

## Study Guide

Many times we struggle to get a solid biblical understanding of the different topics in the Bible. Are we really punished for Adam's sin? What is the purpose of angels? What do the end times look like?

This course will tackle these topics and many more and unpack them in a way that isn't just theoretical but actually relates to your Christian life.

Corresponding teaching videos can be found online at:

[churchoftherock.ca/watch-online/series/crashcoursecreeds/](http://churchoftherock.ca/watch-online/series/crashcoursecreeds/)

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# ESCHATOLOGY – Doctrine of Last Things

## *A Crash Course in Creeds - Session 7*



There are two major views of theology, which dramatically affects how you look at eschatology.

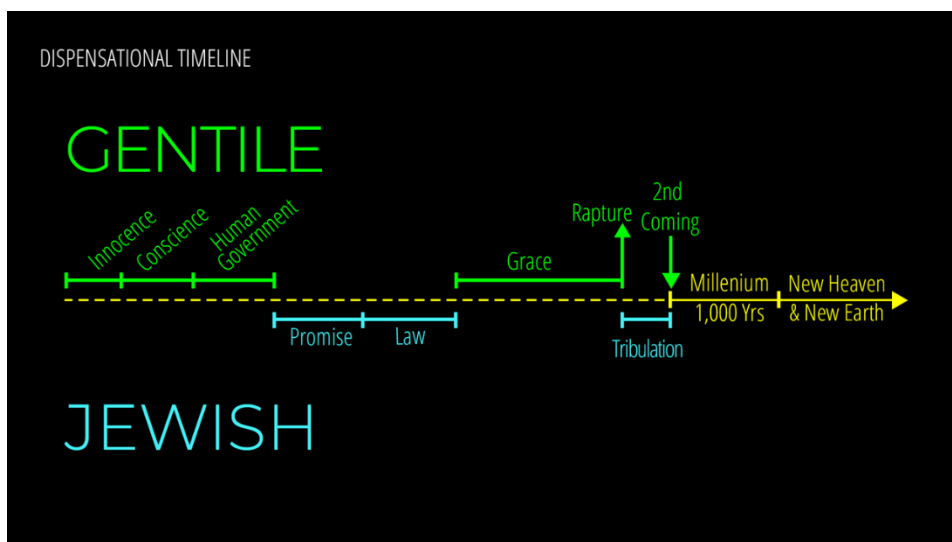
## Dispensational Theology

**God has two distinct peoples** and deals distinctly with each with their own covenant.

- a) ISRAEL – theocratic and earthly kingdom of Old Testament (Jews)
- b) GENTILES (Church) – spiritual and heavenly kingdom of New Testament Church

7 Distinct Dispensations (or Dealings with Man)

- a) Innocence ([Genesis 2:1–3:24](#))
- b) Conscience ([Genesis 4:1–8:22](#))
- c) Human Gov't ([Genesis 9:1–11:32](#))
- d) Promise ([Genesis 12:1–Exodus 12:37](#))
- e) Law ([Exodus 12:38–Matthew 3:1](#))
- f) Grace ([Matthew 3:1–Revelation 19:10](#)) ([Ephesians 3:2](#))
- g) Fullness of Times ([Revelation 19:11](#)) ([Ephesians 1:10](#))



- Therefore, Dispensationalist theologians believe the Jewish Temple will be restored and that all Old Testament unfulfilled prophecy refers to the future restoration of Israel (e.g. Ezekiel & Isaiah), not the Church or “People of God.”

