



11

Jesus Will Return

Key Theme

- God is faithful to His promises.

Key Passages

- 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18; Matthew 24:15–31;
Revelation 20:1–10; Titus 2:11–14

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the certain aspects of Christ's return.
- Explain the hope Christians have in light of the Second Coming.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Write on the board, "What can we know about the Consummation?"

Students will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have them recite the verse together.



Studying God's Word

Jesus said His followers should be ready because one day He is coming back in glory. And all believers will be together with Him forever throughout all eternity.

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Eschatology Comparisons Diagram from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.



Activity: Eschatological Certainty

Students will identify the elements of Christ's Second Coming that are agreed upon by those within orthodoxy.

- Student Guides
- Pencils



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above with this background.

The Bible is the history book of the universe—from beginning to end. It started in Genesis with the Creation, when God created all things, and they were all very good (Genesis 1:31). Man fell into Corruption—sin—by disobeying God’s command (Romans 5:12). The world had fallen into wickedness and disobedience, so God sent a Catastrophe—the worldwide Flood as punishment (Genesis 7:23). Only Noah and his family survived that Flood. But as the population of man grew, they again disobeyed God. As a result of man’s sin at the Tower of Babel, God sent Confusion on them. Their languages were confused, and they were scattered all over the earth (Genesis 11:9). Man could never obey God perfectly. That is why God sent His perfect Son, Jesus Christ, to earth (John 3:16). Jesus died on the Cross so that sinners—all who believe in Him—could have eternal life! But that was not all God did! Jesus was buried, and He rose from the grave, and then ascended into heaven! Jesus is alive. He put an end to death and made a way for sinners to be forgiven and welcomed into His family (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).

But there is still more to come! God has told us about the major events that will finally end history and fulfill His plan for the universe—known as the Consummation! This consummation includes the anticipated return of Jesus Christ in glory as the conquering King!

Jesus often spoke to His followers about His return. He told them to be ready for His coming (Matthew 24:44). Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for His followers and would come again to take them to be with Him (John 14:1–3).

The Bible tells us that as Jesus’s disciples watched Him ascend back to His Father, He was taken up into a cloud. They looked toward heaven as Jesus went up. Two angels appeared to the disciples and assured them that Jesus Christ, whom they had just watched ascend, would one day appear again in the same manner (Acts 1:9–11). The Apostle John confirmed this in the book of Revelation when he wrote that Jesus is coming back in the clouds And when He returns, every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him (Revelation 1:7). And the Apostle Paul wrote that the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God! The saints of God will meet the Lord in the air and will then be with Him always (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

What joyous news this is to those of us, who by God’s mercy, have been born again to a living hope through

the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3). The realization that our Savior, Jesus Christ, will return for us one day should motivate us to live in eager expectation of His return! And while we are eagerly waiting, we should examine ourselves to be sure we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Do our lives reflect faithful obedience and ministry to what Jesus Christ has called us to? Or are we so caught up in the pleasures and enjoyments of this world that we forget that this is NOT our home (Hebrews 13:14)? Are we truly seeking the better, heavenly country that God has prepared for His people (Hebrews 11:16)?

The world and all its pleasures are passing away (1 John 2:17). And because of the joy we have in Christ, we are to put off and deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. We are to live righteous lives today as we look for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11–13)!

The book of Revelation ends with Jesus’s promise, “Surely I am coming quickly.” And as we mature in Christ, our response will align with the Apostle John’s, who replied, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The church has been waiting for Jesus to return for her for over 2,000 years. Faithful believers have been comforted through the centuries by the words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4, especially those who have undergone persecution for their faith:

I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

What a wonderful day that will be! It is a day that we are to look forward to.

