

## Understanding Eschatology

### Session 1 Summary

- **What is eschatology?**
  - **1:** a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of humankind  
(*merriam-webster.com*)
  
- **Why is eschatology important?**
  1. It is spoken of frequently throughout scripture.
  2. The book of Revelation specifically mentions blessings associated with studying and teaching this prophecy (**Revelation 1:3**).
  3. The way we view the future affects how we live in the present and how we interpret other passages of scripture.
  4. Incorrect views of eschatology have resulted in false prophecies or predictions, which have had damaging effects on those who believe them. This is also detrimental to evangelism due to making Christian beliefs look foolish.
  5. Incorrect eschatology validates the arguments of atheists or others who are opposed to Christianity.
  
- **Understanding the Old Testament is essential**
  - “End Times” prophecy of the New Testament cannot be understood without a knowledge of the Old Testament. Much of these New Testament writings include quotations and/or allusions to Old Testament passages.
  - It is important to know the history and the distinction of the Old Covenant and New Covenant
    - God makes a promise to Abraham that He would give Abraham’s descendants a special land and the He would always be their God (**Genesis 17**)
    - God reconfirms his covenant with Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, and renames “Israel.” He has twelve sons who become the “Twelve Tribes of Israel.” (**Genesis 35**)
    - The Israelites become enslaved by the Egyptians. God appoints Moses, a man from the tribe of Levi, to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. (**Exodus 3**)
    - During the Israelite exodus, God gives the written terms of his covenant through Moses. This is when the Tabernacle system of worship was established (the Tabernacle was eventually replaced by the Temple built by Solomon). (**Exodus 24-26**)
    - The Israelites continually broke the covenant throughout many years (**Exodus 32**)
    - A prophecy is given through the prophet Jeremiah declaring that God would establish a new covenant with Israel. (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**)
    - The New Covenant is introduced by Jesus at the last supper (**Luke 22:20**)
    - The New Covenant is put into effect with Jesus’ death and resurrection. (**Hebrews 8:7-13, 9:1-27**)

- **During the time of old covenant, Israel experienced God’s judgement of their disobedience, resulting in the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Babylonians.**
  - 2 Chronicles 36:11-21
  
- **While Jerusalem and the Temple were still in ruins, a prophecy is given through Isaiah that King Cyrus would command their rebuilding.**
  - Isaiah 44:24-28
  
- **Before the second Temple is rebuilt and Jerusalem is restored, we see a mention of a future destruction of the Temple through the prophet Daniel. We also see a prophecy of Jesus in this passage.**
  - Daniel 9:20-27
  
- **The Temple and Jerusalem were restored as prophesied. Just before Jesus’ crucifixion, he pronounces judgement upon the religious leaders for joining in the sins of their ancestors.**
  - Matthew 23:29-38
  
- **Just after Jesus’ declaration of judgement upon the religious leaders, he predicts the future destruction of the Temple.**
  - Matthew 24:1
  
- **Immediately following Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of the Temple, his disciples ask him when it will take place.**
  - Matthew 24:3
  
- **Jesus’ response to his disciples’ question leads into the New Testament passage known as the “Olivet Discourse” (this title is given due to Jesus speaking these words on the Mount of Olives). The Olivet Discourse is where many of Christian eschatological beliefs are derived from.**
  
- **Before we study the Olivet Discourse in its entirety, we will first study the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy by exploring the history of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple which occurred in 70AD. This is documented by the first-century historian, Flavius Josephus.**
  
- **Understanding the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy will give us more insight when we study Jesus’ response to his disciples’ question of “when?”. Understanding how this prophecy was fulfilled will also give us a tool for Christian apologetics.**