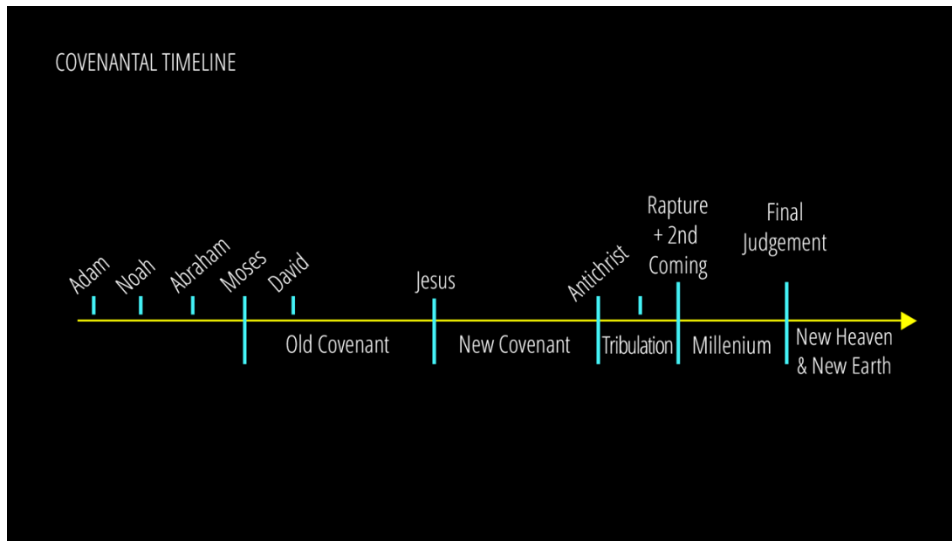
## Covenantal Theology

**God only has one people** (the Children of God – [Hosea 1:10](#)).

Throughout history God dealt with “His People” via numerous covenants:

- ADAMIC COVENANT (Garden of Eden)
- NOAHIC COVENANT (After Flood – [Genesis 8:20–9:17](#))
- ABRAHAMIC COVENANT ([Genesis 17:7](#))
- MOSAIC COVENANT (Old Covenant)
- DAVIDIC COVENANT (Coming King – [2 Samuel 7](#))
- NEW COVENANT (Jesus)

Adherents of Covenantal Theology view history and the coming future events as a single continuous timeline where God unfolds progressive covenants to “His People.”



## THE RAPTURE

1 Thessalonians 4:13–17 - *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*

<sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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.

- The word “rapture” does not appear in Scripture but is what is meant by being “caught up together.”
- It includes Christians who have already died and those still living at that moment.

## THE TRIBULATION

- A time of great distress on the earth as described in the book of Revelation.
- Daniel describes the period as “one week,” which is interpreted as seven years.

Daniel 9:27 - *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

- [Daniel 9:24-27](#) and Revelation 11:2-3 refers to the first half as being 3 ½ years (42 months).
- Jesus refers to it as the “beginning of birth pains” ([Matthew 24:15](#)).
- Jesus calls the second half the “Great Tribulation” ([Matthew 24:21](#)).

## THE ANTICHRIST

- He is a world leader that will capture the attention of many.
- At first he will appear to be a man of peace to solve the planet’s problems ([Daniel 9:27](#)).
- After 3 ½ years he will reveal his true nature ([Revelation 13:5-6](#)).
- People will then worship him and he will require them to take the mark of the beast 666 to even buy or sell ([Revelation 13-18](#)).

## SECOND COMING

- Jesus returns to Earth and casts Satan and the Antichrist into the bottomless pit ([Matthew 24:29-31](#)).

# THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

Jesus sets up a 1,000-year reign on Earth ([Revelation 20:2-3](#)).

- 1) **Post-Millennialism:** Christ will return only after the millennium is over.
- 2) **Amillennialism:** No literal 1,000 years—there is no millennium.
- 3) **Pre-Millennialism:** Christ will return before the millennium.

## FINAL JUDGEMENT

- Jesus will judge all the living and dead.
- The wicked are cast into the lake of fire.
- The believer joins Christ in a new heaven and Earth. ([Revelation 20:7-15](#)).

## NEW HEAVEN & EARTH

- Heaven and Earth as we know it will have passed away and we shall live in a glorious New Heaven and Earth where there is no death, sorrow, crying or pain ([Revelation 21:1-4](#)).

## PRE-TRIB

**The belief that the rapture will occur prior to the 7-year tribulation.**

- **Held by most Dispensationalists.**
- Must believe the word “coming” is used both of rapture and second coming.
- Must believe “appearing” and “revelation” refer exclusively to a secret return for the saints before the tribulation, with a 7-year division till the second coming.

## POST-TRIB

**The belief that the rapture will occur after the 7-year tribulation.**

- **Held by most Covenantalists.**
- Must believe the “coming,” “appearing,” “revelation,” and “gathering” all refer to the same event.
- Therefore, the rapture and the second coming are the same thing and occur at the same time.

## MID-TRIB

**The belief that the rapture will occur in the middle of the seven-year tribulation.**

- **Held by mostly confused people.**
- It is really a variation on Pre-Trib., saying that the tribulation doesn't start until 3 ½ year mark of the seven-year period.
- The last trumpet of [1 Corinthians 15:52](#) is the seventh trumpet of [Revelation 11:15](#) at the middle point of tribulation.

