FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

ESCHATOLOGY

The Doctrine of Last Things

He Who Was, and Who Is, and Who Is to Come

UNIT 1: PROLEGOMENA, WHY ESCHATOLOGY MATTERS

Lessons 1–3: Setting the Foundation for the Doctrine of Last Things

Lesson 1

THE STUDY OF LAST THINGS

Where the Whole Story Is Going

Eschatology as the Consummation, Not Merely the Appendix, of Theology

"Eschatology is not the last chapter of theology, it is the goal toward which every chapter moves."

Key Texts: Titus 2:11–14; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; Revelation 1:7–8; Romans 8:18–25; Hebrews 9:28

> *"Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."*
>
> **Titus 2:13, NASB 1995**

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Introduction

Every great story has an ending that illuminates everything that came before it. The climax does not merely conclude the narrative, it reveals what the narrative was about all along. So it is with the grand story of Scripture. Eschatology, from the Greek eschatos (last) and logos (word or study), is the doctrine of the last things, the study of how the redemptive purposes of God in history are brought to their triumphant consummation in Jesus Christ. And just as no reader of a novel would dare skip the final chapters, no student of theology can afford to treat eschatology as a peripheral afterthought. It is, in the deepest sense, where the whole story is going.

This series, twenty-eight lessons across ten units, is not primarily a study of end-times events on a prophetic timeline. It is a study of a Person. Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Revelation 1:8). Every eschatological doctrine, rightly understood, is a Christological confession. The return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, the new creation, each of these is inseparable from the person and finished work of the Lord Jesus. To study eschatology is to study the consummation of all that Christ has accomplished and all that the Father purposed from before the foundation of the world.

This opening lesson establishes the prolegomena, the necessary foundations, for the study that follows. We will define eschatology precisely, situate it within the organic whole of systematic theology, survey its pastoral urgency, identify the twin dangers of speculative obsession and neglectful indifference, introduce the governing "already/not yet" hermeneutical framework, and set our theological compass toward the Reformed, Christ-centered approach that will guide every lesson of this series. The governing text is Titus 2:11–14, where Paul roots ethical transformation in eschatological hope, "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

A word of orientation is fitting at the outset. The student who comes to this series expecting a tour of prophetic timetables, a decoding of newspaper headlines, or a map of the tribulation will be pleasantly disappointed. What they will find instead is something far more valuable: a careful, exegetically grounded, pastorally applied, and doxologically oriented study of what God has revealed concerning the consummation of all things in His Son. We will engage the great eschatological debates of the church with rigor and charity. We will let Scripture set the agenda. We will be as cautious where the Bible is silent as we are as bold where it speaks clearly. And we will never lose sight of the truth that this doctrine, above all others, is not finally about timelines or tribulations, it is about a Lamb, slain from before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), who is worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (Revelation 5:12). Come, then. Let us study the last things, that we might live more faithfully in the present things, and love more deeply the eternal Person who is the first and last of all things.

I. DEFINING ESCHATOLOGY

The Last Things as the Goal of All Things

A. The Meaning of the Term

The word eschatology derives from two Greek words: eschatos, meaning "last" or "final," and logos, meaning "word," "reason," or "study." In its most straightforward sense, eschatology is the study of last things, the events and realities associated with the consummation of history and the fulfillment of God's redemptive purposes. These include, at minimum, the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the eternal state. But eschatology is far more than a list of terminal events; it is the study of how the God who governs all things has ordained that history will end, and what that ending means for the present.

It is crucial to distinguish at the outset between individual eschatology and cosmic eschatology. Individual eschatology addresses what happens to the person at death, the intermediate state, the soul's condition between death and resurrection. Cosmic eschatology addresses the final consummation of all things, the events surrounding the return of Christ and the inauguration of the eternal order. Both are essential, and this series will treat both with the care they deserve. Lesson 1, however, establishes the framework within which all subsequent eschatological reflection must proceed.

There is also a further distinction that deserves attention from the beginning: the difference between general eschatology and realized or inaugurated eschatology. General eschatology concerns the future events that have not yet occurred, the return of Christ, the resurrection, the judgment, the new creation. Inaugurated eschatology, by contrast, recognizes that certain eschatological realities have already broken into the present through the first coming of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The resurrection of Christ is itself an eschatological event. The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost is the firstfruits of the eschatological age (Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:13–14). The new birth is a foretaste of the resurrection life to come (John 3:3–8; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Eschatology, then, is not only about the future, it is about the future that has already begun to arrive.

The practical implication of this is enormous. To study eschatology is not to turn our backs on the present and set our gaze on a distant horizon. It is to understand the present more deeply, to recognize that every Lord's Day worship gathering is an eschatological event, a rehearsal for the assembly of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:22–24), a foretaste of the supper of the Lamb. Every act of genuine faith, every movement of repentance and trust, every moment in which the Spirit groans within a believer's heart with longings too deep for words, all of this is eschatological experience. The Christian does not merely await the eschaton. In Christ, the Christian already participates in it.

B. Eschatology as the Goal, Not the Appendix, of Theology

Perhaps the most important corrective a student of eschatology needs at the outset is this: the doctrine of last things is not an addendum to the body of Christian theology. It is not a separate department, sequestered at the back of the systematic theology textbook, consulted only by those with an interest in prophetic speculation. Eschatology is the telos, the goal, the end, the purpose, toward which every other doctrine moves. The holiness of God (Theology Proper) will be fully vindicated in the final judgment. The saving work of Christ (Soteriology) will be fully consummated in the resurrection and the new creation. The sanctifying work of the Spirit (Pneumatology)

will reach its completion in the glorification of the saints. The church (Ecclesiology) will be presented to Christ as a bride adorned for her husband. Remove eschatology, and every other doctrine hangs incomplete, a sentence without a period.

