

# Are There A, B, and C Doctrines In The Bible?

**M**any evangelical churches provide a brief Statement of Faith on their church website. The Statement of Faith provides a summary of what they believe about the Christian faith. For example, the Statement of Faith usually lists what they believe about the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the creation and man, sin, salvation, the church, the angels and the doctrine of the future, which is eschatology.

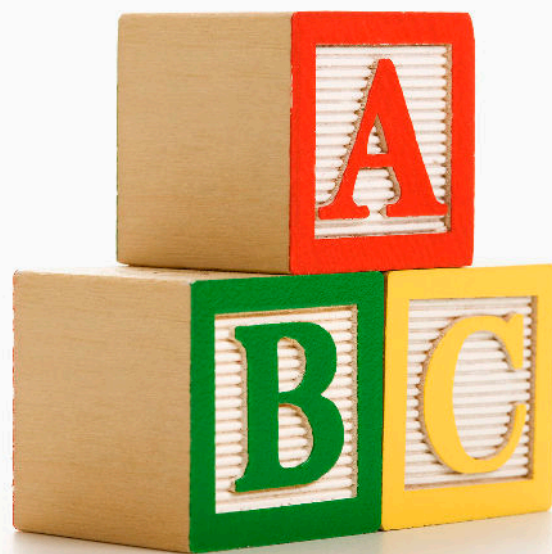
**The Problem.** In recent decades, if a church does include a section about eschatology, it is usually brief. It is the unusual church now that provides much more than a brief paragraph. Brief statements of faith usually just say they teach there is a future resurrection and there will be a second coming of Christ. Almost every evangelical church agrees with those facts. But why do churches avoid revealing the details of what they teach about God's plan for the future? There are at least six reasons.

Part of the answer is that some pastors find eschatology to be complex and difficult to understand and so they avoid it. One pastor near retirement stated that he had not studied the doctrine of the future throughout his life. He said that it was a very difficult subject. Now it was wonderful to hear him admit that, but it was sad that he was not interested enough to discover what God wanted to share with him about His plan for our future. Then he laughed and said, "It will all pan out in the future." Some people refer to this attitude or view as "panmillennium." So, he did not teach about eschatology. We can understand that

eschatology is a difficult subject, but God did not have His prophets and apostles write about the future in the pages of Scripture for us to just ignore it.

Another problem is that some pastors believe that all doctrines in the Bible can be categorized as "A" doctrines, "B" doctrines, or "C" doctrines. They say that the "A" doctrines are the important ones. The "B" and "C" doctrines are not as important, and it is okay for their church members to hold differing views. It is okay to not teach them since those doctrines are less important. Their idea is that we do not have to be concerned if we have the correct view about the future since they do not view eschatology as an "A" doctrine.

**All Doctrines Are "A" Doctrines.** Now to teach a congregation that all the doctrines are not equal in importance is a serious issue for a number of reasons. The first reason is God is the author of every doctrine in the Scriptures. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says,



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All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

Here we are told that all Scripture is God-breathed. That is, every letter of every word was written by God Himself. Even the plural ending of a word is inspired and written by God according to Galatians 3:16. So,

every sentence, word, and letter is inspired. That reveals every fact, every concept, every prophecy, and every doctrine in the pages of Scripture is written by God. That is the first reason all the doctrines are equal.

The second reason all the doctrines are equal is also found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Notice that we are told all Scripture is beneficial “for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” So, this reveals that since every doctrine is inspired by God, every doctrine is important for our edification or spiritual growth. When eschatology is ignored, a major part of our edification is ignored.

The third reason all the doctrines are equal is found in 2 Peter 1:20-21. It reminds us that God the Holy Spirit moved the writers of the books of the Bible to write exactly what He wanted written. This means that no word, no verse, no chapter, no book, and no doctrine is more important than another portion of Scripture because Matthew 5:18 says that even the smallest letter and stroke will not pass away until all is accomplished. Jesus said,

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:18-19 (NASB)

So, this teaches two important points. The first point is that we are warned to not eliminate anything from the Scriptures. We must not eliminate or ignore any doctrine in Scripture. That would be the same thing as removing it from the pages of Scripture. The second point is that nothing in Scripture should be eliminated from our teaching. Both points reveal that no part of Scripture is inferior to another part of Scripture. The prophecies about the future are just as important as all of the other doctrines or the Holy Spirit would not have included them in Scripture (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17). So, the third reason all the doctrines are equal is

that the Holy Spirit moved men to write about them. So we must not remove them from our teaching.

The fourth reason all the doctrines are equally important is that God encourages us to diligently study all of the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15). He did not tell us to study only certain parts of Scripture. A question we must ask ourselves is, “Does God consider it a waste of our time to study parts of Scripture that are seemingly unimportant?” The answer is no! Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we are urged to study Scripture. We are urged to listen to the prophets and to the apostles. We are never told to ignore any part of Scripture. Every believer needs to seriously study the entire Word of God to determine its meaning.

Notice that Colossians 3:16 urges us to study the Scriptures.

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16 (NASB)

Here Paul commands us to study all of the Scriptures. He does not tell us to ignore certain parts or doctrines. We should also remember that Jesus warned us in Matthew 5:18-19 to not eliminate anything from the Scriptures.

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:18-19 (NASB)

It is a tragedy to miss Revelation 1:3 which states that it is a blessing to read and hear “the words of the prophecy.” That is, the Holy Spirit tells us the book of Revelation is a prophecy and we should not ignore it. Therefore, the fourth reason all the doctrines are equally important is that Jesus considered

all of them to be important. God wants us to study every doctrine and all parts of Scripture.