Unfortunately, some, in eager anticipation of that day, have tried to predict the date of Christ's return. Whether by applying complicated mathematical formulas to numbers in the book of Daniel, searching the secret "Bible codes," or by supposed direct revelation, hundreds of people and organizations over the years have predicted the date of Christ's return. Here are just a few of them within the recent past:

- William Miller, a Baptist preacher from New York, stated in 1842, "My principles in brief, are, that Jesus Christ will come again to this earth, cleanse, purify, and take possession of the same, with all the saints, sometime between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844." When this did not happen, he then recalculated and determined the correct date to be October 22, 1844. This date became known as "The Great Disappointment" by the Millerites (his followers) after Jesus failed to return. Thousands of them had sold their possessions and were awaiting the coming of Christ.
- The Watchtower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) have predicted that Christ would come in 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, 1975, and 1994. When He failed to return each time, they reinterpreted these dates to refer to "spiritual" events in heaven.
- Hal Lindsey, author of the book *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, predicted no less than four times a date for the return of Christ: 1981, 1988, 2007, and 2040.
- Edgar Whisenant wrote a book entitled, *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Is in 1988*. When that prediction failed, he "recalculated" and came out with revised predictions of 1989 and then 1993.
- In addition to Hal Lindsey, other authors wrote of the year 1988 being the rapture of the church based on it being 40 years, or one "generation," after the founding of the modern nation of Israel in 1948.
- Harold Camping, an American Christian radio broadcaster, famously predicted that Jesus would return on May 21, 2011. Followers of Camping donated millions of dollars to purchase radio ads and billboards to warn people of the coming apocalypse. When the day passed without the predicted return, Mr. Camping "recalculated" the date to be October 21, 2011, again a failed prediction.
- In an interview in 2012, World Bible Society President F. Kenton Beshore stated that Christ's return will occur sometime between 2018 and 2028.

As you can see, there have been many attempts to set a timetable for Jesus's coming, and they've all been wrong. To some people, the failed predictions are proof that they don't need to take Jesus's return seriously at all—kind of like the boy who cried wolf. However, failed predictions don't prove Jesus wrong. Actually, they prove Him right. Jesus was very clear when speaking about His return: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Later, He said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. . . . Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:42, 24:44).

Right before His ascension to heaven, Jesus's disciples asked Him a question: "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). How did Jesus reply? "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7). We can be sure that Jesus will return, but He has not revealed to us the time when this will happen. So, when you hear people set dates for Jesus's return, don't believe them. The only way anyone could be right about the exact date of the second coming is if Jesus Himself turned out to be wrong.

Rather than leading to date-setting, the return of Jesus is to lead us to sober, righteous, godly living (Titus 2:11–13; 2 Peter 3:11–12; 1 John 3:2–3). We are to be full of hope as we look forward to the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13). We are not to love the world or the things of the world (1 John 2:15), but rather realize that "our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:20–21).



BEFORE THE THRONE

Glorious Lord and Savior, how I long for your return! Your Word gives us glimpses of it, but what we know is just a shadow of that glorious day. When I look for your coming, I am inspired to live a life that is pleasing to you. I want to be ready! I want to seek first the kingdom of God and hold loosely the things of this world. Use this lesson to challenge my students to worship you alone, live in obedience to your commands, and follow your will for their lives so they will be found ready when you return!

Review

As we come to our final few lessons on our chronological trip through the Bible, we need to take a minute and stop to remember from whence we came. If you recall the Seven C's of History, we used them as a framework to think about all of biblical history. We began by looking at the Creation of all things in a perfect state. That perfection was shattered by the Corruption that Adam's sin brought to the world. That sin led to God's judgment in the Catastrophe of the global Flood. In another act of judgment after the Flood, the Confusion of languages scattered the people around the globe. Each of these events recorded in Genesis 1–11 provides a historical framework that the rest of the Bible and the doctrines of our faith are built upon.

We then walked through the rest of the Old Testament and the continual pointing forward to the coming of the Son of David—the Messiah. In the opening of the New Testament, we came to the birth of Christ as the Savior of the world who took on flesh. He lived a life of perfect obedience on our behalf and then died in the place of sinners on the Cross—only to rise from the dead on the third day.

While we could add many other C's to the Old Testament (Covenant, Commandments, etc.) and a few to the New Testament, there is one element of history that is yet to come. That element is the Consummation of all things at the end of the age.

