in the end of the book.

See, and those two are really synonymous, the end of the book and the word *eschatology*. See, because when it comes to the aspects of the majors of the Christian faith, they always have the *-ology* at the end,



right? *Christology* is the study of Christ. That's an easy one, right? *Bibliology* is the study of the *Biblia*, the book, the Bible. *Angelology* is the study of not baseball. Good guess, though. We need the milk, don't we? Study of...? See, that wasn't a trick question, but you guys didn't seem to get that. *Angelology*, *bibliology*, *Christology*. *Eschatology*, then, is the study of the *eschatos*. If you said that, that's absolutely right.

Eschatos is the Greek word in Scripture that is translated "the end" or "the last." Jesus presents himself in Revelation chapter 1, and he says, I am the *ho protos* or *proton, kai eschatos*. I am the *protos*, the first, and I am the *eschatos*, I am the last. I am the beginning and I am the end. And what he's saying there as he's about to unfold what's going to happen in the end is, you know what? I've got it all figured out. I've got it all wired. I've been there, done that. I'm the beginning and the end. He is the *eschatos*. *Eschatos* means the end, the conclusion, the final.

So when we talk about the study of the end things, the end-time things, the word for that that you'll find in all your Christian books that have any, you know, categorization or systematizing of Christian doctrine is *eschatology*. So tonight we're here, crash course on the end of the book, *eschatology*. And let's figure out the kinds of things that the writer of Hebrews says we ought to have these things mastered.

I put it this way on your outline: number one, we ought to master at least these two basics about your future. And the first one is described this way in verse number 2. Look at it again. The resurrection of the dead. And we immediately, when we hear phrases like that, start to think about life after death. That's really not what's being communicated here, though. Look at it again: the resurrection of the dead. Resurrection, *anastasis*, to bring something up, of the dead is not talking about your conscious existence after life, although that's true too.

Jesus is dying on a cross. He looks to the thief next to him who puts his trust in Christ, and he says, today you'll be with me in paradise. Today you will be with me in paradise. Now, here's the thing. Jesus' body and the thief's body were both on a cross. By the end of the day, Jesus' body was in a tomb, and who knows how long there, the thief's body hung on the cross. So we're not talking about bodies there, but that's conscious life after death.

What we're talking about here is the *anastasis*, the bringing up of the dead. What are we talking about here? Bodies, biological units. Letter A, pointy finger number one. When it comes to this, let's just



summarize it this way, to be real specific: we need to master the truth in our minds and be able to think through the fact that you and I will both have a second physical life. We're going to have another one.

So that whole Budweiser slogan doesn't really work, right? "You only go around once in life." Is that Budweiser? I get all the beer slogans mixed up. Help me now. See, you sit here like you've never heard this before. I'm going to implicate myself. Don't say it. You go around twice in life, not just spiritually, but physically. You will have a second physical life. That's what the word resurrection means. It's not talking about your spirit knowing what's going on the day after you die. It's talking about what's going to happen to that body right there. I mean, we're not talking about just what's going to happen to it when it gets to the mortuary, we're talking about what's going to happen to it down the road. What's going to happen way down the road? Will that DNA ever see a physical existence again? And the Bible says, yeah, it will. As a matter of fact, it's going to have a physical existence that's going to last forever. The resurrection of the dead, of dead bodies.

Let's look at a couple of passages just to drive this home. Acts chapter 24, verse 15 is a key passage, and it's one that will help us kind of see the breadth of this topic in Scripture. So once you write it down, please turn with me to Acts chapter 24. In Acts, Paul is being accused of inciting a riot and he's put on trial before Felix. And here he is before this Roman magistrate trying to plead his case, inciting a riot. You don't want to be charged with that. Even today, California penal code, you'll get a thousand dollar fine and a year in prison, I think, for inciting a riot.

So here he is trying to defend himself before the judge. And he talks about the fact that his teaching about the... of Christ has caused a big stir, but he says, I'm not saying anything that's really bizarre here. As a matter of fact, he says — let's get a little context and start in verse 14 — he says, I admit, I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way. That's what they used to call the early followers of Christianity, of Christ, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the law and is written in the prophets. I believe the stuff the Old Testament says. And I have the same hope in God as these men that there will be a resurrection of both — here we broaden the topic — of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

Point is, we're going to live again. You don't only go around once in life, so grab all the gusto you can. You go around twice in life, therefore you ought to be really thoughtful about how you live this one. I'm going to — what does he say? — strive to keep my conscience clear before God and man. Resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.



Here's the thing. We always, in church, it seems to be, just hoping to be positive, I guess, to be focused on the resurrection of Christians. You do realize a passage like this makes it very clear there will be a physical, biological second life for both Christian and non-Christian, for both the righteous person and the unrighteous person, the wicked person, as Paul calls it — a resurrection of both. Therefore, it kind of changes my perspective on this life. I look at my co-workers, I look at my friends, I look at my neighbors, and I think about the reality that it's not just, you know what, I hope you can go to heaven with me, and if you don't, well, you miss out, and who knows, you might just evaporate somewhere in some celestial place. I don't know. No, the reality is you and I will both be physically resurrected. We're both going to have a second physical life. When this physical life is done, we'll have a second one.