Geerhardus Vos, the father of Reformed biblical theology, captured this insight with characteristic precision when he observed that eschatology is not the last chapter of theology but the key to understanding its whole structure. The New Testament, he argued, is thoroughly eschatological in its orientation, not because it is obsessed with future events, but because it understands the first coming of Christ as itself an eschatological event, inaugurating the age to come within the present age. To think eschatologically is to think biblically. And to think biblically is, ultimately, to think Christologically.

Consider how this eschatological orientation pervades the New Testament at every level. The Sermon on the Mount is bracketed by eschatological declarations: blessings promised for the kingdom of heaven, warnings of final judgment, and exhortations to lay up treasure in a place that moths cannot corrupt and thieves cannot steal (Matthew 6:19–21). The parables of Jesus are overwhelmingly eschatological in character, a king who returns to settle accounts, a bridegroom who arrives at midnight, a farmer who waits for a harvest, a master who demands a reckoning of his servants. The New Testament letters are punctuated throughout by eschatological reminders: "The night is almost gone, and the day is near" (Romans 13:12); "The Lord is near" (Philippians 4:5); "Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord" (James 5:7). The entire New Testament breathes with eschatological expectation. To excise that expectation would be to remove the lungs from the body of apostolic Christianity.

The confessional tradition of the Reformed church has understood this well. The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Second London Baptist Confession both conclude with chapters on the final judgment and the eternal state, but these are not postscripts. They are the necessary completion of what the earlier chapters confess about God, humanity, sin, and salvation. The confession that God is sovereign does not reach its fullest expression until we confess that He will sovereignly bring all things to their appointed end. The confession that Christ is Lord does not reach its fullest expression until we confess that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10–11). Eschatology is not where theology ends. It is where theology arrives.

II. THE PASTORAL URGENCY OF ESCHATOLOGY

What You Believe About the Future Shapes How You Live in the Present

A. Eschatology as the Engine of Christian Hope

The pastoral relevance of eschatology cannot be overstated. Paul's great eschatological passage in Romans 8:18–25 does not begin with abstract theological speculation, it begins with a pastoral reality: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." The apostle sets Christian suffering and Christian hope in direct proportion: the greater our apprehension of the coming glory, the greater our capacity for patient endurance in present suffering. Eschatology is not an intellectual luxury for the theologically curious; it is the oxygen supply for the persevering saint.

Similarly, the Apostle Peter grounds the ethical exhortation to holy Christian conduct in the vision of the coming day of the Lord: "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy

conduct and godliness?" (2 Peter 3:11). The coming end of the present order does not paralyze Christian action, it purifies it. It frees the believer from the tyranny of the temporary and the idolatry of the immediate. The person who lives in genuine eschatological hope is simultaneously the most sober-minded person in the room and the most joyfully liberated. What else could motivate the Pauline declaration, "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8)?

The pastoral dimensions of eschatological hope extend well beyond the individual believer's interior life. They shape the entire communal existence of the local church. It is eschatological hope that explains why the church gathers week after week to break bread and drink from the cup, "for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Lord's Supper is a profoundly eschatological act: it looks backward to Calvary, it looks forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and it anchors the gathered community in the promise that the One they remember and the One they await are the same Person. Take away eschatology and the Lord's Supper loses half its meaning. Restore eschatology, and the simplest observance of bread and cup becomes a declaration of defiance against every power that would convince us the present age is all there is.

We should also note that the pastoral urgency of eschatology is not a New Testament innovation, it runs through the entire Old Testament canon. The Psalms are saturated with eschatological longing: "As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake" (Psalm 17:15). The prophets burn with eschatological vision: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14). The saints of every age have needed the same anchor: not merely an explanation of why things are as they are, but a revelation of where things are going. Eschatology has always been the medicine of hope for the people of God.

B. *Eschatology as the Fuel of Perseverance and the Motivation for Holiness*

The writer of Hebrews presents the great cloud of witnesses, the patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs of faith, as men and women who endured precisely because they saw what lay ahead. Abraham "was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Moses "choose rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward" (Hebrews 11:25–26). Eschatological vision, sight fixed on what is coming, produces extraordinary steadfastness in the present. This is not escapism; it is the most realistic engagement with ultimate reality available to the human soul.

Titus 2:11–14, the governing text of this entire series, draws the line from Christology to eschatology to ethics with breathtaking economy: the grace of God that appeared in the first coming of Christ trains us to live godly lives in the present age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. The first coming grounds our justification; the second coming orients our sanctification. The Christian life, in Paul's vision, is not lived between two endpoints on a secular timeline, it is lived between two epiphanies of divine glory, and it is that eschatological orientation that makes holiness not merely possible but intelligible.

The connection between eschatology and holiness is not incidental but structural. When John writes, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2–3), he is not offering a motivational suggestion, he is describing the mechanics of sanctification. The vision of the coming Christ, fixed firmly in the heart of the believer

by the Holy Spirit, exerts a purifying pressure on the soul. You cannot truly behold the coming glory of Christ and remain complacent about present sin. Hope and holiness are inseparably bound together in the economy of grace. This is why eschatology is not a luxury module in the curriculum of Christian formation, it is load-bearing structure.

We might press the point further still. The writer to the Hebrews, addressing believers in danger of apostasy, does not counter their wavering with a more sophisticated theological argument, he sets before them a vision: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Even Christ Himself endured the cross by means of an eschatological vision, the joy set before Him. If the Son of God ran His race by fixing His eyes on what lay ahead, how much more do His redeemed people need the same forward-fixed gaze? Eschatology is not the doctrine for the end of one's theological training. It is the fuel for every step of the journey.

III. THE TWO DANGERS IN ESCHATOLOGY

Speculative Obsession and Neglectful Indifference

A. The Danger of Speculative Obsession

If eschatology is the goal toward which all theology moves, it is also the field in which theological imagination most frequently goes astray. The history of popular American Christianity is littered with the wreckage of eschatological speculation: date-setting prophets who have been embarrassed by calendars, elaborate prophetic timelines constructed from selective proof-texts, and a cottage industry of sensationalist literature that has done more to entertain than to edify. The danger of speculative obsession is real and demonstrable. When eschatology becomes the province of calculation rather than consecration, when Christians are more interested in identifying the Antichrist than in conforming to the image of Christ, something has gone profoundly wrong.