? In what sense is it appropriate to think of the coming Consummation as a part of

“history”? *Knowing that the future has already been determined by God, what will happen in the future, as described in Scripture, is as good as done in God's mind. Also, it has been recorded for us in a historical document that contains these prophecies, as well as many others that have been fulfilled.*

In this lesson and the next we will be looking at the Consummation as it is described in Scripture. This lesson focuses on the Second Coming—the return of Jesus to the earth. The next lesson will look at the nature of the new heaven and new earth. The study of the things of the end times is called eschatology, from the Greek word for “last” or “final,” *eschatos*.

Since this is a topic that there is much disagreement about, you may choose to teach your church's particular position in this lesson. What follows are general descriptions of the basic orthodox views of eschatology.

But before we jump in, I need to give you a disclaimer: there are many different views of the end times, and faithful Christians disagree about how to interpret the passages we will look at today. This is especially true when it comes to the exact order of the timing and duration of the events. Since these things are described in the books of Daniel, Isaiah, Joel, Matthew, Thessalonians, Revelation, and other places, it is hard to connect all the dots in a consistent way. And that has been true throughout much of church history as different ways of understanding the text have been proposed. Every Christian believes that Jesus is coming back at the end of the age, but how that is going to play out is what is difficult to fully understand.





Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

We are going to look at three words that frame our understanding of the Consummation. As we talk about these words, we are going to briefly look at where each is found in Scripture and its use in discussing eschatology. Let's read these passages together and then talk about how they fit into our study of eschatology after we have briefly examined each one.

➤ Write on the board, "What can we know about the Consummation?"

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

The first word is *rapture*. Turn to 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18, and let's see what we learn. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

1 Thessalonians
4:15–18

- ? **What two groups of people are referred to in verse 15?** *Believers who are alive at the Second Coming and those believers who have already died ("asleep" is a euphemism for death as explained in verse 15).*
- ? **Who will descend from heaven?** *Jesus.*
- ? **What will accompany His return?** *A shout, the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God.*
- ? **What will happen to believers?** *They will rise to meet the Lord in the air.*
- ? **Who will rise first?** *The dead in Christ rise first. This must be a description of a physical resurrection since the spirits of those who have died in Christ are already present with the Lord.*
- ? **Who will follow them?** *Those in Christ who are still alive at His return will rise with them into the air to meet the Lord.*
- ? **How long will they remain with Him?** *Always.*
- ? **What is the purpose of this passage?** *Paul wants the believers to encourage one another with this truth. It is not a passage intended to communicate when these things will happen, as the following verses in chapter 5 make clear.*
- ? **Where is the word "rapture" in this passage?** *"Rapture" does not occur in this passage. However, the phrase "caught up" is translated in the Latin from the root raptus. So, we are using a Latin phrase used in church writings by various theologians. This is akin to using the word "Trinity" which is a Latin word to describe a biblical concept.*
- ? **What do we mean when we talk about the rapture?** *The rapture is the event at the return of Jesus where believers are caught up in the air to be with Him, and the dead in Christ are united with their resurrected bodies.*

Our next keyword is *tribulation*. Let's look at Matthew 24:15–31 where Jesus is answering the disciples' questions about the timing of His Second Coming. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Matthew 24:15–31

- ? **When will this tribulation happen?** *It is described as happening after the “abomination of desolation” is set up in the Temple.*
- ? **How is the tribulation described?** *A great tribulation that has never been seen on the earth.*
- ? **How long is the tribulation period in this passage?** *There is no specific time given in this passage.*
- ? **When does the Second Coming happen with respect to the tribulation?** *It happens after the tribulation.*
- ? **What imagery in this passage is similar to the rapture passage we read?** *The Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power (authority); angels appear; a trumpet sounds; the elect are gathered together.*

Revelation 20:1–10

Our next keyword is *millennium*. Let’s look at Revelation 20:1–10 to see what we can learn.

