



# THE DIVINE DRAMA - Part 3: Salvation, Judgement and Eschatology

Presented by Paul Dunk, KW REDEEMER CHURCH, September 2019

## EXPLORING REVELATION<sup>1</sup>

**Author:** John

**Genre:** Apocalyptic literature GRK: to unveil (see what you could not otherwise see) Comedic in its style.

**Historical and Pastoral Setting:**

Address the 7 churches with the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**Purpose:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Central Message or Topics:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Revelation 1:1** “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John”

**The emphasis of revelation is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The debate of revelation is:** what is yet to happen, when will it happen, what will it look like,

**Revelation 2:18** – write the words of the Son of God. “Give God’s perspective on reality.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**It is primarily a profound, poetic, visionary proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jono Linebaugh, NT Survey “Exploring Revelation”, Weeks 1-8 lesson notes, truncated



**The first thing** that happens when we are confronted by the creator God: we're undone.

**The last thing** that God does is call us worthy in Christ - AMAZING GRACE!

**Revelation 5:6** "weep no more, behold the LION of the tribe of Judah." ..... yet what does he see?

---

---

---

---

**Revelation speaks to the "Babylon" of every society that makes its way by violence.**

---

---

**The Pax Romana – "we come and bring peace"**

---

---

---

---

We can be caught up in looking for the "culprit" in Revelation: trying to pin label of anti-Christ on a particular person or system or movement: but that misses the larger point that **this is the same battle** announced repeatedly throughout the NT.

---

---

---

---

**NT writers reveal a dualistic nature of Christ's kingdom: "already and not yet"**

**The Good News at the beating heart of the book of Revelation is that God has already won the war.**

Revelation 5:6 – the lamb was already slain at the cross

Revelation 12:10-11 – God has already won

## **THE UNFOLDING OF FUTURE EVENTS**

**Revelation 6 - the 7 Seals: John uses the patterns of 7's in Revelation**

---

---

---

---

## **THE RETURN OF CHRIST**

Eschatology: eschatos =- the last things | ology "the study of" | The study of the last things

Eschatological differences were formally articulated in the 19th century.

### **3 MOST COMMONLY HELD VIEWS ON THE RETURN OF CHRIST**

All Christians confess that Jesus Christ will "*come again to judge the living and the dead*", ushering in His everlasting Kingdom (Nicene Creed 325AD). We also all agree that this includes "*the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting*" (Apostles Creed 390AD) Where we differ is the question of when the millennium occurs: the thousand year reign of Christ before the new creation, revealed in Revelation 20.

**Postmillennialism:** In this view Christ returns **after** the millennium. Proponents of this view assert that the church works diligently to effectively Christianize the world. As a result of global missionary success, there is a 1000 year reign of Christ's kingdom here on earth and *then* Christ returns and there is final judgement. (*Great optimism Constantine & 19th*)

**Premillennialism:** In this view Christ returns **before** the millenium.

In this view, there is first a period of tribulation, decadence and sin in the world. After this period of tribulation, Christ returns and reigns for a literal 1000 years. After this millennial reign, *then* comes the final Judgement.

**Amillennialism:** In this view, the millennial reign referred to in Revelation 20 is not understood as literal, given that numbers in apocalyptic literature are often symbolic and non literal. In this view, the millennium is understood as a reference to Christ's Kingdom in the present age, spanning the time of His ascension to His second coming. In this view, Christ's Kingdom is understood as being in a state of "*already here but not yet fulfilled*" a time in which the church experiences both growth and decline, suffering and success.

The amillennial view attempts to address the tensions about Christ's Kingdom we find in NT testimony: namely, how both Jesus & the apostles spoke of Christ's Kingdom in two ways: (1) the Kingdom *is here* in the present age as there was an in breaking of the new creation through Christ and (2) The fulfillment of the new creation that *will not be realized* until Christ's return. Throughout Mark you repeatedly find this "**already & not yet**" language concerning Christ's Kingdom.

## **THE JUDGEMENT OF GOD, THE GRACE OF GOD & THEIR DIVINE CONSTANCY**

**Judgement Day (Revelation 4,6,20) is both a day of deliverance and a day of destruction.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

Revelation 2:11 – he who overcomes will not be hurt in the second death.

