

Eschatology: The Christian Hope

THEO6304

in association with the Centergize Conference

August 2015

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Dr. Steve Lemke and Dr. Adam Harwood

Contact Information

Dr. Steve Lemke

Office: Frost 202

Telephone: (504) 282-4455, ext. 3216

Fax: 504-816-8428

E-mail: slemke@nobts.edu

Dr. Adam Harwood

Office: Dodd 213

Telephone: (504) 282-4455, ext. 8074

Email: aharwood@nobts.edu

NOBTS Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Values and Competencies Addressed

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with Doctrinal Integrity and Mission Focus especially highlighted in this course. Each academic year, a core value is emphasized. This academic year, the core value is **Spiritual Vitality**, which is stated as follows: “We are a worshiping community emphasizing both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary family for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word.” The primary core values addressed by the course are Doctrinal Integrity and Characteristic Excellence. The primary ministerial competencies addressed by the course are Biblical Exposition and Theological Heritage.

Course Description

This course provides a biblical, historical, and theological examination of the doctrine of last things (eschatology). This study assists students to begin formation of a systematic, Christian perspective upon this issue. Students will develop an awareness of the issues and values in a Christian understanding of death, life after death, the resurrection, the second coming, and the eternal states. The relationships between eschatology and preaching, evangelism, and ministry are also explored. Students will investigate the theoretical issues involved in this doctrine as well as develop the implications of their findings for Christian living and ministry. Prerequisites: Systematic Theology 1 and 2.

This class will offer an assessment of the doctrine of eschatology, particularly with a view to clarifying the student's own eschatological perspective, as well as developing sermons or teaching material in a church setting.

Student Learning Outcomes

The successful student will be able to achieve the following objectives:

Cognitive:

- Understand and describe various aspects of eschatology, including the relationship of perspectives on history, the relation of time and eternity, hermeneutics, scriptural focus, the interpretation of key Old and New Testament texts, the kingdom of God, the tribulation, the resurrection, the second advent, the immanence of Christ's return, the millennium, the rapture, divine judgments, and eternal destiny.

Affective:

- Determine one's own eschatological position and beliefs with regard to the key issues regarding eschatology.

Skill:

- Exhibit hermeneutical skills in collating the various biblical texts on eschatology into a cohesive presentation of eschatology a way that is biblically faithful.

Required Texts

- Allen, David, and Steve W. Lemke, *The Return of Christ: A Premillennial Perspective. Reflections from the Acts 1:11 Conference* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2011).
- Clouse, Robert, ed., with Loraine Boettner, Anthony A. Hoekema, Herman A. Hoyt, and George Eldon Ladd. *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*. Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1977.
- Gregg, Steve. *Revelation: Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.
- Gleason L. Archer, Jr., ed., with Richard Reiter, Paul Feinberg, and Douglas Moo. *Three Views on the Rapture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, republished from the earlier version, *The Rapture: Pre-, Post-, or Mid-Tribulational*. Grand Rapids: Academie, 1984. **NOTE:** Buy this edition, **NOT** the later edition edited by Alan Hultberg, with contributions by Craig Blaising and Douglas Moo, with a similar title -- *Three Views on the Rapture: Pretribulation, Prewrath, or Posttribulation*, published by Zondervan in 2010. This latter book is also helpful, but the required text is the earlier version edited by Archer.
- The student's choice of **one** of the books noted with an asterisk in the bibliography.
- Lemke, Steve W. *A Christian View of Time and Eternity*. New Orleans: NOBTS, 1993. (This resource is provided free of charge in the Blackboard course documents section).

Class Assignments

Textbook Critiques, (*The Return of Christ, Revelation: Four Views, and the student's choice of one book from the list below, noted also with an asterisk in the bibliography*), 50 points each = 150 points.

Summarize the positions advocated in each of these textbooks, with your own evaluation of the book's content. Total length should be about 6-10 pages each. Focus your evaluation on the ideas presented about Eschatology in the books, not the style of writing.