- ? **How many times does the word “millennium” appear in this passage?** *While millennium is never used, it is the word we use to refer to the 1,000 years referred to six times.*
- ? **What happens to Satan during the millennium?** *He is bound with a great chain.*
- ? **What is he prohibited from doing?** *He cannot deceive the nations.*
- ? **Who is reigning with Christ?** *The saints who had been martyred.*
- ? **How long do they reign?** *1,000 years.*
- ? **What happens at the end of the millennium?** *Satan is released, and there is a war.*
- ? **What happens to Satan at the end of this battle?** *He is cast into the lake of fire to be tormented forever.*

Discover the Truth

So, what was the point of talking about those three words? Well, when we talk about eschatology, there is typically a lot of jargon that we use. That jargon is framed around these three words and how they relate to the events of the end times. If you asked a Christian what they believed about the end times, they might tell you they are a dispensational premillennialist who believes in a pretribulation rapture. So, let’s break down the three major views that lie within orthodoxy. As we do that, we are going to be talking in broad generalizations, so remember that there are lots of nuances that could be explored and described. *Remember that you may choose to teach this section by emphasizing your church’s position.*

While some would divide it further, we can think of the views as framed by their understanding of the millennium with respect to the return of Christ. Premillennialists believe that Jesus will return before the millennium, and then He will set up a 1,000-year reign. Postmillennialists believe Jesus will return after a godly kingdom has been established on earth by the church. And amillennialists believe that the millennium

➤ Refer to the Eschatology Comparison Diagram as you discuss these views. These diagrams are also printed in the Student Guide.

is a symbolic period that stretches from the Resurrection (or the Day of Pentecost) until Christ returns. There are different forms of each of these views of the millennium that can be defined by the other terms we looked at.

The timing of the tribulation described in Matthew 24 (and other passages) is another defining factor that separates these views. Premillennialists generally believe that the tribulation happens near the end of the church age, just before Christ returns and sets up the millennium. Among premillennialists, some believe that the rapture of the church happens before the tribulation, and others believe it happens near the middle, part way through, or at the end of the tribulation (which most would say lasts three-and-a-half or seven years). The four major views are the pretribulation rapture, the midtribulation rapture, the prewrath rapture, and the posttribulation rapture. After the millennium, there is a resurrection of the dead unbelievers who will be judged. For premillennialists, the kingdom of God was inaugurated by Jesus when the church was established and will be consummated at His return.

Among postmillennialists, there is agreement that the rapture happens at the end of the age when all people are taken to judgment after the return of Christ. Within postmillennialism, some believe that the tribulation was mostly accomplished in the first century before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 (known as preterism). Others believe that the tribulation continues as unbelievers persecute Christians, even though society as a whole is becoming better and under the authority of Christ. For postmillennialists, the disciples are called to establish the kingdom of God through the preaching of the gospel and to change society toward godliness until Christ returns. According to postmillennialists, the church will usher in the millennium, and then Christ will return after a long time of peace and prosperity.

Within the amillennial camp, there is a group that believes the tribulation was primarily leading up to the destruction of the Temple (known as preterism) and those who believe the tribulation continues throughout the church age until the Second Coming of Christ and the rapture of all peoples, even as society becomes progressively more evil. For amillennialists, the kingdom of God is being established through the church until Christ returns, despite the worsening of society.

While these are clearly different views, we can consider each of these views to be within orthodox Christian belief, and we can worship God alongside one another. The reason for this is that each of these positions is attempting to build their understanding of the end times based on what Scripture teaches, not on what outside sources or influences would dictate. While we can wrestle through the text together and try our best

to decide which view is taught in the Bible, we are all ultimately trying to use exegesis, drawing ideas *out of* the text, rather than eisegesis, importing our own ideas *into* the text. That is what distinguishes this debate within the church from the debate over origins, since those who adopt evolutionary views are bringing ideas from outside of the Bible into their arguments.



Eschatological Certainty

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

While there are many areas of disagreement, there are areas where all Christians agree when it comes to eschatology. In your Student Guides you will find the Eschatological Certainty activity. Now, that is not an oxymoron since there are some things that all of the different positions can agree on, even if they disagree on the timing. Read through the verses included in the activity to identify those points of agreement, and we will discuss them in a few minutes.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Let's talk about the truths we can learn from these passages.