Another passage that may be helpful that really is the passage I was quoting earlier as I was just discussing with you the essential nature of the teaching of the resurrection is this one, 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Let's take a look at a good section of this, a paragraph. As Paul tries to say, this is so essential. If we don't know it, and if we don't affirm it, and if we're not confident about it, then people ought to say, you guys are kooks.

Because in reality, our Christian life is more than the here and now. And if it's not more than the here and now, you really picked the wrong religion because it's kind of a pathetic thing for us to be following these principles and trying to be these, you know, followers of some way, some truth, some better life, because in reality, it's not a whole lot better than everybody else's. But the hope is it will be at the resurrection.

1 Corinthians chapter 15, look at verse number 12. He says, if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead — I mean, if that's what you heard, if that's what the apostles have gone around saying, if that's what all these witnesses, 500 of them, have testified to — then how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? How come you think that the bodies that we live in aren't going to be resurrected? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, underline these words, our preaching is useless, and so is your trust, your faith. Well, it's just a waste of time. Let's do something else with Sundays. It doesn't really matter. More than that, we're found to be false witnesses about God, because you and we were going around telling everybody that God raised Christ from the dead. He physically, bodily raised. But he did not raise him, if in fact the dead aren't raised.



Verse 16, for if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised — here it is again, a good phrase to underline — your faith is futile and you're still in your sins. Because the whole point of this Christ dying on a cross thing was to take the sin problem away. And the wages of sin is death, and if he did that, there ought to be a resurrection of the dead. He ought to reverse the death problem.

If only in this life — look at these poignant words, verse 19 — if only in this life we've hoped in Christ, then we are to be pitied more than all men. We ought to be just seen as a pathetic bunch of people. But, verse 20, Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the prototype, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. That's their euphemism for death. We are going to be raised the way that Jesus was raised. And he wasn't raised as a spirit or a phantom.

As a matter of fact, he told his skeptical disciples, touch me and see, I have flesh and bone. A spirit doesn't have flesh and bone as you see that I have. As a matter of fact, to prove it, what did he do? Constantly in his post-resurrection appearances, he kept eating. Why? Because you can't eat if you're Casper the Friendly Ghost, right? It just goes in there and you go like this and nothing happens. You need teeth to eat. You need a tongue to eat. You need an esophagus to eat. You need a stomach for somewhere for that food to go. Jesus had all of that because he was bodily, physically resurrected.

Now, I thought you just killed him last Friday. Well, they did, but now he's alive again. Now it's Sunday, and he's alive. What kind of life? A physical life. He was dead physically. Now he's alive. Now, what happened during that middle time? Was he alive? Sure, he was in spirit. His spirit was conscious after death, but his body was in a grave starting to decompose. But you know what? That... and the Bible says that's the same resurrection we can anticipate. And if the dead are not raised, then this whole thing's a crock and it's a waste of time.

Resurrection. You will have a second physical life. If you just want to sum it up in the basics, let's just be sure we know that. We can talk about it. We can understand it in its biblical and historical perspective as Christ being the prototype of what this physical resurrection is all about. Don't think about Casper the Ghost or translucent bodies or, you know, these cotton ball clouds and, you know, people play... It's not about that. It's about being physically alive again.

Secondly, there's this word in this phrase in Hebrews 6:2 that we ought to have this concept mastered, eternal judgment. Judgment, the evaluation and accountability of life. I put it this way, pointy finger number two, letter B: you will be held accountable for your decisions. Paul says, I strive to keep my



conscience clear before God and man. I want to make the right decisions. Why? Because I'm going to be resurrected. And that resurrection is going to last forever. And therefore, the reward or the repayment for my decisions is going to last forever. That's why the word *eternal* is connected with this word *judgment*. Your repayment for decisions rendered here are going to have lasting and eternal dividends. Therefore, wow, that changes the way I live. I need to understand that I'm going to have a second physical life and that my decisions I will be held accountable for.

Turn to a passage in the Old Testament. Easy way to find it is to find the book of Psalms. It's right in the middle. And turn right two books. Your right is this way. Ecclesiastes. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes.

Now, we don't spend a lot of time doing our quiet times or, you know, garnering devotional thoughts from Ecclesiastes, generally speaking, because it's a lot of negativity. And Solomon, in looking at all these things in the world, goes, wow, there's a lot of bummer things in this world. But every now and then, the value of Ecclesiastes is against the backdrop of what he calls meaningless stuff, he pops in with a truth and says, but you know what? Here's a truth from heaven. Here's a truth that really changes our perspective on this.

And in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, he's lamenting the fact that bad people prosper and good people suffer, which is a problem we've all dealt with. And verse number 17 — I think I put it up on the screen — Ecclesiastes 3:17, he stops and says, yeah, but then I remembered this. Here's the biblical truth that all of the Old Testament taught, and here is the Preacher, Solomon — that's what he's called in Ecclesiastes — he's going to now give a perspective-building thought. He says this, I thought in my heart, verse 17, God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked. There will be an evaluation and accountability for both the righteous and the wicked. For there will be a time for every activity, time for evaluation that is, and a time for every deed. There will be an evaluation or a judgment of every deed.

