

The Importance and Simplicity of Eschatology

Matthew 24, Introduction

Well let's turn in our Bibles please to Matthew chapter 24. Now with the conclusion of Matthew chapter 23, Jesus has ended His public ministry. Jesus' public teaching is done. Jesus at this point in the unfolding of His life and ministry has said all He has to say to national Israel. They have rejected Him and He has rejected them, and as a result, their doom is certain and their house is left unto them desolate, as we saw at the conclusion of Matthew chapter 23.

Those who reject Christ as their Messiah cannot hope to escape the damnation of hell, and the nation that has rejected Christ cannot hope to escape its destruction and its desolation. So Israel as a nation, and Israel as the people of God, and Israel as the covenant community is finished. The kingdom of God is being taken away from them, and it is being given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of faithfulness to God and service to God that He requires of the citizens of His kingdom.

This new nation to whom the kingdom of God has been given is the New Israel, with whom the New Covenant is made in the upper room, which began with eleven believing Jews. And into them will be engrafted a multitude of believing Gentiles, and an ongoing small remnant of believing Jews throughout this entire New Covenant period in which we are now living. So Jesus pivots in His teaching from addressing the nation of Israel to addressing His own disciples. He pivots from addressing Old Israel to addressing New Israel.

Jesus now, at this point, enters into an extended discourse with His disciples about the subject of eschatology. Eschatology is simply the study of the last things. It is the study of the prophetic future and what that future holds. God has revealed much of what His plan is for the future, and eschatology is the study of that plan so that we know what that future will be, we know what that future will hold, and we know what we might expect as we move into that future.

So Jesus spends chapter 24 and chapter 25 of Matthew talking entirely and exclusively and extensively about eschatology. Now clearly, at the time Jesus spoke, the entire New Covenant era was yet future, and so what Jesus said about the future at the time He spoke the words of Matthew 24 and 25 was still in the future. At the time Jesus spoke, the entire New Covenant era was yet future, and what Jesus said about the future in those two chapters encompassed, not only the last 2,000 years, but also all the years on into our future, however many of them there may be, until we enter into the last judgment and the eternal state, which chapter 25 closes with.

So what we have here is the entire sweep, though not all the details, of eschatological expectation and prophecy, from the time of Jesus' first ministry on this earth until the time of the eternal state, after the second coming. It's all there in chapter 24 and chapter 25, from start to finish.

Now as I said, not all the details are there. There are other passages which supply additional details. But the sweep from Jesus' day until the day we enter into the new heavens and the new earth—that entire sweep of prophetic history is all revealed in those two chapters.

Now obviously, Jesus thought eschatology was important for the disciples to know, and that's why He spent two whole chapters talking about it. That's why He spoke of the whole period from the time of the first coming to the time of the second coming—in other words, the entire New Covenant era—because it was important for his disciples to know what was going to happen during that time so that they might not be surprised, or dismayed, or confused by what was occurring.

And since eschatology was so important to Christ, to devote this kind of time to it and provide this volume of information about it, then it should be to us as well. And as we study the next two chapters together, over however many months it's going to take, we will see what we may expect to experience and see in the future, both on the world stage, and also on the personal level of our individual lives.

So what I want to do today is to provide us with some introductory thoughts about the whole subject of eschatology in general, and then, God willing, next week, launch into an exposition of the passage itself. So we will not be expounding Matthew 24 today; rather, we're going to be providing two great introductory foundations that we need to grasp in order to be able to successfully launch into a study of these two grand chapters that lie before us.

So in the first place then this morning, let us consider together the importance of eschatology. Now there are many Christians in our day who question the value and the importance of eschatology. They are turned off by all the controversy that surrounds it, and they are mystified by the seeming complexity and obscurity of many of the passages that address it, and they are confused by the conflicts and contradictions among the people who teach about it. And so they adopt a reductionist mentality towards the whole subject, which simply says, Well, we know that Jesus is coming back to the earth again, and we know that He's going to fix everything that is wrong, and that's all I really need to know—don't bother me with the details.

These are the people we call "Pan-millennialists." A Pan-millennialist is someone who says it's all going to pan out fine in the end, and that's the extent of their interest in eschatology and of their understanding of it. They just simply refuse to spend much time thinking about it. What they say is, You know, we need to focus on the present stuff and the practical stuff. We need to focus on evangelism, and we need to focus on child-rearing, and we need teaching about husband-wife relationships, and we need instruction on the struggle with remaining sin, and we need to just preach the gospel. We need all this practical stuff—don't bother me with pie-in-the-sky stuff down the road.

