



# Understanding the Times:

*New Heaven and New Earth*

# Lesson Plan

**Second Coming**

**Heaven**

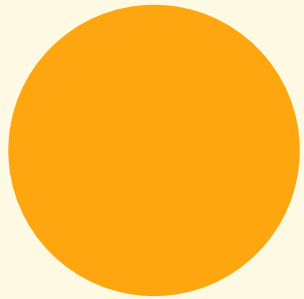
**Final Battles**

**New Heavens and Earth**

**Questions and Answers**

**In Light of Heaven**

# The Second Coming





# The Second Coming of Jesus

- The Second Coming of Jesus Christ stands as one of the most significant events in Christian eschatology, representing the culmination of God's redemptive plan for humanity.

No matter what their differences on the details, all Christians who take the Bible as their final authority agree that the final and ultimate result of Christ's return will be the judgment of unbelievers and the final reward of believers, and that believers will live with Christ in a new heaven and a new earth for all eternity. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will reign and will be worshiped in a never-ending kingdom with no more sin or sorrow or suffering

Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology, p. 1094





## The Second Coming of Jesus

Christ taught that His return would be a literal, physical event; He would return in just the same way as the disciples had seen Him depart (Acts 1:11). He also taught that His return would be a comfort to His followers because He would be returning to take them to be with Him in His Father's home (John 14:1–3). The time of His return, however, would be unknown, therefore people should be prepared for His coming (Matt. 24:36, 42; 25:1–13). During His absence, His people should be faithful stewards (Matt. 24:45–51), faithfully serving Him to receive His commendation and rewards upon His return (Matt. 25:14–30).

Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 375–376.





## Key Passages

- **Acts 1:11** - “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (ESV)
- **John 14:1–3** - “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (ESV)
- **Matt. 24:36, 42** - <sup>36</sup> “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ... <sup>42</sup> Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. (ESV)





## Key Passages

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18** - <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words. (ESV)
- **Revelation 22:20** - He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (ESV)





# Aspects of Christ's Return

- **His Coming in Glory**
  - The Second Coming will be a visible, glorious manifestation of Christ's divine majesty and authority, witnessed by all humanity.
  - It signifies the fulfillment of prophecies and the vindication of Christ's redemptive work.
- **Judgment:**
  - Christ will execute judgment upon the living and the dead, separating the righteous from the unrighteous.
  - Judgment will be just and final, holding every individual accountable for their deeds and faith.
- **Triumph:**
  - The Second Coming culminates in the ultimate triumph of Christ over sin, death, and Satan, ushering in the eternal reign of God's Kingdom.
  - Believers eagerly anticipate this glorious event, knowing that it signifies the consummation of their salvation and the restoration of all things.