Now think about that. Every activity, every behavior, every deed, everything that I do, I'm going to be evaluated. Whether I'm a Christian or a non-Christian, there will be an evaluation of both. Now again, we don't like to think of it that way. We like to think resurrection for Christians and judgment for non-Christians. The Bible is very clear. Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment applies to both Christian and non-Christian, righteous and wicked. We will all be held accountable for our decisions, and we will all have a second physical life.



As a matter of fact, turn back two books to the book of Proverbs. Proverbs. No, not two books, one book. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. Proverbs chapter 14, verse 14. I just want to add these words to it, and I love that the Proverbs and the Psalms are so helpful, because Hebrew poetry doesn't rhyme words, it rhymes thoughts. And therefore, sometimes we get great verbs stacked right on top of each other, and it helps us kind of round out our thinking of these things.

And take a look at Proverbs 14:14. When he's speaking of judgment, he uses two great verbs that'll help us catch it. And we often see this in Jesus' teaching too, that judgment is often helpfully illustrated by monetary words. Are you there? The faithless, those that don't trust God, those that don't do things for God, the people that aren't righteous, they will be fully — here's the verb — repaid for their ways. And then the parallelism: and the good man, the righteous man, in our case, from a New Testament perspective, the Christian man, he will be rewarded for his. Repayment, reward. There's the concept.

What is judgment about? It's not just God sitting on his celestial tribunal stroking his beard going, hmm, that was a pretty good thing. No, that was a really good thing. And that thing over there, bad thing. Oh, that thing, really bad thing. He doesn't just evaluate. He now assigns a retribution to each thing, a remuneration for each thing. All of these deeds — oh, this goes in the good category. This goes in the great category. This goes in the, okay, this is barely above average. These are below average. And now he's paying back. The righteous get paid back. The wicked get paid back. There is a remuneration for all deeds and decisions.

You don't go around once in life, grab all the gusto. You go around twice in life, physically, therefore, you ought to be really thoughtful because you will be eternally judged. What does that mean? Your judgment will have eternal ramifications. It will linger on through eternity.

Now, those are the basics. But as soon as you start talking about, hey, you're going to live again twice physically, there will be a resurrection, and you're going to be judged, all you've got to do is start opening your Bible and looking through the New Testament. And you know what you find? You get confused really fast because there's a lot of different judgments and a lot of different resurrections, and we start going, wow, I need this all sorted out. So this calls for a chart, okay?

Number two, let's chart this out. I want to be able to think through a few of the details. What I want to do is I want to look through what God's *eschatos* is all about, the end stuff is all about. And I want to say, okay, when it comes to accountability and second life, I know the Bible teaches that, but let's just try to sort these things out. Now, we could make a chart that went on all the way through Z, right? So I



know it looks long and you're dreading it, but you'll thank me because we could unpack a lot of these and there's sub-points and sub-sub-points, but we won't go there. Just want to get the major things. Let's just get them in order and let's figure out what's God's plan for the future. What does he reveal to us about what's coming?

And the thing about it is if he went to all the trouble of revealing it and we keep reading about, oh, there's a resurrection, oh, and there's another resurrection, oh, there's a judgment, oh, there's another judgment, I think it would do us well and God would have us spend the effort and the mental activity to say, hey, let's sort it all out. So let's put it in chronological order. And to put the *eschatos* in chronological order, we got to go back.

So the chart looks something like this. We're not going to start in the future. Actually, we're going to start in the past. We're going to describe it. It's the what. We're going to see where in Scripture it says it. And then, a.k.a., we're going to put a label on it that you've probably already heard that will help us say, oh yeah, also known as, that's what that's all about. Okay?

So let's describe the first event in the Bible. Okay? Here comes the very first event, Genesis 1:1. God creates people so that they can enjoy his presence. I'm going to put all this in just really simple vernacular layman's terms, and here it comes: God creates people. He creates them so that they can enjoy him.

Does that sound egocentric? It's not a trick question. Kind of. Yeah. You know what? That's because he is. He's good. It'd be good for you to focus on him because he is the greatest. And in his greatness, if you connect with him, you will be blessed. And he just, he wants to share that greatness. He wants you to experience that greatness. He could have gone just fine through all of eternity in the eternal fellowship, the triune God of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He's revealed as such. He's a self-contained, eternal, divine fellowship. He doesn't need other people. But he is so great that he says, you know what? If I created some people, they would really be blessed if they knew me.

Does that sound prideful? It's because he's God, right? They would be blessed. It's like I kind of attribute it to creating or having something that's so great that you'd be really bad not to share it. And you've heard the old vaccine illustration. But I think about snow cones in Blythe. I just go there in my mind. If there were no such thing as snow cones, and one day you created them in your kitchen and now, wow, this is great. Let's not say, let's say full-blown shaved ice. You just came up with the



concept. Now it's Blythe, right? I think the best thing you could do for Blythinians is to share your greatness, which in that case would be your snow cones. Share them.