But the point is, the Christian gospel, which is at the core of the most practical stuff there is, has everything to do with eschatology, because eschatology sets forth what the gospel promises, and

where the gospel will bring us in the end. Eschatology has to do with God's chief purpose in bringing us the gospel and in providing us with the gospel.

After all, why did God bring us a gospel, and why did God provide us with a gospel? Because He has a goal to achieve with that gospel, and that goal is what is described by eschatology. The chief purpose of the gospel is to destroy the work of the Devil, which was begun in the Garden of Eden, and to redeem us from all the effects of sin that were introduced there, and to finally restore us back to the paradise that was lost. That is the goal of Christ's saving work, and eschatology has to do with the description of the accomplishment of that work, and where it will leave us in the end. And so eschatology has to do with God's chief purpose in salvation, which is that of bringing mankind back to his original God-intended destination of perfect righteousness before God, and perfect fellowship with God, in a perfect world designed by God. That is the end and the goal of the gospel, and that is what eschatology addresses.

Eschatology is about the defeat of Satan's destructive purposes and the victory of God's redemptive purposes. Eschatology is about the final triumph of the cross over sin and Satan, and their utter defeat through the saving work of Christ. In short, eschatology is simply the conclusion and the outcome of the gospel and its final vindication and triumph. I'll repeat that: Eschatology is the conclusion and outcome of the gospel, and its final vindication and triumph.

Now is there anything that is more practical than the gospel and its final vindication and triumph? Is there anything that is more important than the gospel and its final vindication and triumph? People say, Well, give me the practical stuff and the important stuff. Is there anything more practical than that, and is there anything more important than that? And the answer is clearly, No.

The point is this: You cannot separate the gospel from eschatology, because eschatology is the end and the outcome of the gospel. And so if the gospel matters, eschatology matters as well, for they are of a single piece, and they cannot be separated from each other. The second coming, the resurrection, the final judgment, the eternal state of the saved and the lost, matter to the gospel, and are essential to the Christian faith.

Now having asserted all that, I need to prove it. I want you to notice this morning the connection between the gospel and eschatology in several passages of Scripture, and I want you to notice how you cannot talk about salvation without also talking about where it leads and what its outcome is. And where it leads and what its outcome is is what eschatology is all about, and what eschatology teaches.

Turn please in your Bibles with me if you would to Acts chapter 3. We're going to look at verses 19 to 21 together. Now Peter has healed a lame man at the gate of the temple, a big crowd gathers, and Peter preaches the gospel. And having preached the gospel, he comes to the conclusion of his message. Now notice what he says in Acts 3:19 through 21: "19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Is that important? That's pretty

important, right? "...that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;"—and what are those times of refreshing? Here they are—²⁰ and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: ²¹ whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

So from the beginning of the world, God has been speaking about the end of the world. And from the beginning in Genesis 3:15, where God first proclaimed the gospel, that the seed of the woman was going to crush the head of the serpent, God has been working that plan out, and the prophets have been speaking of that plan as to how it was going to occur and unfold.

The Old Testament prophets spoke about the first coming of Christ and they spoke about the second coming of Christ, and of course, the first coming of Christ was realized in the person of Jesus. And then from the time of Jesus, the New Testament prophets have been speaking consistently about the second coming of Christ. And the point is, Peter is saying, Repent. Be converted. Have your sins blotted out. This will conclude in Christ's return and the restoration of all things.

And we see how when Peter's preaching, the gospel leads right into and concludes with eschatology. He has: the gospel; repent, believe, have your sins blotted out; and then he has eschatology—Christ is coming back and He's going to restore all things, and that will be the refreshing, that will be the deliverance, the renewal of all that has been corrupted by sin.

So Peter goes from the gospel straight into its conclusion, which is the second coming of Jesus. The gospel leads to and concludes in eschatology in the preaching of Peter. They are inseparably connected. He can't preach one without preaching the other.

Now turn please in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 19. This is a passage which we have expounded in our previous studies in the gospel of Matthew, so you'll recall it. Matthew chapter 19, verses 16 to 29. Here we see Jesus preaching the gospel, right? Matthew 19:16:

"¹⁶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? ¹⁷ And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. ¹⁸ He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, ¹⁹ Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. ²⁰ The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? ²¹ Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

So what's Jesus doing here? He's preaching the gospel, right? And He's saying to this man, If you believe the gospel, He is saying, you'll have treasure. Where? In heaven. What is heaven, and when are we going to get there? That involves eschatology, okay? But we're not done yet, all right? Verse 23:

“²³ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. ²⁵ When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?” Notice, the subject is still salvation.