Our Lord Himself issued the sharpest possible rebuke to date-setting speculation: "Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matthew 24:36). The proper eschatological posture is not calculation but readiness. The virgins of Matthew 25 were not praised for their prophetic insight into the timing of the bridegroom's arrival, they were distinguished by whether their lamps were trimmed and burning. The servant of Matthew 24:45–47 was commended not for knowing when the master would return, but for being faithfully at work when he did. Eschatology that produces faithful diligence in the present is healthy; eschatology that produces speculative distraction from the present is disordered.

The damage done by speculative eschatology is not merely intellectual, it is deeply pastoral. When a Christian invests great emotional energy in a prophetic system that subsequently collapses under the weight of historical events or more careful exegesis, the result is often a cynicism that extends far beyond eschatology itself. Entire generations have been spiritually burned by the repeated failures of date-setters: the predictions of William Miller in the 1840s, the sensationalism surrounding the year 1988, the Y2K panic dressed in prophetic clothing, and the repeated identification of contemporary political figures with the Antichrist. Each failure is not merely an intellectual embarrassment, it is a pastoral wound. It teaches people to distrust the Bible's eschatological witness altogether, when in fact their distrust should be directed at the speculative systems that presumed to know more than Scripture reveals.

What the Bible offers instead of eschatological speculation is eschatological sobriety, a clear-eyed, humble, watchful orientation that takes the promises of Christ seriously without manufacturing the details He has chosen to withhold. The Thessalonians were warned against those who had abandoned their daily responsibilities because of an overheated expectation of the imminent return: "If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). The antidote Paul prescribes is not less eschatology but properly ordered eschatology, a hope that is sober, productive, and grounded in what the Lord has actually said. This is the posture this series aspires to cultivate: not detached indifference, and not feverish speculation, but the alert and faithful watchfulness of those who know their Master is coming and intend to be found at their posts when He arrives.

B. *The Danger of Neglectful Indifference*

The opposite error is equally perilous. If some Christians are consumed by eschatological speculation, others have retreated into a practical indifference toward the doctrine of last things altogether, treating it as too controversial, too complex, or too culturally embarrassing to engage seriously. The result is a truncated Christianity that lacks the forward-looking orientation Scripture assumes in every believer. A church that does not think eschatologically is a church that has, in practice, made its peace with the present age, and that is precisely what the New Testament forbids.

Paul's rebuke to the Thessalonians who were "grieving as do the rest who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13) applies equally to Christians who have so thoroughly privatized and spiritualized the resurrection hope that it exerts no practical traction on their daily lives. The hope of the resurrection should transform the way we grieve, the way we give, the way we suffer, and the way we die. When it does not, when Christians grieve exactly as the world grieves, fear death exactly as the world fears it, and pursue comfort and security with the same ferocity as those who have no hope, it is a sign that eschatological truth has remained at the level of doctrinal assertion rather than arriving at the level of transformative conviction. The remedy is not less eschatology, but better eschatology: more biblically grounded, more pastorally applied, and more Christologically centered.

The danger of neglectful indifference takes a particularly subtle form in theologically sophisticated congregations. It presents itself not as outright denial of eschatological truth but as a genteel de-emphasis, a quiet relegation of the doctrine of last things to the category of "important but not urgent." The return of Christ becomes a conviction held at arm's length, affirmed in the creed but absent from the sermon, the prayer meeting, and the decision-making table. The result is a Christianity that is thoroughly present-tense in its practical orientation, focused on programs, strategies, community engagement, and institutional health, while the eschatological horizon that alone gives ultimate meaning to all of those activities recedes from view. This is not the Christianity of the New Testament, where even the most concrete ethical instruction, how to treat a neighbor, whether to pay taxes, how to conduct a marriage, is set against the backdrop of the coming Lord.

The corrective to both dangers is the same: a return to the plain teaching of the apostolic writings, read with grammatical-historical care and received with childlike trust. The New Testament church did not oscillate between speculative obsession and practical indifference. It lived in a posture of alert, faithful, joy-filled expectation, working, worshipping, witnessing, and suffering, all in the light of the certain and imminent return of its Lord. That posture is available to us. That is what this series aims to recover.

IV. THE ALREADY / NOT YET FRAMEWORK

Living Between the Two Comings of Christ

A. The Inauguration of the Kingdom in the First Coming

The single most important hermeneutical insight for understanding New Testament eschatology is the recognition that the kingdom of God has already been inaugurated in the first coming of Jesus Christ, though it has not yet been consummated. This "already / not yet" framework, articulated with greatest precision by Geerhardus Vos and developed by Oscar Cullmann, G. E. Ladd, and Anthony Hoekema, provides the interpretive key that unlocks the seemingly paradoxical eschatological statements of the New Testament.

Jesus announced, at the inauguration of His ministry: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The kingdom is not merely promised, it is present. It has arrived in the person of the King. When Jesus cast out demons, He declared, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28). The verb is past tense, arrival already accomplished. The age to come, the eschatological age of salvation, Spirit, and resurrection, has broken into the present age in the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. This is the scandal and the glory of the New Testament: the end has begun.

The apostolic preaching at Pentecost confirms this with stunning clarity. When the Spirit falls upon the gathered disciples in Acts 2, Peter does not say that the Spirit's coming is a sign that the end is near. He says that what the crowd is witnessing is the fulfillment of Joel's eschatological prophecy: "This is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). The outpouring of the Spirit, which Joel had associated with "the last days", has already occurred. The last days have begun. The age of fulfillment has arrived. Every subsequent generation of Christians has lived in "the last days" inaugurated at Pentecost. This is not a demotion of eschatology to the past, it is the recognition that the eschatological age is the age in which the church now lives and ministers.

