

April 21, 2024 by Steve Brandon



The Ethics of Eschatology (Part 1)

Paul's Epistles

As most all of you know, we spent the last year in the book of Revelation, finishing last week in chapter 22. The next book that we will tackle is the gospel of John. I am super-excited for what the Lord will do through this book and in the life of Rock Valley Bible Church! It will be great for us to look at Jesus for a year or two, being invited into the life that he offers us all through faith in him.

But before we jump into John, I'm preaching a series of sermons that comes from a burden of mine that has come out of my study of Revelation for this past year. Revelation has drawn us to think about the end times; about the return of Christ, about the coming judgment, about the glories of the new heaven and the new earth. As I have studied this, I have been struck by how many people are solely interested in what will happen in the future, like timelines and events and signs, all without much thought about how we ought to live today.

For instance, this week, I happened upon church that I know about, with a pastor I have met. I don't know him well. But I know him and I noticed that he recently finished preaching through Revelation as well. After preaching through the book, he gave a "Question and Answer" session with his congregation. It was a time for those in the congregation to ask any sort of questions that they might have about "end times." I was curious as to what was asked and what might be said. So, I listened to the whole hour. The pastor gave some pretty standard answers to some pretty standard questions.

Later I began to think about my message this week. I listened again to the session this time looking and listening for application. The Q&A lasted about an hour. The first 30 minutes centered around questions of the end times. Here were the questions: When is the sheep and goats judgment? What is the first death? What is the second death? When is the rapture? Will the Holy Spirit be with us after the Rapture? Will all the Jews recognize that Jesus was their Messiah? Will people be saved when the two witnesses of Revelation are prophesying? Why is Israel always in a war? That last question, was a natural pivot to current events and worldviews, which took up that last half-hour of the Q&A.

In giving the answers to these questions over the course of 30 minutes, there was very little focus given to how these things affect our lives. The pastor said that We won't be at the sheep and goats judgment, that's for those looking to enter the Millennium. He talked about what the first and second death is, without reference to us. He talked about the rapture, giving Biblical proof for it. He did give some application, saying that "it is foolish to try and figure out who the anti-Christ is, because we will be gone before he arises." Regarding Jewish salvation in the future, the pastor did mention how you aren't saved through bloodlines, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. Further, when talking about God's promises to Israel, he said that Satan will attack the promises of God, but we need to trust in the promises that God has given to us. But that was about it regarding application to our lives in 30 minutes of talking about the "end times." After 30 minutes, when the questions turned more toward current events, the pastor spoke quite a bit about our worldviews. During these answers, the pastor was much more focused upon application. So, the pastor is capable of giving appropriate applications to questions from his congregation.

My reason for bringing this up is not to fault this pastor, but to use him as an example of my burden: There is a great tendency when thinking about the end times to think only in terms of what will happen in the future, without much thought given to how we might apply it to our lives today. I believe that this is quite out of step with the Scriptures. For that reason, I'm planning to preach a series of messages on this topic, which I am calling, "The Ethics of Eschatology." "Eschatology" is literally, "the study of last things." This includes much of what we have looked at this past year: the return of Christ, the coming judgment, and the hope of heaven.

By "Ethics," I mean, "Our proper conduct", "What is the application to our lives of these things?", or "How should we live?" I fear that this tendency to merely talk about time frames of future events, without thinking about how it impacts our own lives, is not how the Scripture presents matters of the end times. Mere curiosity about the end times is dangerous for our souls. What I plan to do this morning is to show you how often the Scripture ties matters of the end times directly to application in our own lives.

Normally, I have us open up to one portion of Scripture, and settle in during my entire sermon. This morning is going to be much different. This morning we are going to a bunch of Scriptures. We are going to read them, I'm going to show you where the "eschatology" is in the text. Then we will look to see if there is any explicit "ethic" of the text into our lives. What we will find is that the Scripture is very clear in its application of end times to our lives.