“²⁶ But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. ²⁷ Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee;”—we've obeyed the gospel—“what shall we have therefore? ²⁸ And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

So what we see in this passage is that the gospel is preached, the sacrifice required of those who embrace the gospel is set forth, and then eschatology is offered and declared to be the motive for us embracing that gospel and the sacrifice that it entails. Jesus said, If you're going to inherit eternal life, you've got to follow me, lock, stock, and barrel. That involves sacrifice. Well, if we make that sacrifice, what are we going to get out of it? Answer: Eschatology. Here's what you're going to get: There's going to be a regeneration, where everything's going to be made new—new heavens, new earth—and you're going to sit on thrones. And see, without eschatology, there's no motivation to embrace the gospel and the sacrifices it calls us to.

The doctrine of hell is part of eschatology, the doctrine of heaven is part of eschatology. And if we're not teaching eschatology, we have pulled the motivation for embracing the gospel right out from underneath it. Because the gospel isn't just about here and now; it's about then and there. And if there's no “then” or “there,” or if our understanding of it is defective, or our understanding of it is very minimalist, then the gospel isn't going to mean much, and we're not going to be motivated by it much—either to believe it, or to preach it, or to live it.

But when we tie the gospel to its outcomes, then the gospel suddenly becomes very precious, precisely because of those outcomes. And that's what Jesus is saying here. Jesus in His preaching ties the gospel with eschatology, and eschatology is the whole foundation for saying to Peter, This is why you make the sacrifices you do as a Christian.

And then a third passage—First Thessalonians chapter 1. Now there are lots and lots of these passages, and I just picked a few, three is all, for lack of time, but notice once again. First

Thessalonians 1, verses 9 and 10. Paul is talking to the Thessalonians and they have embraced the gospel, and he says in First Thessalonians 1:9 and 10:

“⁹ For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” Now there’s the here-and-now. You got saved, you started serving God. What was your motivation? Why did you do that? Verse 10: “and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

You see, it was things to come that motivated the Thessalonians to turn to God from idols to embrace the true and the living God. And if we don’t understand the things to come, then we cannot preach the gospel and provide those to whom we preach with proper motivation to give up their false gods and embrace the true God, and start serving Him. And so the fruit of repentance and faith and service to God is the result of a belief in the second coming and the deliverance from the wrath to come. So we’ve got to understand the second coming and its nature, and the events that surround it, and what it means, and the impact that it has.

And as I said, we could multiply examples, but the point is, the New Testament is saturated with extensive teaching on the subject of eschatology, and the preaching of the gospel is saturated with teaching on eschatology—sometimes more, sometimes less. But you can’t read the New Testament without constantly running into end-times stuff. In fact, there is one whole book of 22 chapters that is dedicated exclusively to the issue of eschatology, and if it wasn’t important and we could just dismiss it, then why did God bother to put the book of Revelation into the Bible? People say, Well, I can’t understand it, so they don’t bother with it. Well, you need to do the work of trying to understand it. And I’m not saying that our understanding of it’s going to be perfect or totally complete.

Let me ask you this: Is your understanding of the gospel perfect and totally complete? No, it isn’t, okay? But you understand it substantially, and you understand it largely, and you understand it enough to draw salvation from it and tremendous comfort from it, and to guide your whole life with it. And it’s the same way with eschatology. I don’t propose to answer every eschatological question to you in this study of Matthew 24 and 25. But what I do propose is to give you a major, substantial understanding of it so that you are then able to have it to motivate you with reference to the gospel; to embrace it, to preach it, and to live it.

If eschatology was important enough to Jesus Christ to teach us about it for two whole chapters, then it ought to be important enough to us to do the work of learning about it. We may not treat eschatology with a dismissive attitude when Christ does not, and the whole New Testament does not. If Jesus thought it was important enough to give this degree of teaching to it, then we need to think it’s important enough to give ourselves to an understanding of it, just like we have sought to understand every other chapter and verse in this book.

So we as a church, and I as a pastor, have the obligation to do the hard work of focusing on and figuring out what these passages mean. And when we do, the richness of the gospel will be seen in a clearer light than we have ever seen it before, and it will move us to worship better and live better than we ever have before. Thus the importance of eschatology.