The great Pauline declaration of 1 Corinthians 10:11 captures the same conviction: the events of the Exodus and the wilderness wandering "were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." The phrase is remarkable: the ends of the ages, the plural is intentional, suggesting the confluence of the old age and the new, have come upon the church. The church does not stand at the beginning of a long redemptive-historical sequence still waiting to unfold. It stands at the culmination, in the age inaugurated by Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, awaiting the consummation that His return will bring. We are not in the middle of the story. We are near the end. And that proximity to the end is not a source of anxiety but of expectation.

B. The Consummation Still Awaited in the Second Coming

And yet the kingdom is not yet fully consummated. The disciples still pray, "Your kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10). Paul still speaks of creation groaning in the pains of childbirth, "eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19). The saints still groan within themselves, "waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). The resurrection has not yet occurred for those who belong to Christ, only Christ Himself has been raised, as the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20). The final judgment has not yet come. The new creation has not yet arrived. Death has not yet been abolished. In a profound and real sense, we live between the times, between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of all who are His.

This tension, the "already" of the kingdom's inauguration and the "not yet" of its consummation, shapes every aspect of New Testament eschatology and, indeed, of the Christian life. It explains why Christians can simultaneously celebrate the victory of Christ (accomplished) and cry out for the return of Christ (anticipated). It explains why the church is simultaneously a community of triumph and a community of suffering. It explains why the believer has already been justified and is still being sanctified, why the Spirit has already been given and yet groans within us. To grasp the "already / not yet" is not merely to understand an academic category; it is to understand the existential situation of every person who confesses Christ as Lord while living in a world that has not yet seen His full vindication.

The "already / not yet" framework also provides the exegetical key to interpreting many of the apparent contradictions within the New Testament's eschatological teaching. When Paul writes that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20), he is speaking of a present reality, the believer's legal standing before God. When he writes that "we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state" (vv. 20–21), he is speaking of a future event, the bodily transformation that has not yet occurred. Both are simultaneously true. Similarly, when John writes that "we are already God's children" (1 John 3:2), he states a present possession; when he adds "what we will be has not yet been revealed," he acknowledges a future disclosure. The "already" and the "not yet" do not contradict each other, they are two aspects of a single eschatological reality that is still unfolding toward its appointed consummation.

Oscar Cullmann's famous illustration from the Second World War is useful here. The decisive battle of a war, the battle that determines who will ultimately win, may be fought long before the war formally ends. Between D-Day and V-Day, the outcome of the war is settled, even though the fighting continues. Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension are the D-Day of redemptive history, the decisive engagement in which the powers of sin, death, and the devil were decisively defeated. His return is the V-Day, the public, final, and universal declaration of what was accomplished at Calvary and the empty tomb. We live between D-Day and V-Day: in the tension of a victory already won and a consummation not yet publicly declared. This is the posture of the church in every age, and it is the framework within which every subsequent lesson of this series must be understood.

V. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CENTER OF ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology Is About a Person, Not Merely a Program

A. Christ as the Eschatological Agent and Goal

It bears repeating with emphasis: biblical eschatology is not primarily about events on a prophetic timeline. It is about a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eschatos Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), the last Man, in whose resurrection the new creation has already broken in. He is the "firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything" (Colossians 1:18). Every eschatological event, the parousia, the resurrection, the judgment, the renewal of all things, is Christocentric in its nature and its goal. The return of Christ is not simply the next item on a prophetic checklist; it is the personal, visible, glorious coming of the King to whom all authority in heaven and earth has already been given (Matthew 28:18).

Hebrews 9:28 states with crystalline precision the shape of the entire eschatological hope: "So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to

those who eagerly await Him." The first appearing (His incarnation and atoning death) dealt with sin. The second appearing will bring the fullness of salvation, the completed redemption of body and soul, the vindication of the people of God, and the consummation of the new covenant. Between these two appearings, we live in hope, not idle hope, but the active, expectant, shaping hope of those who know the One who is coming.

The names and titles given to the return of Christ in the New Testament all reinforce this Person-centered understanding. The parousia, His "presence" or "arrival", is the word used for the royal visit of a king to his subjects, an event of overwhelming personal significance. The apokalypsis, His "revelation" or "unveiling", speaks of a Person who has been present but hidden being made fully manifest. The epiphaneia, His "appearing" or "manifestation", is the word Paul uses in Titus 2:13 for the "appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior." Each of these terms directs the eschatological gaze not to a program, a sequence of events, or a prophetic calendar, but to a Person whose appearing will be the most personally transformative event in the history of the cosmos.

It is worth pausing to feel the weight of this. The hope of the Christian is not in a better world achieved by human progress, nor in an escape from the world through a secret rapture, nor in the endless delay of a world that refuses to change. The hope of the Christian is in a Person, Jesus of Nazareth, risen bodily from the dead, ascended in glory to the right hand of the Father, and coming again with the same body in which He was crucified, the same wounds visible in His hands and His side, the same voice that called Lazarus from the tomb now calling the dead from their graves throughout the earth. That is the eschatological hope. It is, above all, a personal hope. And it is a hope that does not disappoint, because it is anchored in the faithfulness of the One who promised it (Romans 5:5; Hebrews 10:23).

B. *The Revelation of the Triune God in the Consummation*

The consummation of all things is not merely the vindication of Christ, it is the complete unveiling of the glory of the triune God. Paul's great eschatological vision in 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 culminates not with the exaltation of the Son in isolation, but with the Son delivering up the kingdom to the Father, "so that God may be all in all." The Son's reign is the Father's purpose; the Spirit's sanctifying work finds its completion in the glorification of the saints; and the eternal state is the dwelling of the triune God with His redeemed people (Revelation 21:3). Eschatology is, at its deepest level, Trinitarian theology carried to its appointed end.