Due:

- *Revelation: Four Views* textbook critique due (7/15/2015)
- *The Return of Christ* textbook critique due (7/22/2015)
- Your choice of **one of the following** (also denoted in the bibliography with an asterisk).
(due 7/29/2015)
 - Blaising, Craig A. and Darrell L. Bock, eds. *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992, OR, Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*. Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1993.
 - Crockett, William, ed., with John Walvoord, Zachary Hayes, and Clark Pinnock. *Four Views on Hell*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
 - Erickson, Millard J. *A Basic Guide to Eschatology: Making Sense of the Millennium*, a 1999 revision of *Contemporary Options in Eschatology: A Study of the Millennium*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977.
 - Morgan, Christopher W. and Robert A. Peterson, eds. *Heaven, Theology in Community* series. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014.
 - Riddlebarger, Kim. *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
 - Ryrie, Charles. *Dispensationalism*. Chicago: Moody Press, 2007, a revised and expanded version of *Dispensationalism Today*. Chicago: Moody, 1965.
 - Stevens, Gerald. *Revelation: The Past and Future of John's Apocalypse*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2014. (This is our NOBTS professor, advocating a Preterist perspective).
 - Walls, Jerry. *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things that Matter Most*. Waco: Brazos, 2015. (Note: This book advocates views that vary at points from what most Baptists believe).

Textbook Notes (*The Meaning of the Millennium*, and *Three Views on the Rapture*)

50 points each = 150 points

This assignment is NOT the same as the textbook critiques. Write a one page, single-spaced summary of each chapter in the book, followed at the end by 1-2 pages with your evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas presented in the book.

Due:

- *The Meaning of the Millennium* (due 7/17/2015)
- *Three Views on the Rapture* (due 7/22/2015) – Again, be sure you have the book by this title edited by Gleason Archer, as noted above, NOT the more recent one edited by Alan Hultberg.

Participation in Class Debates/Discussions, 50 points

Evidence good preparation and mastery of the material in defending a view of the intermediate state, a millennial view, a view of the tribulation, a view of hell, and/or the text from the list above that you chose to read. These topics will be assigned by July

15. The student is expected to be prepared to represent and articulate the views and books assigned with a clear understanding of the ideas represented.

Position Paper, 100 points. Due: 8/24

Defend your own position on eschatology, particularly the millennium and the rapture, drawing from Scripture and the theological resources utilized in the class to defend your position. Your paper should be about 10-12 pages single spaced. Defend your own position on eschatology, particularly the millennium and the rapture, drawing from Scripture and the theological resources utilized in the class to defend your position. Your paper should be about 10-12 pages single spaced. Your position paper should include an explanation of your stance on the following issues:

- (a) your hermeneutical presuppositions in interpreting apocalyptic literature,
- (b) the primary scriptural locus for your position,
- (c) a chronological account of the events of the end showing how you harmonize the key Scriptures on eschatology (Daniel, the eschatological discourse, Thessalonians, and Revelation),
- (d) your millennial position,
- (e) your understanding of the kingdom of God,
- (f) your understanding of the tribulation,
- (g) your view of the rapture,
- (h) your view of the judgment(s), and
- (i) your stance on the immanence of Christ's return. Due: 8/24

Participation in the Blackboard Blog, bonus points

Participation in the Blackboard discussions is encouraged. Bonus points may be awarded for insightful comments in the class threaded discussions. Insightful comments will have biblical and theological support you are able to bring to your discussion, particularly reflecting what you have been reading in the three required texts. All discussions should be respectful and kind regarding the views of others. The Blackboard site also has other resources that will be helpful in the class.

How to Sign Up for Blackboard— You may participate in a class discussion through NOBTS Blackboard beginning June 15, 2015. To sign up for Blackboard, take the following steps:

Open your web browser to the NOBTS home page, <http://www.nobts.edu> Click on the Blackboard link in the left column. Choose the Create Account button on the left, enter in your information, then click Submit. Confirm your registration by clicking OK. Your personal NOBTS Blackboard home page should now appear. To enroll in a class, click on the Courses tab at the top of the page. Click the Browse Course Catalog link on the right-hand side of the page. Scroll down the page and click on the Enroll button beside “Eschatology: The Christian Hope.” Enter the enrollment code: THEO6304 (Note: the enrollment code is case sensitive, so type it in exactly this way). Click OK when the confirmation page appears.

Course Policies

Participation in Class with preparation and attentiveness are crucial to your own success in the class, as well as to those who sit around you. Each student has a positive contribution to make to the class. It is essential that we treat each other with Christian charity and kindness. Use of laptop computers for note taking is fine, but playing computer games, checking email, social networking, or doing work not associated with the class is not appreciated and is strictly prohibited. We will be dealing with some complex issues, and we need your undivided attention. Participation in the online discussions is strongly encouraged.

