



*THEN* *the*  
**END**  
*will come*

WEEK 5: Preserved from wrath



# 5 Truths that will shape your eschatology

As I'm sure you're aware, eschatology (the doctrine of the end times) is one of those doctrines where godly people disagree. Many of these people have spent years studying the Scripture and searching out the best possible interpretation. They have attended schools of academia. They have studied the original languages. They have read from the brightest minds in history. And yet, these men whom we respect, have been unable to find common ground on this subject.

**So why study eschatology?** Why waste our time looking at a doctrine at which the experts can't agree? Well, the simple answer is found in **2 Peter 1:3**. Peter writes, *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to **life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.**"* In this verse Peter says that we have access to everything we need to live the Christian life the way that God expects. It happens when we access "divine power" – the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who strengthens us for the Christian walk. And it happens as we pursue the "**knowledge of God**" that is found in the **Bible** – the **knowledge of God** from **Genesis** to **Revelation**.

**So why study eschatology?** We study it because it's in the Bible. We study it because we believe it will lead to greater knowledge of God. We study it because we know that in some way it will help us to live the life that God commanded us to live. And we study it because we want to grow in our worship of God.

Our approach will be a little different from other studies we have done. Rather than looking at the individual pieces of this puzzle and trying to arrange them into a cohesive picture, we're going to zoom out to the broader themes of Scripture that will help us understand the doctrine as a whole. Rather than trying to create a detailed timeline of events that lead to a final conclusion, our study will seek to provide a roadmap that so we can sort out the details for ourselves. We're going to focus on the broader truths upon which most theologians agree, and then allow those truths to shape our personal perspective of this doctrine.

We'll take those truths one at a time, and then perhaps take a closer look at how these truths relate to the COVENANTS (i.e. promises) God made to his people throughout the Old Testament. **Here's a list of the 5 truths that we'll cover in the next several weeks.**

1. God's word is clear (perspicuity) and is meant to be interpreted literally.
2. Israel and the church are one in Christ, yet distinct.
3. God will fulfill his unconditional covenants to Israel.
4. The "day of the Lord" is a time of physical judgment of the wicked on the earth.
5. Those who are "in Christ" through faith will not experience God's wrath because Christ already endured it on the cross.

# Preserved from wrath

*“for God has not destined us to wrath...”*

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Several weeks ago hurricane Ian tore through Florida. It was a Category 4 hurricane with winds up to 150 miles per hour. The current death toll stands at more than 80 people and the destruction left behind will take years to rebuild. I’ve never been in a hurricane, but I understand there are preventative measures that can be taken to prepare yourself against the storm: windows are covered with plywood or boards, limbs close to homes are cut down, buildings are reinforced, in some cases metal braces are added, proper shingles are used, doors are reinforced, garage doors are barricaded, and floodproofing measures are employed. And when the storm comes, residents are encouraged to evacuate or find a secure place for shelter.

Scripture indicates that there is a “storm” brewing against the whole earth. It is a “storm” of God’s wrath that will be poured out on all the inhabitants of the world: man, beast, bird, fish, mountain, tree, river, and ocean. Against this “storm” there are no safety measures. Everyone who lives on the earth will face the violent fury of Almighty God; everyone that is, except for those who have already endured the wrath of God through Jesus Christ. Since Jesus already experienced the wrath of God on the cross, those who are “in Jesus” need not worry about this coming judgment. Just as Noah and his family enjoyed preservation from God’s wrath on the ark, and the Jews experienced preservation from God’s wrath through the plagues in Egypt, God’s people will enjoy preservation from God’s wrath during the “day of the Lord.”

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## The Pattern of Preservation

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1. **One of the interesting stories of God’s preservation comes in the early part of Genesis. God appeared to Abraham and told him that He was about to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The problem was that Abraham’s nephew, Lot, lived in Sodom with his family. This begins an interchange between Abraham and the LORD for the sake of the city of Sodom.**

**Genesis 18:22–32 (ESV)** - <sup>22</sup> So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Then Abraham drew near and said, **“Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”** <sup>24</sup> Suppose there are **fifty** righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the **fifty** righteous who are in it...<sup>26</sup> And the Lord said, **“If I find at Sodom **fifty** righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”** <sup>27</sup> Abraham answered and said, **“...<sup>28</sup> Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for **lack of five?**”** And he said, **“I will not destroy it if I find **forty-five** there.”** <sup>29</sup> Again he spoke to him and said, **“Suppose **forty** are found there.”** He answered, **“For the sake of **forty** I will not do it.”** <sup>30</sup> Then he said, **“Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose **thirty** are found there.”** He answered, **“I will not do it, if I find **thirty** there.”** <sup>31</sup> He said,

