



Old Testament Reading — Daniel 12:1-4
New Testament Reading – 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

The Glorious Return of Christ
“The Whole Counsel of the Word of God”

Acts 20:18-24

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In his farewell speech to the church at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul told the elders:

- He had lived among them and taught them the Holy Scriptures with humility. Historians believe Paul was in Ephesus for a little over two years.
- He had not held back any biblical teaching that would have been helpful to them. Historians believe Paul taught daily in a rented room in the school of Tyrannus, and then house-to-house at night, so that no one was neglected.
- He didn't know what would happen to him in Rome, but the Holy Spirit had warned him about being chained to a wall in a dark dungeon of a prison. That warning turned out to be accurate, but it didn't matter to Paul, for he had already died to himself.
- However, he was no longer accountable for the eternal salvation of those he had taught, **“for he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of the Word of God to them.”**

What did Paul mean by “the whole counsel of the Word of God?”

- The ESV translates that as **“the whole counsel of God.”**

- The NIV translates that as **“the whole will of God.”**
- The NASB translate that as **“the whole purpose of God.”**
- Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, for he knew it was the power of God unto salvation to all who believed it.
- Paul was not ashamed to proclaim the whole truth of the gospel:
- That all men were dead in their trespasses and sins and deserving of God’s wrath. (Ephesians 2:1-3)
- That no one can be saved by their works of righteousness.
- That all men must repent of their sin of unbelief, confess Jesus Christ as their Savior, and surrender their lives unto His Lordship. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Church historians codified **“the whole counsel of the Word of God”** in the term **“systematic theology,”** i.e., what the whole Bible has to say about a given topic.

- **Patrology** – the study of God the Father.
- **Christology** – the study of God the Son.
- **Pneumatology**– the study of God the Holy Spirit.
- **Bibliology** – the study of the Bible.
- **Hamartiology**– the study of sin.
- **Soteriology** – the study of salvation.
- **Ecclesiology** – the study of the church.
- **Demonology** – the study of demons.
- **Anthropology** – the study of humanity.
- **Teleology** – the study of God’s design and purpose in the world.
- **Eschatology** – the study of biblical prophecy relative to the Lord’s first and second coming to earth.
 - 27% of the Bible is written in prophetic language.
 - 1,817 prophecies are recorded in the scriptures, with half of them having been fulfilled exactly as predicted.
 - The five world kingdoms – Daniel 7:2-6.
 - Jesus’s first coming – Deuteronomy 18:15-19, Numbers 24:17, Daniel 9:25-26, and Micah 5:2.
 - Jesus as THE Savior – Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 53:4-6.
 - Israel’s exile to Babylon – 2 Kings 20:18.
 - The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem – Matthew 24:1-2.
 - Based on the fulfillment of those prophecies, we can believe God will be faithful to fulfill the remaining biblical prophecies as well.
- **The restoration of Israel** – Jeremiah 31:31–37, Romans 11:26–27.

- **The Rapture of the Church** – 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
- **The tribulation** – Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15–22.
- **The second coming of Christ** – Zechariah 14:3–4, Matthew 24:44, Acts 1:10–11, Revelation 1:7.
- **The millennial reign of Christ** – Psalm 72:7–11, Zechariah 2:10–11, Revelation 20:4.
- **The new heavens and new earth** – Isaiah 65:17.
- Some prophecies have a double fulfillment – one nearer to when the prophecy was spoken, and one further in the future.
 - Isaiah 7:14 – the birth of a child was a sign to King Ahaz, but it was also a prophetic sign of the birth of Jesus. Matthew 1:22-23
 - Isaiah 9:1-9 – the “**light**” that dawned upon the people who walked in darkness was Jesus’ first coming to people of Galilee.
 - Isaiah 9:6 – the “**Son**” that was born refers to the birth of Jesus Christ.
 - Isaiah 9:7 – the “**government**” refers to His position as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords of His Kingdom, which is yet to come.
 - Isaiah 61:1-2 – the description of Jesus as a preacher/pastor was fulfilled in the Lord’s first coming, but the “**day of vengeance**” will occur when He returns.

The Chronology of the Events of the last days of this age:

- **The Rapture of the Church** – 1 Thessalonians 1-4 – when Jesus returns FOR His Bride.
 - Christians who have died will be raised from their graves, gathered together with those Christians who are alive in that day, and in the “**twinkling of an eye**” their bodies will be transformed into the likeness of the resurrected Christ, meet the Lord in the air, and then be taken to the Father’s house for the wedding ceremony.
 - The words “**caught up**” were translated from the Greek word “**harpazo**” which means to “**carry off**” or to “**snatch up**” or to “**fetch away**.” The Latin translation of “**harpazo**” is “**raptus**,” which was then translated into “**rapture**.”
- **The Rise of the Antichrist** – 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 – with the church removed, and with the Holy Spirit no longer restraining evil, a “**false Christ**” will arise, who will be satanically enabled to become the leader of the world during the time of Tribulation. He will make a peace treaty with Israel, but break it a few years later. The Antichrist will be destroyed as Jesus Christ returns.
- **The Tribulation** – Revelation 6 – 16 – a period of seven years in which God’s judgment is poured out on sinful humanity. Jesus described the last 3.5 years as “**The Great Tribulation**,” with death and destruction as the world has never seen before.
- **The Judgement Seat of Christ** – 2 Corinthians 5:10 – while the unbelievers are on earth enduring God’s wrath, believers are in heaven standing before the Lord, and

giving account of our days on this earth. This is where our works will be tested by fire, and if our work endures the test, there will be a reward. If our work is burned up, we will lose our reward, but still live in heaven.