## **The Imminency of His Return**

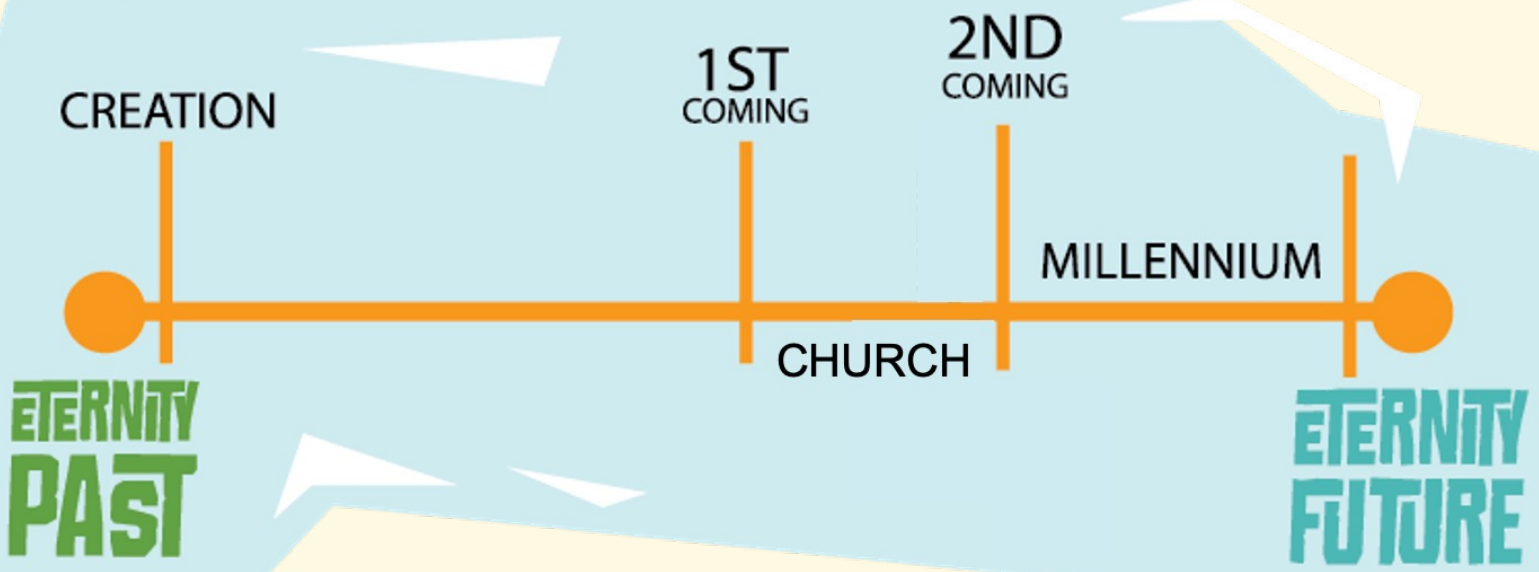
“The prophets were little interested in chronology, and the future was always viewed as imminent ... the Old Testament prophets blended the near and the distant perspectives so as to form a single canvas. Biblical prophecy is not primarily three-dimensional but two; it has height and breadth but is little concerned about depth, i.e., the chronology of future events ... the distant is viewed through the transparency of the immediate. It is true that the early church lived in expectancy of the return of the Lord, and it is the nature of biblical prophecy to make it possible for every generation to live in expectancy of the end.”