*“Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose **twenty** are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of **twenty** I will not destroy it.”<sup>32</sup> Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose **ten** are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of **ten** I will not destroy it.”*

**What do learn about God from this interchange?**

**What do we know about God’s power to “preserve” from the rest of the story?**

2. **At the beginning of the book of Exodus we find the children of Israel in captivity in Egypt. God will raise up Moses to lead the people out of captivity, but he will do it in a way that magnifies his “preserving” power. In order to show his power, God will bring a number of plagues on the nation (Exodus 3:20). Some of those plagues will affect both Egyptians and the Jews, but most of those plagues will be poured out on Egypt alone. Let’s look at a couple examples:**

***Exodus 8:20–22 (ESV)** - <sup>20</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.”<sup>21</sup> Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand.<sup>22</sup> But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.*

- a. **Describe the plague and its extent. [Note: this was judgment on the Egyptian god Uatchit].**

- b. **What does God do for the Jews living in Goshen and why?**

**Exodus 9:1–4 (ESV)** - <sup>1</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. <sup>2</sup> For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, <sup>3</sup> behold, the hand of the Lord will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. <sup>4</sup> But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die.” ’ ”

**c. Describe the plague. [Note: this was a judgment on the goddess Hathor and the god Apis, who were depicted as cattle]**

**d. What does God do for Israel and how should this plague have prevented the “golden calf” catastrophe at Mount Sinai?**

**Exodus 9:13 (ESV)** - <sup>13</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me...<sup>16</sup> But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

<sup>18</sup> Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. <sup>19</sup> Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.” ’ ” <sup>20</sup> Then whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, <sup>21</sup> but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the Lord left his slaves and his livestock in the field.

<sup>26</sup> Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.

**e. Describe this plague. What do you notice about God’s mercy to Egypt? [Note: This was judgment against the Egyptian god Nut, the goddess of the sky]**

**f. What does God do for Israel?**

*Exodus 10:21–23 (ESV) - <sup>21</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” <sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. <sup>23</sup> They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.*

**g. Describe this plague. [Note: This was judgment against the Egyptian god Ra, who was the sun god. This god was symbolized by Pharaoh himself]**

**h. What does God do for Israel?**

- 3. Several hundred years after the Exodus, God would establish his people in the Promised Land and set kings over them. Some of these kings were righteous, but many of these kings were wicked. One of those wicked kings was named King Ahab. He ruled over the northern 10 tribes of Israel after the kingdom was divided. During his reign, God raised up a prophet named Elijah who confronted Ahab and ushered in a three-year drought as judgment on the land. (1 Kings 17)**

Those familiar with the story will know that Israel had abandoned their worship of God and had traded it for worship of a foreign deity named Baal. That's why God had brought severe judgment on the land and chose to send Elijah to a widow living outside Israel in a place called Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8). Eventually Elijah would challenge the prophets of Baal to a showdown on Mount Carmel, and God would prove his power by sending fire on Elijah's offering.

One would think that this display of power would embolden Elijah all the more, but the next scene describes the prophet on the run (1 Kings 19:4). Elijah is discouraged, weary, and full of self-pity. He wants to die, but God shows up and confronts Elijah's poor theology.

**1 Kings 19:9–10 (ESV)** - <sup>9</sup> There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” <sup>10</sup> He said, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

<sup>13</sup> And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” <sup>14</sup> He said, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” <sup>15</sup> And the Lord said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

<sup>18</sup> **Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”**

a. What is Elijah’s complaint?

b. How did God demonstrate his “preserving” power (v. 18)?

4. Several hundred years after Elijah, the nation of Israel would be taken into captivity in Babylon. This was a result of God’s judgment on them for their continued rebellion and idolatry. God however, preserved his people and brought back about 50,000 Jews after 70 years of captivity. At the same time, thousands of Jews remained in Babylon because life was comfortable there.

IN about 473 B.C. the Jews living in Babylon and Persia would face the threat of annihilation at the hands of a man named Haman. The book of Esther records the story of God's "preserving" power in turning the tables on Haman and delivering his people from doom. We don't have the space to record the full events of that story, but let's observe the final results recorded in Esther 8:14-17 and 9:1-4.

**Esther 8:14–9:4 (ESV)** - <sup>14</sup> So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. <sup>15</sup> Then Mordecai went out from



Let's look at several passages that describe the wrath of God and how that wrath was poured out on Jesus.