- ? What do we learn in Matthew 24:44, 25:13; Peter 3:10; and Revelation 22:20? *No one knows the time of Christ's return.*

- ? What do we learn in Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 John 3:2; and Revelation 1:7? *Jesus will return in bodily form just as He left at the Ascension.*
- ? What do we learn in Daniel 12:1–3 and Acts 24:15? *Both believers and unbelievers will experience bodily resurrection.*
- ? What do we learn in 2 Corinthians 5:9–10 and Revelation 21:1–4? *Believers will appear before Christ for judgment and be rewarded with eternal life, living with God for eternity in the new heavens and earth.*
- ? What do we learn in Revelation 20:14–15 and 21:8? *Unbelievers will face eternal punishment in the lake of fire.*

So, regardless of which view you hold, you can find agreement with other Christians that Christ will return in bodily form at a time we do not know (but should be ready for) to judge the living and the dead who will be resurrected in bodily form. Those who are “in Christ” will inherit eternal life, but unbelievers will be consigned to eternal torment in the lake of fire. The differences in the views are really a difference in timing, not substance.



READ THE WORD

Titus 2:11–14

Let's end our look at the Scriptures today by looking at the hope that this doctrine gives us. Turn to Titus 2:11–14. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **Who is the author of this epistle?** *Paul.*
- ? **Who is he writing to?** *Paul is writing to Titus who was left in Crete by Paul to order and establish the churches there.*
- ? **What brings salvation?** *The grace of God.*
- ? **When did this grace become evident?** *It came in the past since it “has appeared.”*
- ? **Who did this grace appear to?** *All men.*
- ? **What or who is this “grace” referring to?** *Paul intends this to be a reference to Jesus Christ.*
- ? **In this context, how should we understand the phrase “all men”?** *It is a reference to humanity in general, not to each individual person. Jesus came to declare God’s grace to mankind in general, but not every individual will hear or has heard this message.*
- ? **What did Christ teach us to do?** *He has taught us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.*
- ? **Who is the “us” referring to?** *In the context of talking to Titus, Paul refers to all believers in this passage. These are promises that are universal to all Christians.*
- ? **What are Christians to be looking forward to?** *The appearing of Jesus Christ.*
- ? **What event is Paul referring to?** *The Second Coming of Christ.*
- ? **How is the appearing of Christ described?** *It is a blessed hope and a glorious appearing.*
- ? **How is Jesus described?** *Jesus is our great God and Savior.*
- ? **What did Christ do for us?** *He gave Himself for us; a reference to His life, death, and Resurrection on our behalf.*
- ? **Why did He give Himself for us?** *To redeem us from lawless deeds and purify a special people for Himself.*
- ? **How should we respond to that redemption?** *We should be zealous for good works, living a life that is worthy of the calling as one of His people.*
- ? **What do we learn about the return of Christ in Philippians 3:20–4:1?** *He will return from heaven.*
- ? **What attitude does Paul describe as we wait for Christ’s return?** *We wait eagerly.*
- ? **Where are we to call home?** *Our citizenship is in heaven, not on earth.*
- ? **What do we learn about the resurrection of believers in this passage?** *We will be transformed to have a glorious body like Christ’s resurrected body.*
- ? **What does Paul call the believers to do in light of these truths (verse 4:1)?** *He calls them to stand fast in the Lord, knowing that He is returning to bring us to Himself.*

Philippians 3:20–4:1

Discover the Truth

As we think about what Paul has written, we can have hope that Jesus will return. In John 14:1–3 Jesus told His disciples that He was going away to prepare a place for them and that He would return for them. But when we use the word “hope” in this passage, we don’t mean it in the sense that we usually use it. The biblical concept of hope is one of a certain trust in God’s promises, not a vain wish that the rain will stop or our favorite team will win. Biblical hope is a certain hope because of who we are hoping in!