George Eldon Ladd, A Commentary on Revelation, p. 22

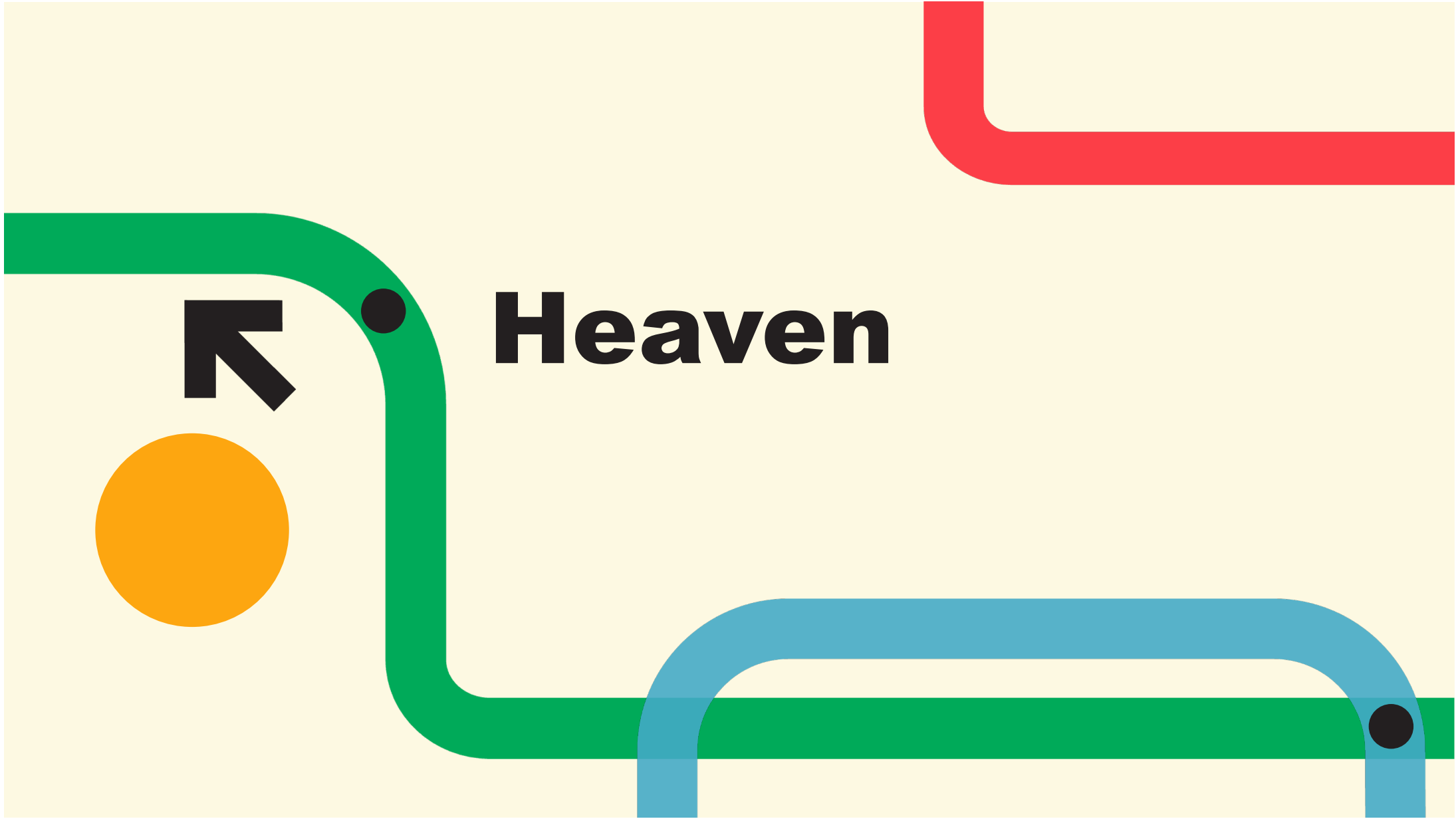




# KEY EVENTS



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**Heaven**



## Heaven

- The word heaven is used in three ways in the Bible.
  - Atmospheric Heaven.
    - Heaven may be used to describe the space surrounding the earth.
    - It is from the atmospheric heaven that the earth receives dew (Deut. 33:13), frost (Job 38:29), rain and snow (**Isa. 55:10**), wind (Job 26:13), and thunder (1 Sam. 2:10). The clouds are in the atmospheric heaven (Ps. 147:8), and the birds fly in it (Gen. 1:20).
    - Since the necessities for life on earth—dew, rain, snow, wind—come from “heaven,” it is a reminder that they are the gracious gift of God (cf. **Matt. 5:45**).





## Heaven

- The word heaven is used in three ways in the Bible.
  - Celestial Heaven.
    - Heaven is also used to describe the celestial realm—the realm of sun, moon, stars, and planets.
    - God created the universe (**Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6**), placing these lights in the heaven (Gen. 1:14).





# Heaven

- The word heaven is used in three ways in the Bible.
  - Dwelling Place of God.
    - This is probably what Paul referred to as the “third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:2).
    - John (Rev. 4:1ff.) was taken up to God’s heaven.
    - Heaven is a specific place where God dwells, as salutation of Jesus’ model prayer indicates (“Our Father who art in heaven” Matt. 6:9).
    - It is in heaven that God sits enthroned (Ps. 2:4; Isa. 66:1); from heaven God renders judgment (Gen. 19:24; Josh. 10:11); but God’s blessings also come from heaven (Exod. 16:4).
    - From heaven God looks down upon His people (Deut. 26:15); from heaven He hears their prayer (Ps. 20:6); He comes down from heaven (Ps. 144:5). It is also in heaven that God’s sovereign plan is established (Ps. 119:89).



