

## Understanding the Bible and the Future Introduction

### Definitions

- In the narrow sense eschatology refers to “the study of final things” in the Bible.
- In the broader, and more biblical, sense, eschatology “concerns what Scripture teaches about God’s purposes in Christ for history. As such, eschatology does include a study of the consummation of God’s purposes at the end of history, but it also includes a study of the stages in the unfolding of those purposes.” (Kevin Mathison)

Why should we bother with the study of eschatology? (Cf. MacPhail, Storms, Riddlebarger, Clark)

1. It is in the Bible.
2. There is profit for our spiritual lives in its study. (cf. 2 Timothy 3:15)
3. Our conclusions regarding eschatology affect our interpretation of other texts.
4. Eschatology is about more than the end of time. It is about the way we interpret Scripture, the nature of Christ’s first coming, the nature of God’s kingdom, the identity of God’s people and how we should be living.
5. We cannot trace redemptive-history in Scripture if we do not know where it is going.
6. We are all exposed to a plethora of unbiblical teaching on the end times.
7. To quench our anxiety and increase our hope.
8. To clear up the end times madness that characterizes Western Christianity.

### Conclusion

“Though it might be exciting to think that God is doing something spectacular in our times, one fears that our lust for excitement is no better than the cry of those Israelites who said, “Give us Bar-Abbas.” It may well be that the end-times madness we have witnessed, first in the late 1970’s, again during the Gulf War and again in recent years, is really a search for certainty. Just as earlier generations turned away from the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, in favor of revivals, our age seems bent on finding confirmation of the faith in the delusion that we are witnesses to the end of history. The fact is that Christians have often thought the same thing, and they have been wrong.” – R. Scott Clark

### *Errors and Retractions:*

- Moody Bible Institute was founded in the late 1800's
- Blood moons are a regular occurrence, though not as frequently as mentioned in the class. See the following for details – <http://www.space.com/15689-lunar-eclipses.html>
- The comments regarding Soutland are not intended to debase or insult another church, but are intended to identify their end-times teaching as being in error.