God didn't have anybody to share his greatness with besides himself, so he creates an angelic class, then he creates a human class, and he says, I can let you enjoy who I am. We call that, no big surprise here, creation. Yeah, it's called the creation. We heard about that. That's the first flannel graph story they learned downstairs. God creates the heavens and the earth and all the people on it.

Letter B, the second thing that happens is people say, forget you, God. Not interested. As a matter of fact, by chapter 3 — and that's where this happens — people say, I'm not interested in following your rules. As a matter of fact, I see that that tree that you told us not to eat from, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that's really good. That would be good for me. I want to have that. Oh, I know God said not to do it, but you know what? I'm going to do it anyway. And they were tempted, and they were drawn away, and they took this fruit and said, forget you, God. Okay, that's called the fall, right? Genesis chapter 3. The fall.

Mankind fell from their place of fellowship. They no longer were able to enjoy God's presence. As a matter of fact, the next time God showed up in the garden, what did they do? Hide. Don't want anything to do with it. Because they were guilty.

God says, okay, people said, forget you. God could have rightly and justly said, well, then forget you, right? That's what you say when people say forget you. Usually you say, forget you then. God doesn't say that. As a matter of fact, he says, okay, I'm going to choose a person. And from that person, I'm going to build a nation, and I'm going to choose to set my love on those people, and I'm going to choose to forgive those people. God loves and forgives a nation, promising them a kingdom.

In other words, I'm going to promise you an environment where everything is going to work out the way it's supposed to. It's going to be a place where it's going to be... things are going to be right. After the fall, everything's all wrong, but I'm going to make a place, a community of people — it's going to be based on these national borders — but I'm going to create this place and they're going to be blessed, they're going to be loved, they're going to be forgiven. Genesis chapter 12 is the catalyst of that. It's the starting point for that. Genesis chapter 12, you Sunday school grads know, Abrahamic covenant. Abrahamic covenant, God promises, I'm going to set my blessing on you people, and as a matter of fact, anybody who blesses you is going to be blessed, and if they curse you, I'm going to curse them. It's going to go bad for them.



This is what's called in Scripture Israel, the nation of Israel. These are his people. He names them four generations into it. He names them Israel, and they are now going to be God's people, three generations into it. Okay, great.

Still in the past. Letter D, moving ahead, because you're thinking, wow, we're only in Genesis 12. We need more letters than what we have on the page. No, no, we're going, we're fast-forwarding now, and you get this in the Gospels. God sends their king. He's going to create a kingdom. They need a king. Matter of fact, the king's going to be his Son, the second person of the Godhead. Sends their king and payment for sin, because he can't just say, I forgive you, so let's just forget about your sin. He's got to pay the sin, pay the sin off, pay for the sin. How is he going to atone for the sin? Well, it isn't going to be through the blood of goats and rams. It's going to be through the blood of his own Son. But what he hopes is that these people are going to embrace him. I'm going to create a nation from Abraham, and I want the nation to embrace their king.

But that's not what they do. They reject him. God sends their king in payment for sin, but they say, no thanks. Okay, things aren't going well. God creates people, enjoy me. No, I'm not interested. God says, okay, but I'm going to love you and forgive you anyway. Here, here's your king. No, not interested.

Okay, he came — this is John 1 — he came, remember this Sunday school verse? He came unto his own, but his own received him not. Remember that verse? They rejected him, not interested. This is Jesus, of course. You know who the king is, right? Yeah, right. Thank you. You know the king. King: Jesus.

Letter E. Are we keeping up? Here we go. Letter E. What happens? King is rejected by Israel, by and large, for the most part. I mean, they may go through the motions of "Save us now," "Hosanna, Hosanna," but in a week they're saying, "Crucify him." Not interested. So God says, got a new plan now. We've got an expanded hybrid organization that I'm going to set my love on and forgive. Now, you know what? I'm not going to confine it anymore to the descendants of Abraham. I'm going to now include people from every tongue, tribe, and nation, and I'm going to set my love on them and move them to embrace my king, and I'm going to love them and forgive them. And it doesn't matter if they're Israelites or not. They can be Grecian, they can be Italian, they can be... It doesn't matter. I'm going to set my love on people as I draw them to embrace my king.



God creates an expanded hybrid organization to love and forgive. Okay? That happens throughout the rest of the New Testament. NT, New Testament. What do we call that organization? It's called the church. It's a new organization. This is not the nation of Israel. This is the expanded hybrid organization, because it does include some Israelites. Matter of fact, the first generation, a lot of them were Jewish. They wrote a lot of the New Testament, but the majority was Gentile. As a matter of fact, the Old Testament foresaw this as the times of the Gentiles. It's going to be a bunch of non-Jewish people that God is loving and forgiving.

You are here. You sit right here between letter E and letter F on God's program. So far, it's all historical. So all of it, you're going, oh, I know all that stuff. And you even know the chronology of that. Creation, fall, Israel, cross, Jesus, church. Great.