Well that brings me to my second major point. Having seen the importance of eschatology, the second introductory point I want to make is the simplicity of eschatology. Now one of the reasons why people shy away from the study of eschatology is that it seems so complicated and so complex and so confusing. But in reality, the eschatological system of the Bible is really very, very simple. There is this age that we're in right now, and then there is the age to come, that will occur after the second coming and judgment of Christ. And that's it. We're done. We can all go home now.

Now, you smile, but really it's just that simple. It's really just that simple. The Bible teaches us about this age and it teaches us about the age to come. That's all there is. There are not seven ages of some fantastical dispensational construct. There are not three ages of pre-millennial or post-millennial thought. Rather, there's just two ages. There is this world, and there is the world to come. That is two-step eschatology.

You can't get any simpler than that, because without two steps, you don't have an unfolding of anything, okay? There's no movement forward if there's just one world. But there's two worlds—there's this world and the world to come; there's this age, the age to come. That's two-step eschatology. There's nothing any simpler than that.

There are only two ages—this age and the age to come. And they are distinguished from each other and divided from each other in the Bible by the second coming and the day of judgment. So you have from creation clear up to the second coming and the judgment—that's this age, or this world. And then you have from the second coming and the judgment, the world to come. And that's the next world. And that's it. That's all there is. This world and the world to come are distinguished from each other and divided from each other by the second coming of Christ and the day of judgment.

Now this simple two-step eschatology that doesn't include any other ages than those two, is set forth time and time and time again in the Scriptures. Let's notice several passages. Turn to Matthew chapter 12, and notice if you will verse 32. Jesus here is talking about the unpardonable sin, and of course it's blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, right? And we're not going to talk about that, but I want you to notice the language of Matthew 12, starting out at verse 31:

“³¹ Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men:”—that's really comforting—“but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.” That's very threatening. Now here's our verse, verse 32: “And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy

Ghost,”—now here it is—“it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

This age and the age to come, this world and the world to come, exhaust all of time. And if you are not forgiven in this age, or in the age to come, you never have forgiveness, because this age and the age to come exhaust all of time. In the parallel passage in Mark chapter 3 and in verse 29, Jesus says, “but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” So the point is that if you’re not forgiven in this world and you’re not forgiven in the world to come, then you never have forgiveness. And so this world and the world to come encompass all of time.

Turn to Mark chapter 10. In Mark chapter 10, verses 29 to 30, it says, “²⁹ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, ³⁰ but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.” So all there is is just this time and the world to come. That’s it. There is no other time.

The parallel passage in Luke chapter 18, verse 29 to 30, says virtually the same thing. Luke chapter 18, notice if you will verses 29 to 30: “²⁹ And [Jesus] said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, ³⁰ who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.” And so that’s all there is. There’s this time and there’s the world to come, and that’s it. There’s nothing else beside that.

Now, you’re in Luke chapter 18, just turn over to chapter 20. Luke chapter 20, verses 34 to 36. Here there’s a dispute about whether the resurrection is a genuine teaching of the Bible, and we’re not going to talk about that, but what we are going to talk about is Jesus’ response. Luke 20:34: “³⁴ And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world”—notice, the children of what world? This world—“marry, and are given in marriage: ³⁵ but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: ³⁶ neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

So Jesus is saying, there’s just two worlds. There’s *this* world, and this world encompasses all of the time that men marry and are given in marriage. And then there is *that* world, and that world contains people who are resurrected, who are all the children of God and who never engage in marriage, ever again.

And so this clearly encompasses all of time. When did marriage begin, and when did death begin? Well, it began back in Genesis 1, 2, and 3, right? And so from creation until the second coming, men marry and are given in marriage, and people die. And during that period, there are saved and unsaved living together on the face of the earth. But from the second coming on into

eternity, there is no marriage, there is no death, they are all resurrected, and there is only the children of God there. Now all of that is taught in Luke 20, verses 34 to 36. And so Jesus is very clear that this world and the world to come encompass all of time.

Now there are numerous other passages that teach this as well. Romans 8, verses 16 to 18, speak of the fact that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. So we have the present time, and the time of glory, and that's it. And turn please to Ephesians chapter 1. (I'm hurrying because I'm running out of time.) Ephesians chapter 1, notice verses 15 to 21:

“¹⁵ Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, ¹⁶ cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;”—and so he prays this long prayer for them, okay. These are believers and he starts talking about Jesus, and notice what he says of Jesus in verse 20: “he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,”—verse 21, here's our verse—“²¹ far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in *this world*, but also in *that which is to come*.” That's all there is—this world and the world that is to come—that's it.