## THE BIG DEBATE: THE TIMING

Matthew 24:36-44 - *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.* <sup>37</sup> *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.* <sup>38</sup> *For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,* <sup>39</sup> *and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.* <sup>40</sup> *Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.* <sup>41</sup> *Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.* <sup>42</sup> *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.* <sup>43</sup> *But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.* <sup>44</sup> *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Our command is not to know when the rapture will occur, but to be ready since we don't know when.

Matthew 24:29-31 - *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* <sup>30</sup> *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* <sup>31</sup> *And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

- "It is pretty straightforward immediately after the tribulation."
- There is no clear evidence that the rapture occurs before the tribulation (but anything is possible).
- Nowhere does it say that we go to heaven in the rapture, only that we are caught up to meet the Lord.
- If He is coming down to rule the earth we are coming with Him
  - Jude 14 "...Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints..."
  - Revelation 20:4 "...they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."



## Discussion Questions

1. In Revelation 22:12, Jesus said, *“Look, I am coming soon...”* (NIV). Clearly His soon is different than our understanding of soon. **What is Jesus communicating here?**

2. What are some of the “rabbit trails” and “red herrings” that distract you from the purposes of learning about eschatology?

3. Matthew 24:4 - *“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”* **What does it mean to “be ready” for the Son of Man to come?**

4. There are many things in history that have been seen as the mark of the beast. What identifies the true mark of the beast?

5. [Revelation 22:7-12](#) shows us how to find comfort, inspiration, motivation, etc. from coming future events. **For each of the concepts listed below, what encouragement should you take out of this for your daily life?**

- The rapture
- The 2nd coming
- The final judgement
- The new heaven and new earth

**What truths do these deepen for you?**



## References to Study: Pre-Trib vs. Post-Trib Rapture

Pre-Trib	Post-Trib
	<a href="#">Matthew 24:29-31</a>
<a href="#">John 14:2-3</a>	<a href="#">John 14:2-3</a>
<a href="#">1 Corinthians 1:7-8</a> (must believe <b>day of the Lord</b> includes rapture)	<a href="#">1 Corinthians 1:7-8</a>
<a href="#">1 Corinthians 15:21-23</a> (must believe <b>coming</b> also includes rapture)	<a href="#">1 Corinthians 15:21-23</a>
<a href="#">1 Corinthians 15:51-52</a> (mystery - rapture is a hidden event that takes place 7 years before)	<a href="#">1 Corinthians 15:51-52</a>
<a href="#">Philippians 3:20-21</a>	<a href="#">Philippians 3:20-21</a>
<a href="#">1 Thessalonians 3:13</a> (coming)	<a href="#">1 Thessalonians 3:13</a>
<a href="#">1 Thessalonians 4:14-17</a> (coming v. 15)	<a href="#">1 Thessalonians 4:14-17</a>
<a href="#">1 Thessalonians 5:4-9</a> (not a direct reference to rapture)	
<a href="#">2 Thessalonians 1:6-8</a> (NOTE: 1 Peter 1:7; Revelation)	<a href="#">2 Thessalonians 1:6-8</a>
<a href="#">2 Thessalonians 2:1</a> (2 different events) <a href="#">v.2</a> (refers to rapture) <a href="#">vv. 3-4</a> (falling away is rapture) <a href="#">vv. 6-8</a> (He=body of Christ or Holy Spirit)	<a href="#">2 Thessalonians 2:1</a> (same event) <a href="#">v.2</a> (refers to 2 comings) <a href="#">vv. 3-4</a> (falling away is apostacy – also see <a href="#">1 Timothy 4:1</a> ) <a href="#">vv. 6-8</a> (He=something else - a gov't?)
<a href="#">1 Timothy 6:14-15</a> (appearing only in the clouds)	<a href="#">1 Timothy 6:14-15</a> (refers to 2 <sup>nd</sup> coming at battle of Armageddon in Revelation 19:16)
<a href="#">Titus 2:13</a> (appearing only in the clouds)	<a href="#">Titus 2:13</a>
<a href="#">Jude 14-15</a>	<a href="#">Jude 14-15</a>
	<a href="#">Revelation 20:4-6</a> (resurrection takes place just prior to the Millennium)