Now we're moving into the future. All of this is yet future. What's next? Letter F. What's the next thing on the list? Here it comes. Ready? Let's jot it down. God resurrects all those who were a part of the church. Now, to be a part of the church, you've got to repent of your sins and put your trust in Christ. Mostly Gentile, some Jewish, they've done that. And the problem is, this has gone on for, at least from our perspective, at least 2,000 years, and most of the church is dead biologically. They're biologically dead. The bodies of former, you know, churchgoers and people who have trusted in Christ, I mean, their DNA and biological matter scattered all over the planet. Most of the church is dead. So God says, I'm going to resurrect all those people. Where does it say that? Passages like 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. 1 Thess 4, he's going to resurrect those who are part of the church.

Okay, now note this. This is resurrection 1.1. Just jot down 1.1. We'll get to what 1.1 is, but just jot down resurrection 1.1. It is the time when God brings back to life those who had put their trust in Christ during the period of the church, from Acts chapter 2 to 1 Thess chapter 4, actually to Revelation chapter 3.

Now, letter G, God temporarily sets aside the church and gets back to his program with Israel. He sets aside the church, and now he's going to get back to his program with Israel, because what was Israel all about? I'm going to create a kingdom out of you, and I'm going to give you your king. Oh, you rejected the king? New hybrid organization. Hybrid organization, a lot of these people die through the ages. Now what I'm going to do is pop them out of the ground, give them their bodies back, and I'm going to set aside the church and draw my attention back to finishing my program with Israel because there's a lot of unfinished business there.



1 Thessalonians chapter 4 tells us about the setting aside of the church. Daniel 9 predicted that there's still a dangling section of God's program for Israel. We call the setting aside of the church what? The rapture. That's the rapture. The next thing on God's program comes really in a set. The resurrection of formerly church-going, repentant, and faith-filled Christians. It's just their bodies, because their spirits are already with God. Out of the ground they go.

And then 1 Thess 4 says, if you're still on earth and you remain and you're a follower of Christ, when all these dead bodies start popping out of the cemeteries, then you get caught up in the sky to meet the Lord in the air. What about my body? It gets changed on the way. So really, you can put a bracket around F and G, because these things happen simultaneously, almost, although the Scripture is very clear, the dead in Christ will rise first. And then we who remain will be caught up together with God in the clouds, with Christ in the clouds. Okay? Resurrection and rapture.

We often put it in charts, rapture and resurrection, but really, let's just be technical, the best place to be on the day of the rapture is in a cemetery, because then you'll get a little bit of warning, just a little bit, because all these graves are going to start popping open and you're going, whoa, whoa, whoa, and then you go. But the graves will go first because that's what the Bible says. The dead in Christ will rise first and then we who remain will be caught up together with the Lord in the air. Resurrection, rapture. That's why it's good to hang out in cemeteries because you raise the odds of getting a little bit of warning, but not much. Twinkling of an eye. All right, let's not hang out in cemeteries.

H, what happens after the rapture? Well, God's now going to do a little judging. Here comes our first judgment. The King judges the church for her faithfulness. Now notice, this is a judgment of something positive, faithfulness. He judges the church for her faithfulness. Not individuals for their giftedness, but individuals for their faithfulness. How faithful were you to do what God told you with what you had? That's why he's not just going to look at fruit, because people bear fruit some 30, 60, 100-fold. He's going to ask, how faithful were you? Because it's required of a steward that he be found faithful. God wants you to be faithful, and therefore this is a judgment of how faithful you are. But that's all on the positive side.

Passages in Scripture that talk about that — I think I narrowed it to one just to make it simple on our chart — 1 Corinthians 3. 1 Corinthians 3 talks about the fact that we will be judged for what we do, but in this case, as it relates to the church, only for the positive. So therefore, it won't be all that bad. Well, it will be bad for those of us that weren't very faithful.



If our faithfulness was sporadic and our wife's faithfulness was exemplary, and if our best friend's faithfulness was above average and mine was just a little below, I was a little, you know, faithfully retired. I was just behind the curve. I wasn't very good. Well, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3, you'll suffer loss. Does that hurt? Yeah, it hurts. Matter of fact, there'll be some tears on judgment day for us in the church because we'll say, wow, I should have been more faithful. And to the extent that we're not, we're going to suffer that loss.

But it's a judgment of what is good. It's like the, I like to illustrate it with the chili cook-off. There is a judge who comes down the line and samples your chili. Now, can that be a day of tears? It can be if the judge goes, oh, thanks, nice try, and goes on to the next guy and says, oh, this is good. Now, you're sitting there with your chili going, what do you mean? And he says, it's just not very good. Well, am I going to be cast into hell? No, but it's not very good. And then the next guy, oh, that's really good chili. Good job. "Well done, good and faithful servant." Remember all those phrases? Comes into play right here, 1 Corinthians chapter 3.

We want God to reward us because we've been faithful. And the more faithful we are to the tasks that God has called us to, the more God is going to say, well done. And that's going to come with some kudos, because it isn't just a pat on the head. Matter of fact, the Bible says we are storing up for ourselves treasure in heaven. And that, by the way, remember, it's all about a physical resurrection. This is physical. And you know what? When I think about goodies that are not physical, I don't get very excited. When I think about goodies that are physical, I get excited, right? I mean, that's really what connects with us. We want the nice house or the nice car. We want the nice whatever. And the nice whatever is what comes connected with God's rewards because it comes in a physical dimension.