This Trinitarian and Christological anchor is precisely what distinguishes Reformed eschatology from the eschatological systems that have captured popular imagination in our day. We are not waiting for a political kingdom to be reconstructed in the Middle East. We are not waiting for a secret evacuation before a period of divine wrath. We are waiting for the Person, the risen, reigning, returning Lord Jesus Christ, whose appearing will be the end of death, the vindication of His people, the judgment of His enemies, and the inauguration of an eternal order in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.

The Trinitarian shape of the consummation also guards against a subtle error that sometimes appears in eschatological piety: the reduction of the eternal state to an exclusively Christological experience, as though the Father and the Spirit were somehow less central to the final glory. The Revelation's vision of the new Jerusalem specifies that "the throne of God and of the Lamb", Father and Son together, will be the defining reality of the eternal city (Revelation 22:3). The Spirit, who has been the agent of the believer's union with Christ throughout the inter-advent period, will not be absent from the consummation, He who is the "river of the water of life"

proceeding from the throne (Revelation 22:1, read in Trinitarian context) will be the source of the eternal, ever-deepening life of the redeemed. The eternal state is Trinitarian to its core: the Father dwelling with His people, the Son reigning in their midst, the Spirit filling all things with the life and light of God.

This has profound doxological implications for the study of eschatology. If the goal of all things is "god may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28), then the study of last things is ultimately the study of the self-glorification of the triune God through the redemption and restoration of all that He has made. Every eschatological doctrine, pursued to its logical end, arrives at this point: the glory of God displayed in the face of Jesus Christ, filling the new creation as the waters cover the sea, received and reflected back by a redeemed humanity worshipping in resurrection bodies on a renewed earth. That is where history is going. That is where theology is going. That is where this series is going. And it is good beyond words to go there.

VI. THE REFORMED APPROACH TO ESCHATOLOGY

Sound Hermeneutics, Confessional Grounding, and Christological Focus

A. Hermeneutical Principles Governing the Series

The approach taken in this series is consistently Reformed, by which we mean: (1) governed by the grammatical-historical method of exegesis, reading prophetic and apocalyptic texts in their original literary and historical context with careful attention to genre; (2) shaped by the history of doctrine, taking seriously the interpretive tradition of the church, particularly the Augustinian and Reformation heritage; (3) oriented by Progressive Covenantal Biblical Theology, reading the Old Testament promises in light of their New Testament fulfillment in Christ; and (4) confessionally grounded in the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689), which represents the mature expression of Reformed Baptist orthodoxy.

This means, among other things, that we will resist the temptation of what we might call "system-driven exegesis", the tendency to read every prophetic text through the lens of a preconceived eschatological system, rather than allowing the texts themselves to shape and correct our theological convictions. We bring convictions to the text, as all interpreters do, but we hold those convictions under the authority of Scripture. We come not as arbiters of the Bible but as students of it, and we are committed to going where the exegesis leads.

The grammatical-historical method, when applied to prophetic and apocalyptic texts, requires particular care with the question of genre. Apocalyptic literature, of which Revelation and Daniel are the primary biblical examples, is a distinct literary genre with its own conventions: a heavy use of symbolic imagery, numerical symbolism, recapitulatory structure (the same period of time revisited from multiple angles), and an overwhelming emphasis on the sovereignty of God over the forces of history and evil. To read apocalyptic literature as though it were a straightforward historical chronicle, treating every number as literal, every image as a one-to-one correspondence with a contemporary historical figure, is to misread the genre and therefore to misread the text. Good eschatological interpretation begins with good literary sensitivity.

Progressive Covenantal Biblical Theology, the recognition that the biblical covenants form a unified redemptive-historical sequence that finds its fulfillment in Christ, is indispensable for eschatological interpretation precisely because so much of the New Testament's eschatological teaching is built upon Old Testament foundations. When Revelation draws upon the imagery of the temple, the holy city, the river of life, and the tree of life, it is not

creating new theology, it is drawing upon the deep wells of Israel's covenantal history and declaring that all those promises find their ultimate fulfillment not in a rebuilt earthly Jerusalem but in the new Jerusalem that descends from heaven, the dwelling place of God with man. To understand where the Bible's eschatology is going, one must understand where it has been, and that requires a biblical-theological framework that traces the covenantal thread from Genesis to Revelation.

B. *The Amillennial Conviction*

This series is taught from a consistently amillennial perspective, the view that the kingdom of God is present now, that Christ reigns at the right hand of the Father, that the period between the first and second comings constitutes the "millennium" of Revelation 20, and that the return of Christ will bring immediately and simultaneously the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the inauguration of the eternal state. There is no intermediate earthly kingdom between the parousia and the new creation.

This conviction is held with confessional humility. The millennial debate is an intramural discussion among those who hold to the authority of Scripture and the historic faith. Premillennialism and postmillennialism are represented by godly, learned, and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, and we engage their arguments charitably and substantively (see Lessons 12 and 13). But we are also persuaded, on exegetical, hermeneutical, and historical-theological grounds, that amillennialism is the most faithful and coherent reading of the biblical data, and we will make that case throughout the series with as much clarity and care as we can bring to the task. The goal is not to win an argument but to understand Scripture more faithfully and to love Christ more ardently.

The historical pedigree of amillennialism is worthy of notice at the outset, because it is frequently misrepresented in popular eschatological literature as a recent compromise or a capitulation to allegorizing tendencies. In fact, the amillennial understanding of the millennium, articulated most systematically by Augustine in the City of God (Book XX) but present in various forms in earlier interpreters, was the dominant eschatology of Western Christendom for over a millennium. The Reformers, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and their successors, were substantially amillennial, identifying the present age with the reign of Christ described in Revelation 20 and holding to one return of Christ followed immediately by the final judgment and the eternal state. The confessional documents of the Reformed tradition, the Westminster Standards, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Second London Baptist Confession, reflect this amillennial framework. To embrace amillennialism is not to innovate. It is to stand in a stream of interpretation that stretches from Augustine to the present, grounded in a grammatical-historical reading of the relevant texts.