**Christians are being hurt by the first death - but not the second.**

- o This is consistent with Paul, Peter and John – in Christ, we have already died that death

---

---

---

---

*"You've already died the big death. The little death is no big deal."* – Luther

**The wrath of God is not contrary to the grace of God.** Wrath is a key element of

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (Rom 3:23) and (2) a crucial aspect that one must understand in order to grasp and marvel at both the necessity and the wonder of the cross.<sup>2</sup>

---

---

---

---

*"It is a strange thing that when men talk about the love of God, they show by every word that they utter that they have no conception at all of the depths of God's love. If you want to find for instance, true gratitude for the infinite grace of God, do not go to those who think God's love as something that costs nothing, but rather go to those who are in agony of soul have face the awful fact of guilt of sin, and then have come to know with a troubling wonder that the miracle of all miracles has been accomplished, and that the eternal Son has died in their stead."*<sup>3</sup> ~ J. Grescham Machen

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Michael Allen, Systematic Theology III, Lecture 14, 2013, Knox Theological Seminary

<sup>3</sup> J. Grescham Machen, Selected Shorter Writings, p.32

We must not speak of God as though He is “one part love and one part wrath”. When we speak of God’s wrath and judgement, we must remember that God’s love is *primary* to His character and His judgement came as a *secondary* and necessary response to sin, *because* of His love for His creation, and what sin has done to distort and destroy it.

The cross is the intersection of God’s judgement **on sin** and grace **for sin**.

---

---

---

---

## **CHRIST’S TEACHING ON HELL AND THE 3 MOST PROMINENT VIEWS CONCERNING IT**

The Scriptures clearly and unavoidably speak to the existence of hell in the teachings of Christ Himself. These texts are: Matthew 5,22 | 8:12 | 10:5-15 | 10:28 | 18:8-9 | 22:13 | 25:29-30 | 25:41,46

**Eternal Punishment:** In this view, Hell is (a) actual (b) severe (c) endless (d) penal (e) just (f) appointed by God  
Key texts in support of this view include Matthew 25:31-46

Specifically in Matthew 25:46, Jesus parallels eternal life with eternal punishment.

*“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

The proponents of this view argue that the burden of proof is on those other views to refute this clear parallel from Jesus.

**Annihilation:** In this view, Hell is (a) actual (b) severe (d) penal (e) just (f) appointed by God - but not endless. In this view, you are judged by God and die the 2nd death and while all in Christ are raised to life, perish in a final death. While this view seems both modern and prevalent, we have evidence of this view in the early church. Both Tertullian (155-220AD) and Augustine (354-430AD) made a point of opposing this perspective. The exegetical argument for this view is based on the claim that the NT speaks of “destruction” as opposed to everlasting conscious torment. Proponents of this view suggest that an eternal punishment would be unjust as it is disproportionate to the infraction of sin. In the 13th century, Aquinas argued against this view.<sup>4</sup>

“The magnitude of the punishment matches the magnitude of the sin ... now a sin that is against God is infinite. The higher the person against whom it is committed, the graver the sin - it is more criminal to strike the head of state than a private citizen - and God is of infinite greatness. Therefore, an infinite punishment is deserved for a sin committed against them.” - Aquinas<sup>5</sup>

**Universalism:** The universalist view, Hell is remedial, not eternal and in the end, we are all found fit for heaven. This modification means that the nature of hell is not penal, severe or divinely appointed. It cannot be scripturally defended.<sup>6</sup>

### **What difference does having an understanding of eternal judgement make?**

Regardless of whether one holds an annihilation view or an eternal punishment view of hell, the fact of the matter is that we were not created for either, but rather, were created for life with God in a world unbroken by the destructive power of sin. Jesus speaks more to the subject of hell and divine judgement more than anyone, showcasing our need for God’s grace and our dependence on Him for salvation.

Having a biblical understanding of judgement enables us to properly honour the biblical emphasis on grace, redemption, restoration and eventual glorification. Having an acute awareness of the seriousness of the human condition enables us to clearly understand the gravity and significance of Christ’s cross. We do not celebrate cheap grace: *cross matters*.

---

<sup>4</sup> Excursus: The Objection of Thomas Aquinas to Annihilationism, ST 1a.2ae.85-1 , 2, 4

<sup>5</sup> Excursus: The Objection of Thomas Aquinas to Annihilationism, ST 1a.2ae.85-1 , 2, 4

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Michael Allen, Systematic Theology III, Lecture 14, 2013, Knox Theological Seminary, 3 historic views on hell, summarized

**The New Heavens and the New Earth**

**Revelation 21:22,24-26** – in stark contrast to Rome, there is no war. All of creation is participating in worship. The future ends up looking like the present: of worship to God.

**Revelation 21:4** – He will wipe away every tear from their eyes: death shall be no more. No suffering.

**Revelation 21:5-7** – Behold I am making all things new. It is done. The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Rev 22:** Starts in a garden and ends in a garden.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---