Okay, God resurrects all who are part of the church, temporarily sets aside the church to get back to his program with Israel. That's what Daniel 9 is all about. H, the King now judges the church for her faithfulness. What do we call that? Maybe you've heard this phrase, maybe not, but I know it's tossed around often, the *Bema* seat judgment. The *Bema* seat judgment is a judgment that's different than the *krino* judgment, if you want to put it that way. There's two Greek words in the New Testament for judge. One is *bēma* and one is *krino*. *Krino* usually has a negative connotation attached with it. *Bēma* has a positive connotation.

We use *judge*, an English word, and we just use it indiscriminately. "My Cousin Vinny's going to the courthouse and he's going to stand before the judge." That's a negative judgment. You know, "I created this great bowl of chili and I'm going to the judge at the Orange County Fair and they're going to judge it." That has a positive counter. There's hopes of great things in the one judgment and there's



dread of bad things in the other. This is the *Bēma* seat judgment, which means it's the good judgment. And there's hopes of good things at this judgment. But there also is a little disappointment going on here, because a lot of us are going, man, I could have had a whole lot better crock of chili than that. And darn, I wasted my opportunities. You're going to think of chili that day.

Letter I. What comes next? God has set aside the church now, and he's turning back to Israel. Well, that has to do something to do with Israel, probably, absolutely. The Bible says that God will judge the earth and draw Israel to himself so that they embrace his King. That's what's going to happen during this period. He has now set aside the church. That's called the rapture. Now he's going to turn his attention to Israel, and what he's going to do is he's going to simultaneously judge the earth for its rejection of the King, because the church is out of the way, and he's going to turn his attention to drawing Israelites, Jewish people, to embrace Jesus, the Messiah.

This is foretold in passages like Jeremiah chapter 30, that he is going to turn his attention to win these people. In passages like Revelation chapter 6 through chapter 18, it's illustrated with all kinds of detail. For instance, there'll be 144,000 Jewish missionaries that are going to go out and try and win Jewish people to the Messiah. And they will be highly successful because they will be turning their hearts every day in tons, in mass, to follow Christ. This is what's predicted, by the way, in not only Jeremiah 30, but Daniel chapter 9. He's going to finish his work with Israel in this period.

This is called, by the way, because of the negativity of the judgment of the earth, the tribulational period. Jeremiah 30 has a different name for it. It's called the time of Jacob's trouble, when they will be oppressed. But here's what it says: Jacob, which is another name for Israel, will be saved out of it. They will be redeemed, but the world will be judged. And the world will be fostering — or not fostering — it will be focusing its hostility toward Israel, which by the way is so fascinating because if we were having this study in Hebrews chapter 6 verse 2, 150 years ago and talking about Israel, we'd be going, well, where are those Israelites anyway? Well, scattered all over the world. Well, there's still a lot of them scattered all over the world, but you do realize, don't you, that it wasn't until 1947 that we could say, well, Israel's back in... in... in... in Israel. The Jews are back now in Jerusalem. They now are, you know, flying F-16s around and actually have a nation. That's all a part of God's providential plan because he's getting ready for step number I on his program, which I don't think is lettered I, but letter I on our chart.

Okay, J. After this time of Jacob's trouble, as God is preparing hearts of Israelis to come to embrace the Messiah that previously they rejected — not all of them, but most of them — now most of them are turning to Messiah at the very end as the world pits its hostility toward Israel, which is not much of an



imaginative stretch because it's happening all the time. But as they bear down on Israel to destroy them, the Bible says God's going to send his King back to rescue them and defend them.

Passages like Revelation chapter 19 spell this out. It's looked forward to by chapter — actually many times in Revelation — but chapter 16 it starts in earnest. Then chapter 18 — I mean, it's all about chapter 18 and chapter 19, the apex of it all, when the King comes to rescue Israel at the end of this thing. And this in Scripture is designated Armageddon. Here is the great battle of Armageddon, when, as chapter 18 says, Babylon is defeated. What does that mean? The nations that have pitted themselves against Israel in this time of Jacob's trouble. Jacob or Israel is going to be saved out of that. And they will, because the King himself will come back and fight with them. And guess who comes back with the King? The church. And we ride with him, behind him. He comes with his saints, and he comes to rescue Israel at the end of the tribulational period, a seven-year period according to many passages, including the book of Revelation and Daniel chapter 9.

K, God resurrects the Jews killed during the tribulation. The tribulation is a time of hostility of the nations, represented by the word Babylon in the book of Revelation, against Israel. And guess what? They have a lot of success in killing Israelis during the tribulation. So a lot of them, now newly trusting in Christ, the Messiah, Jesus from Nazareth, they end up being killed during this period.

Now what happens here? After he comes and rescues Israel, guess what he does? He resurrects all those killed during the 70th week of Daniel, the tribulation. Now all the Jewish people get resurrected. This is found in Revelation chapter 20. And we can call it, because it's also summed up as the end of the first resurrection, let's call it resurrection 1.2. Because what he does in chapter 20 is God distinguishes between the first resurrection and the second resurrection. The second resurrection is the bad one. The first resurrection is the good one. You want to be a part of the first resurrection, but if you read the Bible carefully, we've already had an installment of the first resurrection, which was not the resurrection of the Israelis. It's the resurrection of those of the hybrid organization, mostly Gentiles, at the end of the church age.