At the same time, the series will not treat the millennial question as settled beyond all discussion. We will engage the biblical texts with fresh exegetical attention, acknowledge where genuine difficulties exist, and maintain the kind of confessional charity that recognizes godly interpreters have read the same texts differently. What we will insist upon, however, is that the millennial question must be answered from the exegesis of Scripture, beginning with Revelation 20 in its canonical and literary context, and moving outward to the wider biblical testimony, rather than from a prior commitment to a particular system. The text must govern the system, not the reverse. And when we arrive, lesson by lesson, at the great eschatological affirmations of the New Testament, we pray that every student will find that the amillennial reading is not a diminishment of biblical hope but a clarification and a deepening of it.

VII. ORIENTING OURSELVES TO THE SERIES

A Map of the Journey Ahead

A. The Shape of the Series

Twenty-eight lessons spread across ten units will carry us from the foundations of eschatological method (Unit 1) through individual eschatology, death, the intermediate state, and the present heaven (Unit 2), through the kingdom of God in its already/not-yet structure (Unit 3), through the millennial debate and the nation of Israel in biblical prophecy (Unit 4), through the signs of the times, the Antichrist, and the great tribulation (Unit 5), through the second coming and the Day of the Lord (Unit 6), through the resurrection of the dead (Unit 7), through the final judgment with its dual outcomes (Unit 8), through the eternal state and the beatific vision (Unit 9), and finally to the practical and doxological conclusion: how eschatology shapes the Christian life (Unit 10). It is a full, systematic, and pastorally engaged survey of the doctrine, nothing essential omitted, nothing sensationalized.

Each lesson is designed not merely to inform but to form, to shape the student's mind, affections, and will around the realities of what God has promised and what Christ will accomplish at His return. The study and discussion questions are crafted to draw the student into the text, not merely to test retention of lecture content. The prayer focus at the close of each lesson is a deliberate act of eschatological devotion, a turning of the soul toward the coming King in the posture of hopeful, dependent, worshipping expectation. The entire series is, at its root, an extended meditation on the Maranatha prayer: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

The ten units of this series are not merely logical divisions of subject matter, they follow the natural movement of biblical eschatology from the individual to the corporate, from the present to the future, from the historical to the cosmic, from the contested to the confessed. We begin with method because eschatology is above all an exercise in biblical interpretation, and the student who does not understand how to read prophetic and apocalyptic texts will be adrift in every subsequent discussion. We move from there through individual eschatology because the doctrine of death and the intermediate state is both pastorally immediate and theologically foundational, it shapes our understanding of what resurrection means and why it matters. From individual eschatology we move to the kingdom, the millennium, the signs of the times, the second coming, and the resurrection, arriving finally at the eternal state and the beatific vision. Each unit builds upon what precedes it. By Lesson 28, the student should possess not merely a set of eschatological opinions but a coherent, biblically grounded, pastorally applicable vision of the end toward which all things are moving.

There is also a certain cumulative doxological momentum built into the series that deserves to be named. Eschatology, properly studied, does not leave the student cold or merely informed, it warms the soul and turns it toward God in praise. When we study death, we are forced to confront our finitude and to find our hope not in ourselves but in the risen Christ. When we study the intermediate state, we are reminded that the dead in Christ are not absent but present with the Lord, and our grief is tempered with a joy that the world cannot give. When we study the resurrection, we find that the body, this mortal, groaning, aching body, is destined for glory, and the knowledge of that transforms how we inhabit the body we have now. When we study the eternal state, we find that the telos of all creation is not dissolution but renewal, not escape from matter but the redemption of matter, not the end of history but the beginning of the age that will have no end. Unit by unit, lesson by lesson, this series

is designed to leave the student not merely better informed about eschatology but more deeply in love with the God who is bringing all things to their appointed end.

B. *A Word About the Stakes*

We close this first lesson with a word about what is at stake in the study of eschatology. This doctrine is not an academic exercise. The resurrection of the dead is the foundation of the gospel: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). The return of Christ is the hope of the suffering church: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18). The final judgment is the ground of moral seriousness: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10). And the new creation is the end for which the entire created order groans: "Creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

There is, then, no minor eschatology. Every Christian who suffers, who grieves, who is tempted to despair, who longs for justice, who mourns the dead, that Christian needs eschatology. They need not merely a doctrine about the future, but a vision of the Person who stands at the end of the future, arms open, wounds visible, glory blazing: the Lamb who was slain and who lives forevermore. That is who this series is about. And that is why we begin.

We should also be transparent about the weight of the responsibility that falls upon the teacher of eschatology. Of all the doctrinal areas in which a pastor or teacher can do damage to the flock, eschatology ranks near the top. The congregation that is taught a sensationalist eschatology becomes anxious, distracted, and susceptible to manipulation by those who traffic in prophetic fear. The congregation that is taught no eschatology becomes spiritually shallow, worldly in its practical orientation, and ill-equipped to face suffering or death with genuine hope. The congregation that is taught a careful, biblically grounded, pastorally applied eschatology, however, becomes resilient, able to suffer without despairing, able to grieve without hopelessness, able to engage the world with genuine conviction that what they are doing matters in light of what is coming. That is what this series aims to produce: not eschatological anxiety, not eschatological indifference, but eschatological resilience rooted in the unshakeable promises of the God who cannot lie.