This morning, my focus is upon the apostle Paul. So, my message this morning is entitled, "The Ethics of Eschatology in Paul." I scoured through all of Paul's writings, for all of the references that I could find in Paul's writings that refer to something about end times. Whether that's about a future day of judgment, or a day of salvation, or the day Christ returns, or our future resurrection, or our hope of heaven. I found well over 50 passages that speak of something about "Eschatology," and I think I can point to specific application in all of them. The vast majority of them are direct applications, clear in the context. The vast minority of them, find their application by way of assumptions drawn from the greater context of the passage.

So let's begin with the book of Romans. It's the first of Paul's letters that he wrote in our Bible. If you are new to the Bible, if you find your way to the book of Romans, and our first reference, we will simply work our way forward in the Bible. When we finish with Romans, we will go forward to 1 Corinthians, and then to 2 Corinthians. I encourage you to follow along in your Bibles. We will go pretty fast and we will see how far we get this morning.

Let me warn you, that these Romans passages are some of the more difficult passages to see the link between the ethic and the eschatology. So hang in there until we finish with Romans. The first passage we are going to look at is Romans, chapter 2 verse 5. In the context here Paul is referring to those who judge others, while practicing the very same thing.

Romans 2:5

But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

You can see the eschatology there in the reference of the time when "God's righteous judgment will be revealed." This is a reference to the final judgment. You can see the ethics right there in the first part of the verse: It's your "hard and impenitent heart" that will bring God's wrath upon you. Though this isn't a straight command to repent, the implication is obvious: "Soften your heart or face the wrath of God."

The next reference in Romans about future events is found in Romans 2:15-16.

Romans 2:15-16

They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

You can see the eschatology when Paul references day of judgment when "God judges the secrets of men." In this verse, the ethics are not so clearly spelled out. However, the greater context of this verse, beginning in verse 12, is that judgment will even come upon those who don't have the law (verse 12), because everyone has the law written on their hearts. Thus, God will even judge the Gentiles on the day of judgment for what is written on our conscience. Ultimately, Paul is heading toward chapter 3, where he points out that all of us are sinners under the wrath and condemnation of God. Again, the implications of these words are for us to see our sin, and our peril before God who will judge the secrets of our heart.

The next passage in Romans that speaks of some matters of the future is Romans 5:9.

Romans 5:9

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

We see the eschatology is salvation from the wrath of God, which will come on that final day. We don't see the ethic in this verse. Yet, we do see "justification by his blood" is what saves us. If you look back to verse 1 in Romans 5, you see that this "justification comes by faith." The ethic here is believe in Christ, that you might have "peace with God" (verse 1), and be justified before him on that final day.

The next passage is:

Romans 6:5

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

The eschatology here is the resurrection from the dead that comes in the future. Again, the ethic here isn't quite clear. But if you think a bit, you can see it. Union with Christ is the condition by which we will be united with Christ in his death. Our union with Christ comes through faith in him. The ethic here is to believe in Christ.

The next passage is:

Romans 8:18-19.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

The eschatology here is the glory that is to be revealed to us. This comes at "the revealing of the sons of God." The ethic is suffering, particularly "suffering with Jesus."

Look at verse 17:

Romans 8:17

and if [we are God's] children, then [we are] heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

For the suffering for Jesus that we experience in this life, can't be compared with the coming glory. The suffering comes about because we are one of those children of God who will be revealed. So, be willing to suffer for Jesus.

The next passage is Romans 8:30, but we need to go back to verse 28 to get the context.

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

The eschatology comes in verse 30, speaking about the glorification of the believers. This only comes for those who are justified. We saw

justification back in chapter 5 verse 9 when Paul said that our justification saves us from the wrath of God. We saw in chapter 5 verse 1 that our justification comes by faith in Christ. So, who are glorified? Those who believe. There's the ethic: believe in Jesus, so that you may be glorified.

The next passage is Romans 11:26-27.

Romans 11:26-27

And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,
"The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";
"and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Now we begin to see the direct connection between eschatology and ethic. The Deliverer is coming from Zion, this is the coming of the Messiah in future days. In his coming he will "banish ungodliness from Jacob." There's the ethic. When the Deliverer comes, the Jew won't want to be walking in ungodliness, let he be banished! The application comes straight to us. At the return of Christ, he will banish all ungodliness. So, let's walk in godliness!