So the resurrection of the church, just prior to — twinkling of an eye — the rapture of the church, now we have at the end of the 70th week of Daniel, the time of Jacob's trouble, the tribulational period, we have another resurrection. This time, a focus on the Jews killed during the tribulational period.

Letter L. God then will judge Israel and the nations. There is a negative and a positive in this. He judges Israel for the positive they've done, just like he judged the positive of the church. It was called



the *Bēma* seat for the church. It's not called that for Israel. It's just called the judgment of Israel. But it's called that in a positive manner. And in a negative manner, at the same time, he judges the nations.

This is foretold in Ezekiel chapter 20. And a more familiar passage I threw in, which also refers to the same event, is Matthew chapter 25. Usually quoted out of its eschatological context, but Matthew 25 is the parable you know that Jesus told of the separation of the sheep and the goats. Remember that passage? The sheep get separated from the goats. The Israelites get separated, and now they're judged for the good that they did, and the nations are judged — the goats are judged — for the bad that they did.

So we have a positive judgment akin to the *Bēma* seat judgment, and a negative judgment of retribution for people that are lost. This all happens at the end of the tribulation. We call this the judgment of Israel, although it will include the judgment of the nations, the separating of the sheep and the goats. As a matter of fact, I almost put that, and you can put that here, sometimes it's called the sheep and goat judgment. It's the separation of the nations from Israel.

Okay, now, note this. F through L are all component parts of what is often referred to in the New Testament as the coming of the Lord or the second coming, or in the Old Testament, it's often referred to as the day of the Lord. The coming of the Lord, the day of the Lord, the second coming, really refers to at least — and I'm just giving you the major ones here — one, two, three, four, five, six, seven events: the resurrection of the church, the rapture of the church, the *Bēma* seat judgment of the church, the tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, Armageddon, Christ's saving of Israel, the resurrection of those dying during the tribulation, and the judgment of Israel and the nations. All of these events are the coming of the Lord. And so when people say, wow, at the second coming, you've got to know there's lots of component parts to that. These are the major seven component parts of the coming of the Lord. There's a series of events. You say, when the Lord comes back, well, there's lots of things that happen when the Lord comes back within a period of seven years. Here's the gist of them, the highlights.

Are you still with me? Letter M. What's next? Tribulation's over. Well, God now finishes his program with Israel by spending a thousand years fulfilling all the kingdom promises to Israel. He made a lot of promises that haven't been fulfilled yet, about a physical place with a physical King, with nations on the outside that aren't necessarily kindly toward Israel. So you've got people that don't necessarily follow God and those that do follow God, but a perfect situation with the Son of David ruling over Israel.



Now, where's that going to happen? Not the new Jerusalem, not the end of the book, because at the end of the book, all we have is redeemed people. But we have a period of time that God is going to play out all the promises to Israel, where he's going to do exactly what he promised in the Old Testament, but it's going to happen in the context of not just these redeemed and special people, but also the other nations that are outside. Ezekiel 37 talks about this. Revelation chapter 20 talks about this.

The phrase *a thousand years* is very specific, used six to seven times — and I can't remember whether it's six or seven times — in Revelation chapter 20. A thousand years. Another word for that is the a.k.a. in this point: millennium. We call it the millennium because a millennium means a thousand years, of course, and the Bible says that he is going to do all these things, taking the tempter, the devil, and chaining him up for a thousand years. So a thousand years, no tempter, no devil, nobody there to stir the pot.

Where are we going to be? Well, we've got glorified bodies at this point, and we rule and reign with Christ. What about these people that have come over from the tribulational period? Well, they're living in unredeemed bodies, but bodies that aren't distracted or assaulted by the enemy, and they will be having children. We will not. They will be populating Jerusalem and Israel. We will not. We'll be reigning with Christ. They'll fill the place up, and at the bottom of this period — which we didn't give a letter to — he's going to release the tempter for a short time, because there's a lot of people born during the millennium that have never even had a chance or a choice or seen the two options, because all we have is Jesus on the throne ruling in Jerusalem.

So, after the millennium, a couple things happen. The release of the enemy for a while, but after that, we have God calling up then everybody who's ever rejected the King. This is a bad one. This is when he actually puts eternal bodies with DNA that's not going to be corrupted — he puts eternal bodies back on people that rejected him. Revelation 20 gives this a name. It's called, by inference, the second resurrection. It's compared to the first resurrection that came in two parts. And basically, he's telling us, you don't want to be a part of this one. Which really is by inference saying, you better not reject the King. Don't reject the King, because if you do, you end up being resurrected a thousand years afterwards. And a thousand years afterwards, all you're going to be is resurrected so that we can get to letter O, where God can then judge you for your rejection of the King and your deeds.

Because just like the positive judgment for Israel and the church is going to be remuneration for what's done, so it is with the judgment of people that have rejected the King. All judgment of non-Christians is going to be varied based on what they've done. Just like the reward for Christians is going to be varied. It's not communism here. This is God doling out based on effort and faithfulness and commitment to



the cause. He is going to reward people differently. And so he will reward — or I should say, judge or repay — people differently here.