We begin, then, where all good theology begins and ends: not with a doctrine, not with a system, not with a timeline, but with a Person. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), is the Lord of history, the firstborn from the dead, the coming King, and the eternal dwelling of His people. To know Him is to know the end toward which all things are moving. To love Him is to long for that end with a longing that is itself a gift of the Spirit who cries out within every redeemed heart: Abba, Father, and who, at the close of the entire canon of Scripture, breathes through the church one final, irreplaceable prayer: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

> *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."*
>
> **Romans 8:18, NASB 1995**

Theological Terms and Definitions

Eschatology	From the Greek eschatos (last) and logos (word, study): the branch of systematic theology that treats the last things, the events associated with the consummation of God's redemptive purposes, including the return of Christ, the resurrection, the final judgment, and the eternal state.
Eschaton	The Greek term for "last" or "final", often used in theological discourse to denote the end of the present age and the final eschatological event (the return of Christ and the inauguration of the eternal state).
Parousia	Greek for "presence" or "arrival", the primary New Testament term for the return of Christ (e.g., Matthew 24:3, 27, 37; 1 Thessalonians 4:15). It connotes not merely a future event but the personal presence of the returning King.
Inaugurated Eschatology	The theological conviction, central to New Testament eschatology, that the eschatological age has already been inaugurated in the first coming of Christ, His incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, though it has not yet been consummated. Associated especially with Geerhardus Vos.
Already / Not Yet	The hermeneutical framework that captures the NT's dual perspective on the kingdom of God: it has already arrived in Christ's first coming (already), but it has not yet been fully consummated (not yet). This tension characterizes the entire inter-advent period.
Individual Eschatology	The branch of eschatology that treats what happens to the individual at and after physical death, including the nature of death, the intermediate state (the soul's condition between death and resurrection), and the prospect of personal resurrection and judgment.
Cosmic Eschatology	The branch of eschatology that treats the consummation of all things, the return of Christ, the general resurrection, the final judgment, the renewal of the cosmos, and the eternal state. Also called "general eschatology."
Amillennialism	The eschatological position that understands the "millennium" of Revelation 20 to refer to the entire inter-advent period, the era between Christ's first and second comings, during which Christ reigns from heaven. There is no future earthly millennium; Christ's return brings the immediate inauguration of the eternal state.
Telos	Greek for "end," "goal," or "purpose", used in eschatological theology to denote not merely the chronological ending of history but its appointed goal and consummation. Eschatology is the doctrine of the telos of all things.
Prolegomena	Greek for "things said beforehand", the foundational, preliminary discussion that establishes definitions, methods, and governing convictions before the main body of a theological study. Unit 1 of this series serves as the prolegomena to the study of eschatology.

Practical Application

A. *For the Mind: What Must We Believe?*

We must believe that eschatology is not a peripheral or optional doctrine, it is the consummating goal of the entire revealed counsel of God. To treat the doctrine of last things as a matter of secondary importance is to misread the structure of Scripture itself. Every doctrine finds its completion in eschatology: God's holiness vindicated, Christ's work consummated, the Spirit's sanctification completed, the church glorified, and creation renewed. We must hold this conviction firmly if we are to take eschatology seriously without distorting it.

We must believe that Jesus Christ is the center and substance of all eschatological hope. Eschatology is not primarily a study of events but of the Person who stands at the end of all events, the returning King who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Any eschatological system that loses this Christological center has, ipso facto, lost its claim to being genuinely biblical.

We must believe that the "already / not yet" framework is the key to understanding the Christian's present existence. We live in a real and meaningful tension: the kingdom has come, but it has not yet been consummated; we are justified, but not yet glorified; death has been defeated, but not yet abolished. Refusing this tension, collapsing either into over-realized eschatology (acting as if the new creation has already fully arrived) or under-realized eschatology (living as if the kingdom has not yet come at all), will distort both our theology and our discipleship.

B. *For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?*

We should feel the weight and beauty of eschatological hope as a present, shaping reality, not a vague sentiment about a distant future, but an active, burning expectation of the return of a Person we love. Paul writes that the Holy Spirit, who is the firstfruits of the age to come, causes us to groan inwardly, "waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). That longing, that holy restlessness, is not a defect. It is a sign of spiritual health. The heart that does not long for Christ's return has made its peace with the present age in a way the New Testament never endorses.

We should also feel the pastoral gravity of eschatological doctrine for those who suffer. The congregation will include those who are currently facing death, grieving the dead, suffering chronic illness, enduring persecution, or despairing of justice in a world that seems indifferent to righteousness. These are not abstract theological cases; they are our brothers and sisters. Eschatology, rightly taught, is a profound pastoral gift, the promise that suffering is not the final word, that the dead in Christ are not lost, and that the One who wept at Lazarus's tomb is coming back to overturn every tomb.

We should desire to approach this series not as a debate to be won but as a school of hope in which the soul is formed toward readiness for the appearing of the King. Let the study of eschatology make us more patient in suffering, more generous in this life, more fervent in prayer, more urgent in mission, and more deeply in love with the Lord Jesus Christ. If it does that, the series will have accomplished its most important purpose.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

- Read Titus 2:11–14 slowly and meditatively. Note the three temporal references: the grace of God has appeared (first coming), we live godly lives in the present age (the inter-advent period), and we look for the

blessed hope, the appearing (second coming). How does this passage define the shape of the Christian life between the two comings of Christ?

- Read Romans 8:18–25 and identify every eschatological element Paul mentions. List them. Then ask: in what ways does my daily life reflect or fail to reflect the "eager longing" and "groaning" Paul describes? What would change if I lived more consistently in light of this passage?
- Write a brief personal statement of your eschatological hope, not a theological system, but a personal confession: what do you believe about the future, and why does it matter to you? Bring it to the next class session. It need not be polished; it need only be honest.
- Pray Revelation 22:20, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus", every morning this week. Pray it slowly. Let it be the first eschatological act of the day. Then notice: does it change the way you hold the things of the day?
- Identify one person in your life who is currently suffering, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, and bring the eschatological hope of Romans 8:18 or 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 to them this week, either in conversation or in a written note. Be concrete, be personal, and be biblical.