Absences are not allowed without special permission in this reduced time format course. Tardiness or leaving early from class sessions can count as an absence.

Grades will be determined on the basis of the NOBTS grading scale— an A for 93-100, B for 85-92, C for 77-84, D for 70-76, and F for 69 or below.

Late Work will be penalized. No assignment will be accepted that is over two weeks late, and all late work will be assessed a proportional penalty (two points per office day).

Seminary Computer/Phone Texting Policy— The student is to demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior at all times. This includes the usage of cell phones and computers during class time. The opportunity for students to use these items within the classroom is contingent upon their proper usage. Students are also reminded that phones are to be silenced during the class and other Seminary functions. Proper usage includes note taking and tasks specifically assigned by the professor. Improper utilization includes all other usages such as surfing the Internet, playing games, texting, and emailing. If a student is engaged in improper usage of a cell phone or computer during a class, the professor has the right to prohibit the student from bringing the item to subsequent class meetings. Application: Silence your phone and put it away before class. No text messaging, no phone or computer email, no games, no surfing, no Facebook, no Twitter, no distractions that would distract your focus from the class.

Class
Schedule

The Doctrine of Eschatology	
When	Class Discussion Topic or Assignment
6/15-8/15	<i>Before the Conference</i>
7/15	<i>Revelation: Four Views</i> book critique due
7/17	<i>The Meaning of the Millennium</i> textbook notes due
7/22	<i>The Return of Christ</i> book critique due <i>Three Views on the Rapture</i> textbook notes due
7/29	(The book you choose from the list) book critique due
8/3-8/5	<i>At the Centergize Conference</i>
8/3 1:00-2:15 pm	Overview class meeting Class discussion on the Intermediate State
8/3 2:30-4:00 pm	Class discussion of books on millennial views
8/4 1:00-2:15 pm	Class discussion/debate on millennial views
8/4 2:30-4:00 pm	Class discussion on views of Heaven and Hell
8/5 1:00-2:15 pm	Class discussion on elective books
8/5 2:30-4:00 pm	Class discussion/debate on views of the Tribulation
8/7-8/24	<i>After the Conference</i>
8/24	Student's position summary due

Bibliography

- Archer, Jr., Gleason L., Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo, and Richard R. Reiter. *Three Views on the Rapture: Pre; Mid; or Post-Tribulation?* Grand Rapids: Harper Collins, 1996.
- Ball, Bryan W. *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660*. Vol. XII. Netherlands: Leiden E. J. Brill, 1975.
- Bateman, IV, Herbert W., ed. *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999.
- Baumgartner, Frederic J. *Longing for the End: A History of Millennialism in Western Civilization*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Beasley-Murray, George. *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- *Blaising, Craig A. and Darrell L. Bock, eds. *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1992.
- *_____. *Progressive Dispensationalism*. Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1993.
- *Blomberg, Craig L., and Sung Wook Chung, eds. *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Bock, Darrell L., ed., with Craig A. Blaising, Kenneth L. Gentry, and Robert B. Strimple. *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- Boettner, Loraine. *The Millennium*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1957.
- Bonda, Jan. *The One Purpose of God: An Answer to the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Boyer, Paul. *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Braaten, Carl E. and Robert W. Jenson, eds. *The Last Things: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Brower, Kent E. and Mark W. Elliot, eds. *Eschatology in Bible and Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Brunner, Emil. *Eternal Hope*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *History and Eschatology*. Edinburgh: University Press, 1957.
- Cameron, Nigel M. de S., ed. *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1992.

Campbell, Donald K. and Jeffrey L. Townsend. *The Coming Millennial Kingdom: A Case for Premillennial Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1997.

Clouse, Robert G., ed. *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977.

Cohn, Norman, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith*. New Haven and London: Yale, 1993.

_____. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

* Crockett, William, ed., with John Walvoord, Zachary Hayes, and Clark Pinnock. *Four Views on Hell*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Daley, S. J., Brian E. *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Doyle, Robert C. *Eschatology and the Shape of Christian Belief*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1999.

*Erickson, Millard J. *A Basic Guide to Eschatology: Making Sense of the Millennium*, a 1999 revision of *Contemporary Options in Eschatology: A Study of the Millennium*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977.