We continue on to Romans 13.

Romans 13:11-12

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

The eschatology comes in verse 11, "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed." That's expecting the day of final salvation, when Jesus appears and brings us into his glory. every day we draw nearer and nearer to that day. The ethic comes in verse 11, "wake from sleep." The ethic comes in verse 12, "cast off the works of darkness." The coming of our salvation in the future is the drive for us to walk in godliness.

There are two more passages in Romans that refer to the future things.

Romans 14:10-12

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

The eschatology is clear: judgment is coming. The ethic is clear: don't pass judgment on your brother. Don't despise your brother, because we are going to give an account to God!

Here's the last passage in Romans.

Romans 16:19-20

For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The eschatology comes in verse 20. It looks forward to the day when Satan is crushed under our feet. This is the day when Satan is finally defeated. The ethic is in verse 19, 'I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.' The coming defeat of Satan requires our obedience today!

OK, there is every reference that I could find in Romans of some future event. In every text there was a connection between future events and our obedience. Some of the connections may not have been so clear. But with a little look at the context, it was there, in all of them. My main point this morning is singular: there is an ethic of eschatology. There is an application to all "end times."

So, I want for you to step back and think about teaching you may have heard regarding end times. Has there clear and constant application? I think about my own preaching through Revelation, did I make such connections between what will happen in the future to our lives today?

I think about the Question and Answer session that I listened to this week. For half an hour, the pastor talked about all that he believes will happen in the future, the tribulation and the revealing of antichrist, abomination of desolation, and the rapture and the millennium. a new temple, with hardly any application at all.

The burden of my message this morning is that this isn't the flavor of the Bible when it comes to what it says about the end times. Because there is always an application for us. There is always an exhortation in some way to seek the Lord and to walk in his ways!

We saw this in the book of Romans. We will see this next in the book of 1 Corinthians, which is the next book of Paul that we have in our Bibles. It feels just like Romans.

So, let's dig into 1 Corinthians. I did the same thing with 1 Corinthians that I did with Romans. I scoured the book, looking for any sort of reference to the end times, I found that every time, Paul's purpose in bringing up the end times was some application in our lives.

We begin with 1 Corinthians 1:7-8. This comes in the context of Paul's thanks to God for God's grace that was working in their lives. They had called upon the name of the Lord (verse 2) They were sanctified in Christ Jesus through faith in him (verse 2).

1 Corinthians 1:7-8

you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You see the eschatology in the both of these verses. In verse 7 there is “the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In verse 8 there is “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The ethic here isn't quite so clear. Those in Corinth are “waiting” for the return of Jesus. But the aim is that they would be “guiltless” in that day. That is, when they stand before the Lord, they would be found blameless before the Lord. because, God sustained them in their walk with him. Thus, the ethic here is the importance of continuing on in their faith.

We continue on.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

The eschatology here is clear. Paul is talking about the judgment here, when God will test our works. Some work will be like wood, hay, or straw. Such work will be burned up. Other work will be found like gold, silver, or precious stones. Such work will receive a reward. The ethic is clear as well. You want to gain a reward in that day. So build your life with works that will last.

The next reference to future events that I found comes in 1 Corinthians 4:5.

This verse comes in the context of Paul's poor reputation among people, not because of his sin, but because of his devotion to Jesus. Some have called him a fool (1 Corinthians 4:10). Paul was OK with that, because, he wasn't looking for the approval of men. Rather, he was looking for the approval of God.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

I trust that you can see the eschatology in this verse. It's the judgment when the Lord comes. At that time, everything will come out in the open. The ethic is to live in such a way that you will be commended by God on the day of judgment. Don't worry about your reputation among others.

The next reference to the end times comes in 1 Corinthians 5:5.

This verse comes in the context of a sinful man in the church, who was co-habiting with his mother-in-law. Rather than sorrowing over this man's sin, the church was boasting of their tolerance. Paul said, “that's not good.” Paul's counsel to them is this:

1 Corinthians 5:5

you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

The eschatology is clear here. Paul is talking about “the day of the Lord.” The ethic here comes on several levels. First of all, there's the ethic for the church. You cannot tolerate a professing believer in your congregation who is living in such sexual sin. So cast him out. The second level is for such a one living in such sin, you are in danger of the attacks of Satan upon your life!