## Heaven

- Dwelling Place of God.
  - The Bible speaks about the occupants of heaven.
    - In the Old Testament the believer looked forward to the future reign of Messiah. For the Jews there were but two ages, the present age and the “age to come”—which was Messiah’s reign on earth. The prophets had much to say about Messiah’s future reign (cf. Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1–16; 25:1–27:13).
    - A commonly occurring phrase in the Old Testament, “and he was gathered to his people” (cf. Gen. 25:8) suggests immortality.
    - In this present church age, believers immediately go to God’s presence in heaven upon death (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 4:14)

Adapted from Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* pp. 372–373.





## Reward in Heaven

“There will be different degrees of blessedness and reward in heaven. All will be blessed up to the limit of what they can receive, but capacities will vary just as they do in this world. As for rewards (an area in which present irresponsibility can bring permanent future loss: 1 Cor. 3:10–15), two points must be grasped. The first is that when God rewards our works he is crowning his own gifts, for it was only by grace that those works were done. The second is that essence of the reward in each case will be more of what the Christian desires most, namely, a deepening of his or her love-relationship with the Savior, which is the reality to which all the biblical imagery of honorific crowns and robes and feasts is pointing. The reward is parallel to the reward of courtship, which is the enriching of the love-relationship itself through marriage.”

J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology* p. 266



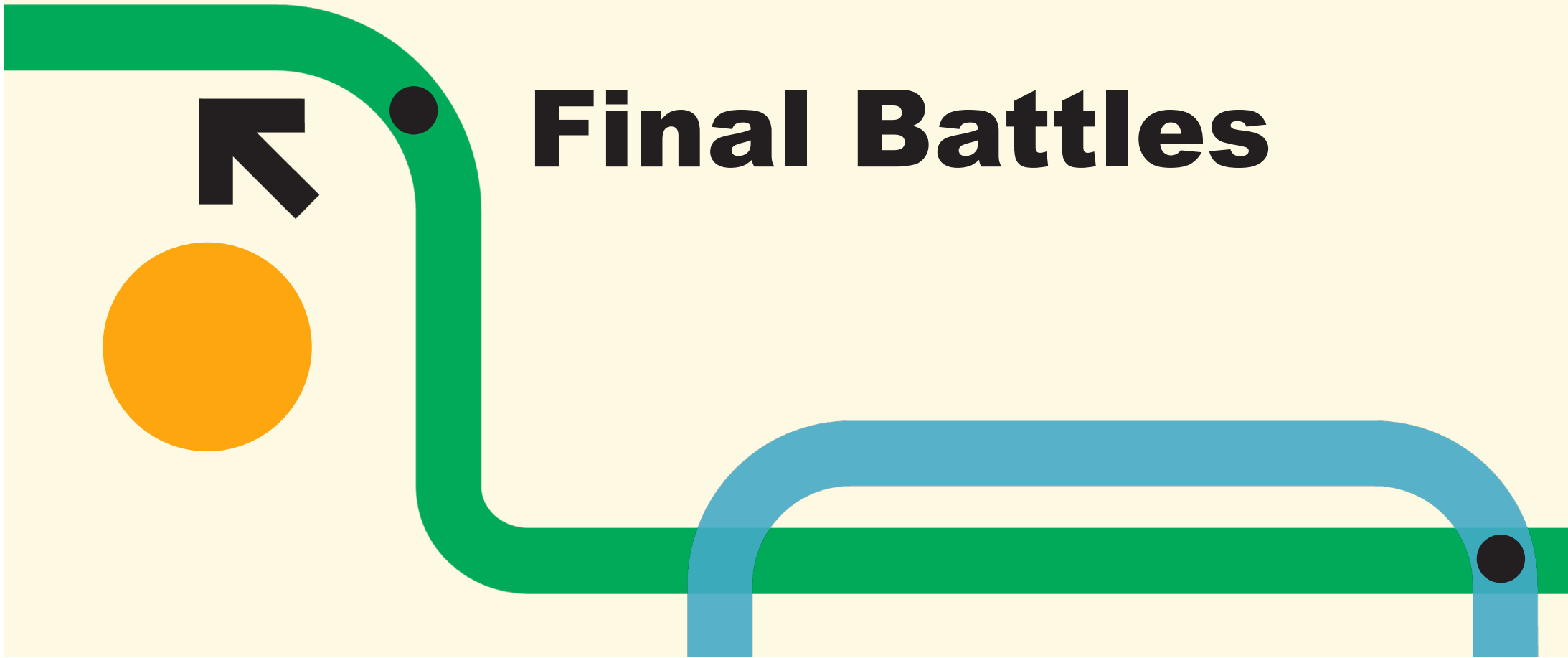
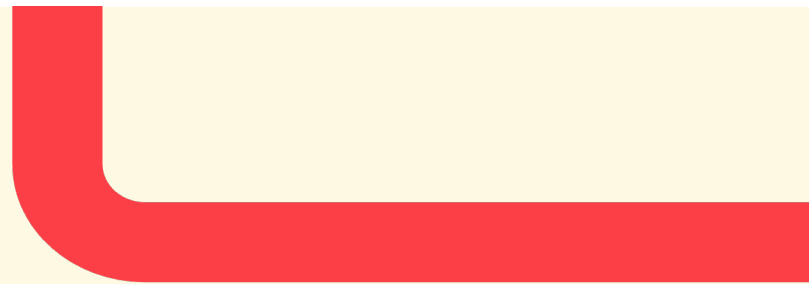
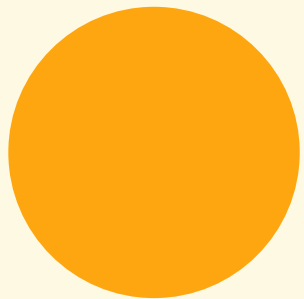