- **The Battle of Gog-Magog** – Ezekiel 38-39 – a great army from the North will lead several nations to join them in coming against Israel. But not only will these armies be demolished, even the nations from which these armies came will also be attacked.
- **The Abomination of Desolation** – Daniel 12:11, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14 – midway through the Tribulation, the Antichrist will break covenant with Israel, enter and desecrate the new temple, declare himself to be God, and demand to be worshipped as God. This will launch a severe persecution of Christians and Jews.
- **The Battle of Armageddon** – Revelation 19:11-12 – under the banner of the Antichrist, the armies of the world will come against Jerusalem at the end of the Tribulation. However, Jesus will return in all of His glory, defeat the armies of the world with the sword of His mouth, and cast the Antichrist and False Prophet into the lake of fire.
- **The Judgment of the Nations** – Matthew 25:31-46 – Jesus will judge the survivors of the Tribulation. He will separate those who are saved (sheep) from those who aren't (goats), and while the wicked will be cast into hell, the righteous, along with the Old Testament Saints will be the honored guests at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
- **The Binding of Satan** – Revelation 20:1-3 – Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years.
- **The Millennial Kingdom** – Revelation 20:1-7 – This will be a thousand-year period of peace and prosperity such as the Garden of Eden was before Adam and Eve sinned. Satan's influence will be restricted, the curse of sin will be lifted, and the whole earth will be productive. Jesus will rule the world, and people from all over the world will come to hear the Word of God from the lips of our loving Lord. Though believing mortals enter the millennial kingdom as humans, when they die, their bodies will be transformed into spiritual beings, as we will be, and so will those who are born during the Tribulation. The righteous remain in the King of God and in the New Heaven and the New Earth.
- **The Last Battle** – Revelation 20:7-10 – Everyone who enters the millennial kingdom will be holy. However, those humans who survived the Tribulation, and entered the kingdom as humans, will bear many children who must repent of their sin nature. At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released to entice those millennial children into his rebellion against God. However, that final rebellion will be quickly defeated. Satan, and those who followed him will be cast "alive" into the Lake of Fire, along with the Antichrist and the False Prophet, never to be heard of again.
- **The Great White Throne Judgement** – Revelation 20:11-15 – this is where all the unrighteous dead are raised and judged according to their works, and no one will be found worthy to enter into heaven because of their works. However, the Book of Life will also be opened, and not seeing their names written down, they will also be cast into the lake of fire.
- **The New Creation** – Revelation 21-22 – This heaven and this earth will pass away, but as it passes, the New Jerusalem arrives. It is a massive CUBE, 1500 miles wide, 1500 miles long, and 1500 miles high. The city is accessible through twelve gates, three on each side, and each gated is fashioned out of a single pearl. There will be

no need for the sun or the moon, for the glory of the Lord is the light that beams through this transparent city. There will be no temple there, for since that veil was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross, He made it possible for us to have communion with God Himself; even to see Him face to face, and we will live in that beautiful city forever, and ever, world with out end.

The Apostle Paul wrote his letters to the church at Thessalonica **so they would not be ignorant of eschatological things**. However, a recent survey of adults who claimed to be born-again Christians revealed this alarming report:

- Less than half (48%) of those adults who claim to be born-again Christians believe Jesus will return as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.
 - 38% said Jesus will definitely not return.
 - 28% said He will probably not return.
 - Only 27% said Jesus will return.
 - Only 20% said they expected Him to return in their lifetime.
- If a pastor fails to proclaim the truth about God, even Christians tend to **lose their fear of Him**.
 - If a pastor fails to preach on the Person of the Holy Spirit, even Christians **lose their joy of knowing Him**.
 - But if a pastor fails to proclaim the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, including His promise to return, even those who are saved **lose their hope in Him, and, in time, even their love for Him**. (Revelation 2)

On average, 98 churches in the United States close their doors each week. While there may be many surface reasons why a church would die, **I submit the main reason is that the pastors failed to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God, including eschatology**.

- In the 3rd chapter of 2nd Peter, the Apostle addressed those who had given up hope of the Lord's return.
- Peter assured them the Lord was not slow in keeping His promise to return, but rather He was revealing His grace: His desire to see everyone saved.
- Peter also assured them, the day of the Lord would come, the heavens and the earth, and everything in it will be burned up.
- Peter said, knowing these things will happen, Christians had better be holy and righteous people, eagerly and constantly looking for that new heaven and new earth that God has promised.

Verse 14 – **“Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless. Beware lest you fall from your steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”**