Fudge, Edward William and Robert A. Peterson. *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical & Theological Dialogue*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

George, David, ed., with Herschel Hobbs, George Beasley-Murray, and Ray Frank Robbins. *Revelation: Three Viewpoints*. Nashville: Broadman, 1991.

Gloer, W. Hulitt, ed. *Eschatology and the New Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988.

Gowan, Donald. *Eschatology in the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

Gregg, Steve. *Revelation: Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.

Grenz, Stanley J. *The Millennial Maze: Sorting Out Evangelical Options*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.

Gundry, Robert. *First the Antichrist*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997.

_____. *The Church and the Tribulation: A Biblical Examination of Posttribulationism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973.

Hanhart, K. *The Intermediate State in the New Testament*. Groningen: V. R. B. Kleine, 1966.

Hebblethwaite, Brian. *The Christian Hope*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

- Hendriksen, William. *More than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967.
- _____. *The Bible on the Life Hereafter*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959.
- Hill, Charles E. *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Hong, Christopher. *Eschatology of the World Religions*. Washington: University Press, 1976.
- Thomas Ice and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. *The Great Tribulation, Past or Future? Two Evangelicals Debate the Question*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999.
- Karleen, Paul S. *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of The Church: Is It Biblical?* Langhorne, PA: BF Press, 1991.
- Kung, Hans. *Eternal Life?* Garden City: Doubleday, 1984.
- Kvanvig, Jonathan. *The Problem of Hell*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Kyle, Richard. *The Last Days are Here Again: A History of the End Times*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.
- _____. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- _____. *The Last Things*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- _____. *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
- McGinn, Bernard. *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Moore, Russell D. *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.
- Moltmann, Jurgen. *Theology of Hope*. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
- *Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson, eds. *Heaven, Theology in Community* series. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014.
- _____. *Hell under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- Mounce, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation (NICNT)*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Newell, William R. *The Book of Revelation*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1935.

Newport, John. *The Lion and the Lamb: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation for Today*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998.

_____. *Life's Ultimate Questions*. Dallas: Word, 1989.

Osborne, Grant. *Revelation (ECNT)*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

Pache, Rene. *The Future Life*. Chicago: Moody, 1962.

Pate, C. Marvin, ed., with Kenneth L. Gentry, Sam Hamstra, Jr., and Robert L. Thomas. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

Patrides, C. A. and Joseph Wittreich, eds. *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents and Repercussions*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958.

Peterson, Robert A. *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment*. Philadelphia: P&R Publishing, 1995.

Pittenger, W. Norman. *Last Things in a Process Perspective*. London: Epworth, 1970.
Polkinghorne, John. *The God of Hope and the End of the World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

_____ and Michael Welker, eds. *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2000.

Powys, David J. 'Hell': *A Hard Look at a Hard Question: The Fate of the Unrighteous in New Testament Thought*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1997.

Ratzinger, Joseph. *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1997.

*Riddlebarger, Kim. *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.

Rosental, Marvin. *The Pre-wrath Rapture of the Church*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990.
Ryrie, Charles. *Dispensationalism Today*. Chicago: Moody, 1965.

*_____. *Dispensationalism* (Revised and expanded). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Sauer, Val. *The Eschatology Handbook*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1973.

Sleeper, C. Freeman. *The Victorious Christ: A Study of the Book of Revelation*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.

Sproul, R. C. *The Last Days according to Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

*Stevens, Gerald. *Revelation: The Past and Future of John's Apocalypse*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2014.

Thomas, Robert L. *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1992.

_____. *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1992.

Summers, Ray. *The Life Beyond*. Nashville: Broadman, 1959.

Torrance, Thomas, ed. *Eschatology*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953.

Van Kampen, Robert D. *The Rapture Question Answered Plain and Simple*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1997.

*Walls, Jerry. *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things that Matter Most*. Waco: Brazos, 2015.

_____. *Heaven: The Logic of Eternal Joy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

_____. *Heaven: The Logic of Damnation*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.

_____. *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Walvoord, John F. *The Millennial Kingdom*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959.

_____. *The Rapture Question*. Revised ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.

_____. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: A Commentary*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966.

Willis, Wendell, ed. *The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987.

Witherington, III, Ben. *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World: A Comparative Study in New Testament*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.