## Key Passages

- “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **Matt 6:19-21** (ESV)
- And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made five minas.’ And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’ **Luke 19:17-19** (ESV)
- According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 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 **1 Cor. 3:10-15** (ESV)



# Final Battles





# Armageddon

- The term “Armageddon” appears only once - Rev 16:16
- Armageddon’s Role in Revelation
  - Armageddon comes in reference to God’s wrath in Rev 16 and as part of the overall judgment motif throughout Revelation (7 seals of Rev 6, 7 trumpets of Rev 8–9).
  - The outpouring of God’s wrath is separated into seven distinct events initiated by angels who pour out their respective bowls of wrath (Rev 15:7–16:1).
  - The sixth outpouring dries up the Euphrates River (Rev 16:12)
  - The dragon, beast, and false prophet send demonic spirits to gather the kings of the world for battle on the “great day of God the Almighty” (Rev 16:14).





## Armageddon

- **Rev 16:12-16** - <sup>12</sup> The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. <sup>13</sup> And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. <sup>14</sup> For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. <sup>15</sup> (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) <sup>16</sup> And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (ESV)



# FINAL KEY EVENTS

- Battle of Armageddon/defeat of the nations
- Beast and false prophet thrown into lake of fire
- Earth renovated/God's people ruling with him

- Satan released for last battle
- Satan thrown into lake of fire
- Great White Throne judgment
- New heavens/new earth
- New Jerusalem

CHURCH AGE

MILLENNIAL  
KINGDOM

ETERNAL STATE

TRIBULATION

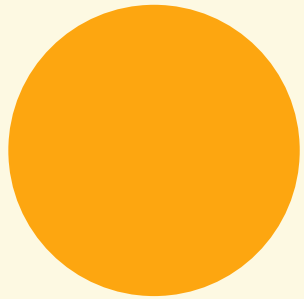
**Premillennial Approach**



## Final Battle

- At the end of the millennium, Satan will be released, and one final battle will occur, which will rapidly be won by Christ (Revelation 20:7–9).
- Satan is then permanently consigned to the lake of fire.
- At this point the second resurrection will occur, and another judgment.
- Unbelievers will be resurrected and judged at what is referred to as the great white throne judgment; based on their works, they will be assigned to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15).