The next verse is 1 Corinthians 6:1-3. In this passage, Paul is addressing the situation where believers in Christ are suing one another. Paul says, “This is wrong.” But notice the argument that Paul uses to explain why this is wrong.

1 Corinthians 6:1-3

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

The eschatology is clear, but confusing. In verse 2, Paul talks about how the saints will judge the world. In verse 3, Paul talks about how we will judge angels. This will take place in the future at some point. I don't know what exactly it means that we will judge the world and the angels.

But the ethic is super-clear. Christians ought not to be bringing other believers into the worldly courts. Instead, they should settle their disputes among one another, within the church. This passage shows clearly the point of my message this morning. Paul brings up the future to affect how we should live today. In this context it has to do with our disputes with others in the church. Our future role as judges has an implication on how we should deal with disputes today.

The next passage I found in which Paul refers to future events comes in chapter 7, verses 25-31. This passage is a long one. We don't need to be caught up in the details, only the application in light of the end times.

1 Corinthians 7:25-31

Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife?

Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

The eschatology comes in verse 29, "the appointed time has grown very short." It also comes in verse 31, "The present form of this world is passing away." The end times is also coupled with the context of Paul's day. In his day, the persecution of believers was coming on strong. The ethic of this passage is to consider marriage carefully, because in marriage, you will bring on troubles in your life. There are enough troubles with the persecution, that marriage may not be so wise in those sorts of days. The events of the future has an implication on our consideration of marriage.

Our next passage comes in 1 Corinthians 11:26-27. The context of this passage is the Lord's Supper that is celebrated in the church. We read this often.

1 Corinthians 11:26-27

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

The eschatology of this text can be seen in verse 26, "until he comes." The ethic comes in verse 27, "don't eat or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner." The context surrounding these verses explain how we should examine ourselves before eating and drinking, looking to the Lord by faith. making things right with each other before we eat and drink,

Our next passage is found in 1 Corinthians 15. Much of this chapter deals with eschatology. It deals with the return of Christ in verse 23. It speaks about how Jesus will deliver the kingdom to the Father in verse 24. It describes the rule of Christ in verse 25. It talks about death being defeated in verse 26. It tells of the end of all things, when God is "all in all" in verse 28. This chapter also has extensive discussion about our future resurrection bodies, what they will be like, how our bodies will be "spiritual" bodies (verse 44), and how our bodies will be "raised in power" (verse 43). This chapter speaks of the return of Jesus. For the sake of brevity, I want to start reading in verse 50.

1 Corinthians 15:50-57

I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "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.

The eschatology here is super clear. Paul's whole discussion is what take place at the return of Christ. It speaks of how Christ will come in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet and how the dead will be raised. How we will put on immortality. How sin and death will be defeated! How the victory will be that of Jesus!

And the ethic comes in verse 58.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The "therefore" of verse 58 signals the application of the eschatology. In light of all that was written about the return of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, the defeat of sin and death, We ought to live in this way: We ought to be "steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord" (verse 58), because we know that Jesus will return and have the ultimate victory.

Of any of the passages we have looked at so far, 1 Corinthians 15 mirrors the book of Revelation more than any other passage. The main application of Revelation is to endure and overcome the world! "Here is a call of the endurance and faith of the saints" (Revelation 13:10). "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

In thinking about and talking about end times, this is where it must land! We must feel the importance of it in our hearts. We must apply it by serving the Lord with zeal and endurance, knowing that he will return and make all things right.

One more text in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 16:22

If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!

We see the eschatology in Paul's prayer that Jesus would come. It's a lot like how John ends the book of Revelation, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). The ethic comes right before the prayer. Paul brings a curse upon those who have no love for the Lord. We ought to love the Lord, especially in light of his coming.