Revelation 20 again spells this out and gives it a name: the Great White Throne judgment. That's what it's often called because it says he's going to resurrect bodies, stand them before the great Judge. And as Ecclesiastes and Proverbs 14:14 say, every deed will be accounted for. And there will be a remuneration or a repayment for all that was done.

And speaking of done, letter P. At long last, God, the end of the book, gives a perfect eternal home to both Israel and the church. He is now creating a place, and this is spelled out in Revelation 21 and 22, that he says now is perfect. It's a perfect place. Satan is no longer temporarily chained for a thousand years. He is completely and finally cast into a place called the lake of fire, no more ever to disturb those that follow Christ, both in Israel and the church. And we will live together, as described in Revelation 21 and 22, in a 1,500-mile cube. And it's a cube because the symbolism is rich. There was only one cubed room in the temple or the tabernacle, and that was the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was, where the special representation of God's glory was. And it says the dwelling of God, which was manifested between the wings of the cherubim on top of the Ark of the Covenant in the cubed room — here's what the voice says: now the dwelling of God is among men in a 1,500-mile cube with all these people from the church and from Israel who put their trust in the King, and he now grants them this place.

And he's got a name for it. It's not the old, and it's not the millennium. It's the all-new and improved Jerusalem. This is a whole different kind of Jerusalem. Revelation chapter 21 and 22 tell us about that place. And it's a place that's not like the millennial Jerusalem. It's one up from that, and it's certainly not like the modern-day Jerusalem. And it gives us a home, a residential, physical home for people who have been resurrected into physical bodies.

Creation, fall, Israel, Jesus, cross, resurrection of the church — 1.1, the rapture, the *Bēma* seat, tribulation, second coming, resurrection 1.2, judgment of Israel, millennium, resurrection number two, Great White Throne, New Jerusalem. Memorize this list. There will be a test.

You know, I was thinking about 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, talking about the fact that the very first thing that's next on God's list is the resurrection of the dead. And if you were to try to find a cemetery near our present meeting place, you would find very few. Matter of fact, you could drive for miles and only find three, really, anywhere around here. Because in our culture, we've taken death and totally



separated it. Amazingly enough, the more affluent a culture has become, the more they've tried to distance themselves from any reminders or representations of death.

But you know what? Most of my relatives on my mom's side are buried right outside the windows of the church. You know how that is in the South? You go to those old churches in the South and right outside — now think about this — is just a bunch of graves, headstones of all your relatives. I've always thought that'd be great. Might help people pay attention as they're coming in for the sermon, right? Here's this reminder. This is important.

But more than that, can you imagine how great it is to recognize that every Christian and every church that can look through the window at a headstone right outside the stained glass window of their church is reminded that the very next thing on God's program is popping those bodies out of those graves of those that trusted in Christ. And then we go to join Christ in the air.

The hope of the resurrection ought to be central in our minds, and unfortunately we can't get permits to put cemeteries around our churches anymore. But I'm telling you what, if we don't recognize that the whole point of the Christian message is that God is going to reverse death for us so that we as disembodied spirits will one day again be clothed in our physical bodies that will then be perfect. And then ultimately placed in a 1,500-mile cube, a city. And I don't know, you know, other than the representation of the Holy of Holies. The point is, it's going to be this tremendous, bizarre place that ultimately will be physical, where all the blessings of God will be magnified and concentrated.

And that ought to be our hope. In the New Testament it was called the blessed hope. As a matter of fact, the Christians were so focused on what's going to happen in the *eschatos*, in the end, that they were people that would break out with this Aramaic word, *Maranatha*. Remember what that means? Come quickly. Come, Lord. It was the cry of the early church.

And unfortunately today we've kind of lost that pulse, that heartbeat of God is going to do some great things. And I hope that tonight this little teaser on the end times might help you say, you know what, we ought to be more focused on that. We ought to get more excited about it. We ought to be more filled with the kind of New Testament, imminent hope of God's second coming with all of its component parts.



So I pray that this might get you started. A lot of homework, perhaps, is prompted by this, and I hope you dig into your Bibles. Let's pray together.

God, please help us to be not only fixed on the hope of the coming of Christ, but be people that do a good job studying your word. Help us not be like people with that cop-out of, well, I'm sure it'll all pan out, doesn't matter. God, you went to a lot of trouble to reveal to us your plan with the various resurrections and the various judgments. And I pray we would not be so cavalier to give the cop-out that it really doesn't matter whether I research it or not.

Help us to be people like the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to be, to be good students of the word, workmen that don't need to be ashamed, who accurately handle the word of truth. And I pray we would do that, God, not just so we can come out of a church service saying we know more, but because our heart needs to be just fueled by the details and the important intricacies of what it means to live with you forever, which is not just a pie-in-the-sky wish, but it's something that you've given us a roadmap to follow and to understand and to get our hearts in line with in Scripture.

God, thanks for giving us your word, and I pray we'd get excited about it, understanding it, and having our hearts long for it this week. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.