# New Heaven & Earth







## **New Heaven & Earth**

- The new heavens and new earth is the culmination of the biblical story
- Christ accomplishes God's original purposes for creation, reverses Adam's curse, culminates his fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, and, ultimately, provides his people a place to dwell with God for eternity.
- The Bible describes the new creation as both physical (material, corporeal, concrete) and spiritual (experiencing the presence of God, spiritual).



## **New Heaven & Earth**

After the final judgment, believers will enter into the full enjoyment of life in the presence of God forever. Jesus will say to us, “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34). We will enter a kingdom where “there shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him” (Rev. 22:3).

When referring to this place, Christians often talk about living with God “in heaven” forever. But in fact the biblical teaching is richer than that: it tells us that there will be new heavens and a new earth—an entirely renewed creation—and we will live with God there.

Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* p. 1158



## **New Heaven & Earth**

- The author of Hebrews tells us of the heavens and earth, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; They will perish, but you remain; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle you will roll them up, and they will be changed” (Heb. 1:10–12).
- God has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven,” a shaking so severe as to involve “the removal of what is shaken ... in order that what cannot be shaken may remain” (Heb. 12:26–27).
- Peter says, “The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and all the works that are upon it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).
- In Revelation, where John says, “From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them” (Rev. 20:11). Moreover, John says, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more” (Rev. 21:1).



## New Heaven & Earth

- Does God destroy completely and replace the heavens and earth or are they just changed and renewed?
  - Some emphasise the fact that it will be an entirely new creation
  - Others focus on verses that say that this present creation will be renewed.

“Would God entirely annihilate his original creation, thereby scrapping the creation that was originally “very good” (Gen. 1:31). The passages above that speak of shaking and removing the earth and of the first earth passing away may simply refer to its existence in its present form, not its very existence itself, and even 2 Peter 3:10, which speaks of the elements dissolving and the earth and the works on it being burned up, may not be speaking of the earth as a planet but rather the surface things on the earth (that is, much of the ground and the things on the ground).”

Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology p. 1160

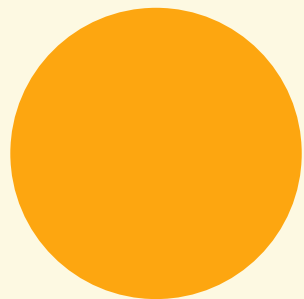


## **New Heaven & Earth**

The historic Christian position is that the new creation is a renewal of the old creation, in which Christ's work and particularly his death and resurrection remove the effects and source of sin and thereby bring restoration not only to human beings but to all that God has made. This accords with the biblical data, including an affirmation of creation's goodness (Gen 1:3, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) and God's care for it, the scope of redemption encompassing all that was affected by the fall, the prophetic hope that it is the current created order that will be restored in the new creation (e.g. Isa 65:17ff.), the continuity our resurrected bodies will have with our current fallen bodies (1Cor 15), and creation's own longing for restoration and liberation from the curse of sin (cf. e.g. Rom 8:22–23).

Matt Emerson "The New Heaven and New Earth"

# Marriage of the Lamb





## Revelation 19:1-10

- <sup>1</sup> After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, <sup>2</sup>for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”
- <sup>3</sup> Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”
- <sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” <sup>5</sup> And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.” <sup>6</sup> Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. <sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” -
- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”
- <sup>10</sup> Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.”
- For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.



## **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

- The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is the symbolic depiction of the union between Christ (the Lamb) and His bride (the Church).
- This is the culmination of the divine relationship between Christ and believers.
- The participants of the Marriage Supper are believers who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- The invitation is to all who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:9-10)
- The focus is on the joy, celebration, and eternal fellowship that will be experienced





## **The Marriage of the Lamb in Revelation**

“Revelation contains wedding imagery in which Christ, the Lamb, is the bridegroom and the Church is the bride. “The Lamb” is a major Christological title in Revelation, as John portrays Christ as a victorious Lamb who conquers through self-sacrifice. Christ is the slain Lamb (Rev 5:6, 9, 12; 13:8) whose shed blood (Rev 5:9; 7:14; 12:11) triumphs over death and the devil (Osborne, Revelation, 35–36).