- ? What attribute of God allows us to have hope that Jesus will return?
Because God is faithful, we can hope in His promises.

We can hope in the return of Christ because we know the character of the one who has promised to return. Jesus does not lie.

God’s promises are sure. We hope in the return of Christ with certainty because He is faithful!



Applying God’s Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

While we may not understand all of the details of what is coming in the Consummation, there are some things we can be sure of. We may not know exactly when Christ will return, how the millennium will play out, or the sequence of events surrounding the tribulation and rapture, but we know He is coming again. We know with a certain hope that Jesus will return to bring about the consummation of all things, bringing resurrection and justice to all of mankind.

All of those who have put their faith in Jesus as Messiah will stand before God, clothed in His righteousness, and know that their names are written in the Book of Life. They will be rewarded with eternal life in the presence of God, inheriting the new heaven and the new earth. They will never have to fear or mourn the effects of the Curse, and every tear will be wiped from their eyes, and there will not even be the opportunity to sin. Our bodies will be conformed into a glorious form with no disease or pain, and we will use our entire beings to worship and serve God for eternity in His presence.

However, those whose names are not found written in the Book of Life face a horrible future at the Second Coming. After their bodily resurrection, they will stand before God in their sin having no excuse and no defense. They will be cast into the lake of fire, facing the eternal punishment of hell as God’s wrath for their sin is poured out upon them. For those outside of Christ, the Second Coming is a most dreaded and fear-filled event.

As we consider all of this, we cannot pretend that our eschatology does not influence the way we live. For those with a postmillennial view, working to spread the gospel and influence society toward godliness informs how they live each day. Those with a premillennial view who think society will continue to get worse may tend to ignore what is going on in society and not try to influence government. While we may tend to ignore eschatology, it truly is something we need to seek to understand so that we can live a life that is faithful to God's calling for us.

Knowing the faithful character of our God, we have great hope for the future. Knowing that there are many who have not yet bowed the knee to Christ, we have a great opportunity to serve God as His ambassadors and share the hope we have at the coming of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? **As you think about the Second Coming, what do you find the most encouraging about your future?** *Discuss various answers. While it is true that we will have all of our physical ailments healed and our emotional scars, as well, the ultimate desire we should be cultivating is to be in perfect fellowship with and worship of our God.*
- ? **How does the fact that we do not know the day or hour of Christ's return influence the way you live as a Christian?** *If we are honest, we might have to admit that we often fail to live in light of His return. However, it should stir up in us a zeal to serve and honor Him on the earth while time remains, pursuing holiness in our own lives and proclaiming the gospel to those who do not know Christ.*
- ? **If we can acknowledge that there are different ways to understand the end times within orthodox Christian beliefs, why can't we do the same when it comes to the origin of the universe and the descriptions in Genesis?** *When Christians disagree about eschatology, they do it as they try to interpret ideas from within the text of the Bible. When looking at origins and adopting old-earth views on how to understand Genesis, those ideas come from outside of Scripture. It is the difference between exegesis, drawing ideas out of the text, and eisegesis, adding ideas from outside into the text. If we allow ideas about the age of rocks or the naturalistic formation of the universe to drive our understanding of origins and interpreting the Bible, we are allowing man's ideas to be the authority in interpreting God's Word.*
- ? **When we talked about how the Jews of Jesus's day viewed the coming of the Messiah, we saw that they misunderstood what Scripture said about the Messiah and how and when He would come. They knew He was coming, but they misunderstood certain aspects from the Scriptures. How does this compare to our understanding of what will happen in the Consummation?** *Just as the Jews had the Scriptures describing the coming of the Messiah, we have the Scriptures describing the Second Coming. As we read the Old Testament, we can understand how some of them were looking for a political conqueror and missed the spiritual aspects of His work on earth. Likewise, we have the prophecies of the Second Coming, and there is still disagreement among Christians in how to interpret the passages.*





MEMORY VERSE

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for sending Christ so that our names may be written in the Book of Life.
- Praise God for His faithfulness to His promises.
- Ask God for wisdom in living in light of the Second Coming.