Key Texts: *Titus 2:11–14; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; Revelation 1:7–8; Romans 8:18–25; Hebrews 9:28*

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Before this lesson, what was your general impression of eschatology? Was it something you found exciting, confusing, irrelevant, or intimidating? What formed that impression, and how has this lesson begun to adjust it?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Titus 2:11–14. According to Paul, what is the relationship between the first appearing of Christ (v. 11), present Christian conduct (vv. 12–13a), and the expectation of the second appearing (v. 13b)? What specific behaviors does eschatological expectation produce, according to this passage?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:20–28. What is the sequence of events Paul describes? What is the relationship between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of those who belong to Him? What is the ultimate goal Paul names in verse 28?
- Read Romans 8:18–25. List every eschatological category Paul mentions: what is "not yet" (what is still being waited for), and what is the emotional and spiritual posture Paul associates with that waiting?
- Read Revelation 1:7–8. What does verse 7 predict about the nature of Christ's return? Who will see it? What response will it evoke? How does the self-identification of God in verse 8 ("Alpha and Omega") ground the certainty of what verse 7 promises?
- Read Hebrews 9:28. What two "appearings" does this verse describe? What was accomplished by the first? What will be accomplished by the second? What is the posture of those who await the second appearing?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson argues that eschatology is the goal of all theology, not merely its final chapter. Do you find this convincing? How would you explain this claim to someone who thinks eschatology is a secondary, peripheral doctrine?
- What does the "already / not yet" framework mean in practice? Give two or three concrete examples from Christian experience of the tension between the "already" of the kingdom's inauguration and the "not yet" of its consummation.
- The lesson identifies two dangers: speculative obsession and neglectful indifference. Which of these do you think is the more common danger in evangelical Christianity today? In your own life? What are the symptoms of each, and what is the biblical antidote?
- Why is it significant that Jesus said, "Of that day and hour no one knows" (Matthew 24:36)? What posture does ignorance of the timing produce? Why does God, in His wisdom, conceal the date of the return?
- How does the Christological center of eschatology, the fact that we are waiting for a Person, not merely an event, change the emotional and spiritual character of eschatological hope? What difference does it make that it is Jesus who is coming back?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- If the "already / not yet" framework is true, what false alternatives does it rule out? What would it look like to be practically conformed to this tension in your daily decision-making, your handling of suffering, and your engagement with the world?

- How should a robust eschatological hope change the way a Christian relates to the prospect of death, their own, or the death of those they love? What would you say to a fellow believer who is paralyzed by the fear of death?
- The lesson argues that eschatology fuels mission and perseverance. How should the reality of Christ's return shape our engagement with evangelism and with the Great Commission? Does your current evangelistic practice reflect the urgency of the parousia?
- As we begin this series, what is the one eschatological question you most hope will be answered or clarified? Write it down. Hold it before the Lord in prayer. And commit to engaging the series with the expectation that the God who inspired the Scriptures can satisfy every holy longing for understanding.

Prayer Focus

Open this time of prayer by reading Revelation 22:17–21 aloud, the closing benediction of the entire canon of Scripture. Let the congregation hear the final *Maranatha* of the Bible, the last prayer of the last apostle, the ultimate longing of the Spirit-filled church: *"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."* Pause for a few moments in reverent silence after the reading. Allow the weight of those final words to settle upon every heart. From Genesis to Revelation, the story of redemption has been moving toward this glorious conclusion. The promises of God, the covenants, the prophets, the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, the ascension, and the mission of the church all point toward the triumphant return of Christ. As the people of God, we now join the prayer that has echoed through the centuries: "Come, Lord Jesus."

Pray first for those within the congregation who are suffering and who desperately need the hope of Christ's return to anchor their souls. Recall Romans 8:18, that *"the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."* Lift before the Lord those who wake each morning with chronic pain or debilitating illness. Pray for those battling cancer, disability, or failing health. Remember the grieving who have buried spouses, parents, children, or dear friends and who continue to carry the ache of separation. Pray for those facing financial hardship, strained marriages, prodigal children, loneliness, anxiety, depression, or spiritual weariness. Intercede for believers around the world who suffer persecution because they confess the name of Christ. Ask the Lord to make the doctrine of the last things more than an academic subject. May it become a living hope, a firm anchor for weary hearts, a light that shines in darkness, and a constant reminder that Christ will one day make all things new.

Pray for your church as an eschatological community. Ask that we would become a church that genuinely lives in expectation of Christ's return. May we be found faithful, watching with our lamps trimmed and our hearts prepared. Pray that our affection for the temporary things of this world would grow weaker while our love for the eternal kingdom grows stronger. Ask the Lord to guard us from worldly distractions, complacency, and spiritual indifference. Pray that this study of biblical eschatology would not merely increase our knowledge, but deepen our holiness, strengthen our perseverance, reshape our priorities, and intensify our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. May every lesson move us toward greater obedience, greater faithfulness, and greater anticipation of the day when faith becomes sight.

Pray also for those outside of Christ. Bring before the Lord family members, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and friends who remain without the hope of the gospel. Think especially of those who grieve without the assurance of the resurrection, who fear death because they do not know the Savior who conquered it, and who are building their lives upon a world that is passing away. Ask the Holy Spirit to awaken hearts to the certainty of Christ's return and the urgency of repentance and faith. Pray that this season of studying the last things would make our witness more compassionate, our prayers more fervent, our conversations more intentional, and our proclamation of the gospel clearer. Plead with God to draw many to saving faith so that the Day of the Lord would become for them a day of joyful expectation rather than fearful judgment.

Conclude this prayer time with a corporate act of worship and confident hope. Read together 1 Corinthians 15:55–57: *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Allow those triumphant words to remind the congregation that Christ has already secured the victory His people await in full. Then invite everyone to conclude the prayer together with the church's ancient confession of hope, the prayer that has echoed from the apostles until today: *"Maranatha. Our Lord, come. Amen."*

> *"Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."*
>
> **Titus 2:13, NASB 1995**

Key Texts: *Titus 2:11–14; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; Revelation 1:7–8; Romans 8:18–25; Hebrews 9:28*

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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