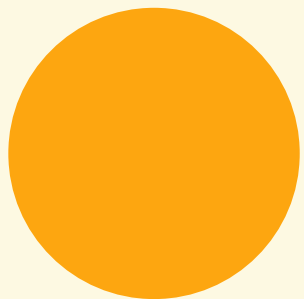
Revelation depicts Christ and His Church as being betrothed at His ascension, with the marriage ceremony culminating at His Parousia. The metaphor of marriage creates a compelling portrait of the intimate, intensely loving, personal relationship that Christ has with His Church.”

Michael Kuykendall, “Marriage of the Lamb,” The Lexham Bible Dictionary

The background features a light cream color with abstract, thick, rounded lines in red and orange. On the left, a vertical orange line descends from the top, with two horizontal red lines crossing it from the left. On the right, a vertical red line descends from the top, with a horizontal red line crossing it from the left. A solid green circle is positioned in the lower right area. Two small black dots are placed at the intersections of the horizontal red lines with the vertical orange line.

# Questions & Discussion

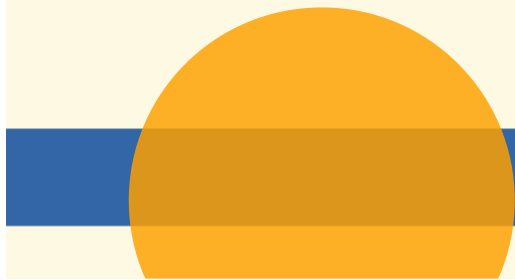
# In Light of Heaven



# When I Get To Heaven

When I get to heaven, I shall see three wonders there. The first wonder will be to see many there whom I did not expect to see; the second wonder will be to miss many people who I did expect to see; the third and greatest of all will be to find myself there.

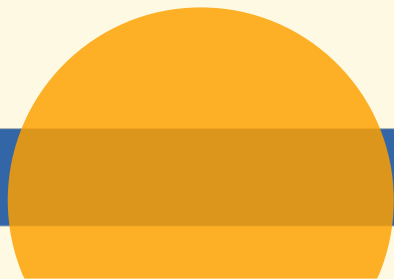
*John Newton*



# Understanding Heaven

Life on Earth matters not because it's the only life we have, but precisely because it isn't—it's the beginning of a life that will continue without end. It's the precursor of life on the New Earth. Eternal life doesn't begin when we die—it has already begun. Life is not, as Macbeth supposed, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Informed by the doctrines of creation, redemption, resurrection, and the New Earth, our present lives take on greater importance, infusing us with purpose. Understanding Heaven doesn't just tell us what to do, but why. What God tells us about our future lives enables us to interpret our past and serve him in our present.

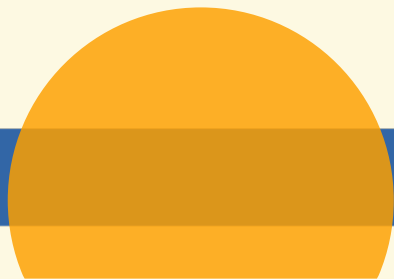
Randy Alcorn, Heaven



# Chapter One

And as He spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read; which goes on forever; in which every chapter is better than the one before.

C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, p. 228



# In Light of Heaven

Do I daily reflect on my own mortality?

Do I daily realize there are only two destinations—Heaven or Hell—and that I and every person I know will go to one or the other?

Do I daily remind myself that this world is not my home and that everything in it will burn, leaving behind only what's eternal?

Do I daily recognize that my choices and actions have a direct influence on the world to come?

Do I daily realize that my life is being examined by God, the Audience of One, and that the only appraisal of my life that will ultimately matter is his?

Do I daily reflect on the fact that my ultimate home will be the New Earth, where I will see God and serve him as a resurrected being in a resurrected human society, where I will overflow with joy and delight in drawing nearer to God by studying him and his creation, and where I will exercise, to God's glory, dominion over his creation?

Randy Alcorn, Heaven (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2011).



# Understanding the Times