1. *Isaiah 53:4-5, 10* - <sup>4</sup> Surely he has **borne** our **griefs** and **carried** our **sorrows**; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was **pierced** for our **transgressions**; he was **crushed** for our **iniquities**; upon him was the **chastisement** that brought us **peace**, and with his **wounds** we are **healed**...<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the **will of the Lord to crush him**; he has put him to grief...

**What did Jesus do for us and what did it bring?**

2. *Romans 5:6-9 (ESV)* - <sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time **Christ died** for the **ungodly**. <sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been **justified** by his **blood**, much more shall we be **saved** by him from the **wrath of God**.

**What did Jesus do for us and what did it bring?**

3. *John 3:17-18 (ESV)* - <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to **condemn** the world, but in order that the world might be **saved** through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever **believes** in him is **not condemned**, but whoever does **not believe** is **condemned** already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God... <sup>36</sup> Whoever **believes** in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the **wrath of God remains** on him.

**What does Jesus offer and what are the benefits?**

4. **Romans 2:4–10 (ESV)** - <sup>4</sup> Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and **patience**, not knowing that **God’s kindness** is meant to **lead** you to **repentance**? <sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are **storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath** when **God’s righteous judgment** will be revealed. <sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by **patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality**, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are **self-seeking** and do **not obey** the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be **wrath and fury**. <sup>9</sup> There will be **tribulation and distress** for **every human being who does evil**, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup> but **glory and honor and peace** for **everyone** who does **good**, the Jew first and also the Greek.

**What does God offer and how does it come (v. 4, 10)?**

**What happens to those who are “self-seeking” and “disobedient”?**

5. **Ephesians 2:1–5 (ESV)** - <sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind**. <sup>4</sup> **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved

**What did we deserve because of our willful disobedience?**

**What is offered to those who are in Christ?**

6. **Hebrews 10:24–31 (ESV)** - <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you **see the Day drawing near**. <sup>26</sup> For if we go on **sinning deliberately** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a **sacrifice for sins**, <sup>27</sup> but a **fearful expectation of judgment**, and a **fury of fire** that will **consume the adversaries**...<sup>29</sup> How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has **trampled** underfoot the **Son of God**, and has **profaned the blood** of the **covenant** by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the **Spirit of grace**? <sup>30</sup> For we know him who said, **“Vengeance is mine; I will repay.”** And again, **“The Lord will judge his people.”** <sup>31</sup> It is a **fearful thing** to fall into the **hands** of the **living God**.

To what “day” is the passage referring (v. 25) and how does it relate to “vengeance” (v. 30)?

What is the significance of there “no longer remaining a sacrifice for sin” (v. 26)?

What should the wicked expect on this day?

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## PRESERVATION of the SAINTS

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1. **1 Thessalonians 1:6–10 (ESV)** - <sup>6</sup> And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in **much affliction**, with the **joy of the Holy Spirit**, <sup>7</sup> so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup> For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. <sup>9</sup> For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, **Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come**.

How does Paul describe the current situation in Thessalonica (v. 6)?

What promise carried the church through their affliction (v. 10)?

2. **1 Thessalonians 2:13–16 (ESV)** - <sup>13</sup> And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you **received the word of God**, which you heard from us, you **accepted** it not as the word of men but as what it really is, **the word of God**, which is at work in you believers. <sup>14</sup> For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you **suffered** the same things from your own **countrymen** as they did from the Jews, <sup>15</sup> who **killed** both the **Lord Jesus** and the **prophets**, and drove us out, and **displease God** and **oppose all mankind** <sup>16</sup> by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to **fill up the measure** of their **sins**. But **wrath has come upon them at last!**

What do we learn about the situation in Thessalonica (v. 13-15)?

How is persecution different from the “wrath of God”?

What is happening to those who oppose God’s people and the gospel (v. 16)?

3. **At the end of 1 Thessalonians, Paul encourages the saints as they anticipate the coming of Christ.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:1–10 (ESV)** - <sup>1</sup> Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves are fully aware that the **day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night**. <sup>3</sup> While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then **sudden destruction will come upon them** as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will **not escape**. <sup>4</sup> But you are **not in darkness**, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup> For you are all **children of light**, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. <sup>6</sup> So then **let us not sleep**, as others do, but let us **keep awake** and be **sober**. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day, **let us be sober**, having put on the **breastplate of faith and love**, and for a **helmet the hope of salvation**. <sup>9</sup> For **God has not destined us for wrath**, but to obtain salvation

*through our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>10</sup> who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.*

**Paul addresses the “day of the Lord” in verse 2. What will the world say as this day gets closer and what will actually happen (v. 3)?**

**What instruction does Paul give to the church (vv. 4-8)?**

**What encouragement does he offer in verse 9?**

**What is the basis of that encouragement (v. 10)?**





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