We see the same kind of language and emphasis in Titus chapter 2. The book of Titus chapter 2, in verses 11 to 13, it says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly,” notice, “in this present world;”—now verse 13: “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ,” which is the end of this world, and the beginning of the world to come. And that event of the second coming separates those two worlds and those two ages.

In First Timothy chapter 6, verses 17 through 19, he says, “¹⁷ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they...trust [not] in uncertain riches, but in the living God,” and that they lay up treasure in heaven in the world to come.

The point is, this two-age terminology permeates the New Testament. It is foundational to the New Testament. People do not think of these passages that I have just read to you as being prophetic, but in fact they plainly set forth the framework into which all prophecy must fit. These passages plainly set forth the framework in which *all* prophecy must fit. All prophecy has either got to fit into this age, or in the age to come—in this world, or in the world to come.

And guess what—the Millennium spoken of in Revelation chapter 20 has to fit into one of these two ages. It's not a third age. The language of the Bible does not allow for a third age. So the Millennium either fits in this age, or in the age to come, because that's all there is. Those two ages encompass all of time. This age, and the age to come, taken together exhaust all of time, including the eternal state.

So as we study Matthew 24 and Matthew chapter 25, what we are going to have is a description of this age, from the time of Christ's first coming up through the second coming of Christ, and then after that is the resurrection and the eternal state, and that's what Matthew 25 closes with. The last phrase in Matthew chapter 25 is this: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." That's the age to come. And everything before that is this age.

Simple, right? Is that simple? And while there may be some details we wonder about, do they fit into this age or do they fit into that age, the big picture is clear. In this world, we're going to have tribulation. In that world, we're not going to have any. This is a present evil world. That's going to be a perfect sinless, holy world.

So this whole complication of eschatology is completely unnecessary, and it's entirely unbiblical to say, Well, there's seven ages; or there's three ages. There's just two, and everything fits into one or the other. And when you understand that and you start reading these passages, you say, Well where does this fit? And you've only got two boxes to put it in. And understanding that dramatically simplifies your ability to understand eschatology.

So as we go through Matthew 24 and 25, we're going to be talking in this language, we're going to be talking according to this framework, and we're going to better and more easily understand that eschatology encompasses the last days. And the last days are from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ.

Why is that whole period called the last days? Because it's the last covenantal period that will ever exist. You know, we've had the period from the Fall to the Flood, and then we had the Noahic Covenant period, then we had the Abrahamic Covenant period, then we had the Old Covenant period, and the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant, and guess what? There are no more covenants. We're done. This is the last. We've been in the last days, people, for 2,000 years. We're going to be in the last days for God alone knows how many more years.

So don't think the last days are something way out there, yet to come. The last days have been happening, and that's why a lot of what Matthew 24 teaches is teaching about what's been going on the *last* 2,000 years, not just about what's going to go on when Antichrist appears, and all that involves him.

Well hopefully that's helpful; hopefully you see the importance of eschatology and the simplicity of eschatology, and it's going to motivate you to say, You know what? I can sink my teeth into this. I *must* sink my teeth into this. I'm going to learn this stuff. And we're going to go slowly and soberly and patiently, and hopefully when we're done, you'll understand a lot more than when we started, and hopefully, all the false notions that have been taught to you in the Dispensational milieu of our day, which is the most popular view—the whole "left behind" view of Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye—that all of that is bogus, it is wrong, it is unbiblical. And we're going to see that biblical eschatology is taken straight out of the passage, and we don't

need some fancy guy with special effects to try to swindle us into thinking that things are going to be as described in some special-effects movie. It's simply not that way.

There's just one coming, one time, one day of judgment—the dividing line between the first and the second coming. There's no secret rapture, and then a seven-year tribulation afterward and then a second coming, and then a millennium, and then a rebellion, and then the new heavens and the new earth. All of that's bogus. And we're going to prove it as we study these passages together. Well, let us pray.

Father, thank you so much for your word and for its teaching. Help us to understand it, and Lord, the glorious outcome of the gospel. Fill us, Father, with an understanding of your truth and your word so that we grasp the message that Jesus is conveying to us in these two chapters. Give us wisdom, give us humility, give us illumination so that we might rightly divide the word of truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.