So, there is every text in 1 Corinthians that deal with "end times." Every time, without exception, there is an appropriate application. This is

the point of my message this morning. Eschatology has an ethic. The end times has an application. Every time that Paul brings in the future events, he always comes with an application of some sort. This application is varied. Consider a brief summary of the applications we have considered in 1 Corinthians:

- Trust in God to sustain you (1 Corinthians 1:7-8).
- Make sure that you are investing in work that lasts (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).
- Entrust your reputation to the Lord who will judge (1 Corinthians 4:5).
- Don't tolerate sin in the congregation (1 Corinthians 5:5).
- Don't bring lawsuits against one another (1 Corinthians 6:1-3).
- Think long and hard about the hardships of life and the nearness of Christ when considering marriage (1 Corinthians 7:25-31).
- Examine yourself before eating the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:26-27).
- Always abound in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15).
- Love the Lord (1 Corinthians 16:22).

So, when you find yourself talking with others about the return of Christ or the coming judgment or the hope of heaven, check yourself to see if you are seeking to apply these things to your own life. Or if you are listening to some podcast or preacher, who is talking about the end times, listen for the application. Because, eschatology always has an ethic. If the ethical portion of the eschatology lesson is missing, something is wrong!

Let's look at 2 Corinthians. We will find the same thing: when eschatology is mentioned, there is always an application.

2 Corinthians 1:12-14

For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand—just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

The eschatology comes in verse 14, when it speaks about "the day of our Lord Jesus." The ethic takes a little explanation. Paul says (in verse 14) that those in Corinth will boast of him and his friends on the final day. Paul's boast in verses 12 is that he has a pure conscience in walking with God and behaving toward others. This will prove true in the end. So, the ethic of this passage is this: Motives of the heart will be clear on the final day. So walk in such a way that you will be vindicated on that day.

Let's move on.

2 Corinthians 4:13-14

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

In this passage, Paul is speaking about the difficulties and hardships in ministry. Yet, Paul believes that both he and all who have believed in Jesus will be brought into the presence of God. That's the eschatology. The ethic is that Paul would continue to speak the gospel, even in the midst of much opposition. You can see Paul's perseverance earlier in the context. "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10). But the coming of Christ, and the assurance of being with him, gave him the will to persevere.

The next passage in 2 Corinthians that speaks about future things and "end times" comes in 2 Corinthians 5.

2 Corinthians 5:1-2

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,

In these verses, Paul is talking about a tent and a building. The tent is figurative for his earthly body. The building is figurative for his heavenly body, which he will receive from Christ in the future. The ethic is seen at the end of verse 2, "We long to put on our heavenly dwelling." For those of you who are aging and aware of the body, you too ought to "long" to have your heavenly dwelling, which only comes when Jesus returns.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

The eschatology here is clear to see. It's the judgment seat of Christ. The ethic is clear as well, at the judgment see, we will all receive "what is due, whether good or evil." The exhortation, then, is to see the good. But Paul even goes beyond this, in verse 6 he says, "We are always of good courage." In verse 8 he says, "We are of good courage." Why? because he knows that he has a "heavenly dwelling," where all is much better.

OK, one last verse in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 11:2-3

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am

afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

The eschatology is seen in verse 2, when Paul puts forth this imagery of him standing before Jesus, presenting the church Jesus as pure and holy. This follows the picture in Ephesians 5 and Revelation 19 of the church being the bride of Christ, who is one day presented to Jesus as a pure bride. Yet, Paul has concerns, that those in Corinth have strayed. They have strayed away "from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ." And thus, won't be presented to Christ as a pure virgin. The ethic, then, is for us, that we might not be led astray by cunning of the devil, because we too will stand before Christ. Our longing is to be a pure bride for him!

So, let's take a big breath. I have sought with all my heart to find all of the passages in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians that have any reference to future events. This may be the return of Christ or the coming judgment or the hope of heaven that believers have. I may have missed several, but I tried to get them all.

Now, the reason why I painstakingly went through all of these passages is to show that in EVERY case, Paul drives us straight to application. This is how the Bible speaks of the end. So beware the one who only speaks about future events without seeking to apply the truths to our hearts. Because such an omission is contrary to Biblical teaching.

So let's be applicational when thinking about eschatology, because the Bible is applicational when it comes to eschatology.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on April 21, 2024 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.