The fifth reason all the doctrines are equally important is found in Titus 1:9. The verse says,

**Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.**  
Titus 1:9 (NASB)

Here the elders of the church are to hold fast to the faithful Word of God so that they can teach sound doctrine and defend those doctrines. This requirement for an elder assumes that Scripture provides sufficient information for all the biblical doctrines so that the elders can accurately teach and defend them. Further, they must also be able to defend those doctrines. The fact that they must be able to defend the doctrines reveals that all of them are important. Every doctrine is important, including eschatology. That is why the elders must be able to “refute those who contradict.” There are no statements in this verse about defending only some of the doctrines such as salvation. An elder must be able to defend every doctrine in Scripture. Sadly, many elders cannot do that. That is, many men who are called elders do not meet God’s standard for the office.

On one occasion a pastor told his congregation that they should be willing to accept different views about the doctrine of the future. He supported his claim by referring to two well-known pastors who had different views about eschatology. They were friends. So, he told the congregation that they should be open to different views of the future just as he thought those two prominent pastors did. However, he missed the fact God has told us to reject false doctrine. He also missed the fact that both of those pastors, while friends, would not have agreed with the eschatological view of the other man. They would not have sat under the teaching of the other man.

The command for elders “to refute those who contradict” reveals that the truth of every doctrine can be defended. To be able to refute those who contradict reveals there is enough content in Scripture to do that. So, to teach a wrong view of

a Biblical doctrine is an error. It is error to compromise our view on any doctrine because of friendship.

So, doctrines about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, sin, salvation, the church, and the future are all important. No doctrine can be more important or less important than another since God has said elders must teach and defend them all. That is the fifth reason.

The sixth reason all the doctrines are equally important is found in 2 Timothy 2:16-18. There the apostle Paul rebuked two men for distorting the truth about the future.

**But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.** 2 Timothy 2:16-18 (NASB)

Notice that the apostle Paul is concerned that two men were teaching error about the future resurrection, which is part of the doctrine of eschatology, or future things. Just as Paul rebuked the Galatians for drifting from the doctrine about salvation, Paul rebuked Hymenaeus and Philetus so that everyone would be warned about their error. This reveals that a wrong view of eschatology is sin. It is error to teach that any congregation of believers should be willing to accept another doctrinal view, unless it is the biblical truth. This reveals that eschatology must be defended and is just as important as the doctrine of salvation. Therefore, to teach it correctly, pastors and teachers must study it. All the doctrines are important.

So, there are no “A”, “B”, or “C” doctrines for every doctrine is an “A” doctrine. For example, the doctrine of salvation is critical for eternal life. The doctrine of God is critical to understand the character and decrees of God. The doctrine of sin is critical to help us understand sin, and that we are sinners in need of forgiveness. The doctrine of the church is critical to know how the church should function. The doctrine of future things is critical to know God’s plan for the future. It is not okay for a church to just tolerate or accept various opinions about what God wrote. The apostle Paul wrote,

If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing. 1 Timothy 6:3-4a (NASB)

That is, anyone who strayed from what 1) Paul taught, 2) Christ taught, and 3) the doctrine conforming to godliness is in sin. Now that includes everything that Paul taught in all his epistles, and Paul included eschatology in his writings!

So, every doctrine is equally important since God placed all of them in His Word for us. Each doctrine has its purpose. We will not be saved by studying only the doctrine of man. We will not discover that Jesus is God by studying only the doctrine of the church. If someone is not saved, they need the doctrines about Christ, sin, and salvation. God gave us the doctrine of future things because He wants us to know what He has planned for our future. The doctrine of the future helps us to believe and trust Him. The fact that Israel has returned to their land in 1948 is an encouragement that God's Word is accurate and the biblical doctrine about the future is trustworthy.

**Danger of Not Knowing Eschatology.** Most believers understand that teaching a false view about the future is a sin. But now we need to understand that there are some serious dangers to avoiding eschatology. Many people do not understand that most of the books of the Bible contain teaching about eschatology. For example, Genesis 3:15; 49:10 and Numbers 24:17 refer to the reign of the future Messiah. Failure to understand this will result in false teaching of those passages. Prophecies about the future are also contained in Deuteronomy, Psalms, all of the major prophets, most of the minor prophets, all four gospels, Acts, and almost all of the other books of the New Testament, including the book of Revelation. Many of Jesus' parables cannot be accurately understood without a knowledge of eschatology. Failure to have a correct view of the doctrine of the future will result in teaching error for which God will hold the pastor or teacher accountable. James 3:1 says,

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren,

knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. James 3:1 (NASB)

This verse is a warning to every pastor and teacher to understand eschatology. It is a serious error to not study and understand the doctrine of the future. A wise Christian will want to know that their pastor has a correct understanding of eschatology. Otherwise, he will distort the meaning of many passages of Scripture.

An excellent example of the difference in amillennial and premillennial teaching is found in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24-25. When Jesus taught about the signs of His coming, He told the disciples that when people see the abomination of desolation standing in the temple, then it is time to flee.

Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Matthew 24:15-16 (NASB)

Immediately this reveals that a temple must exist in Jerusalem for the abomination of desolation to stand in the holy place within the temple. We should also notice that Jesus reveals Israel will exist as a nation when this event occurs for He refers to both Judea and the holy place.

The premillennial view says this is a future event because Daniel 9:26 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The prophecy in Daniel 9:27 describes a future event beyond A.D. 70. It reveals that Israel would have returned to its land after its destruction in A.D. 70 and a temple would exist again. In 1948, the Jews began to return to the land and Israel was again recognized as a nation, but we are still waiting for a temple to exist in Jerusalem so that the prophecy of Matthew 24:15-16 can be fulfilled.

But amillennialists teach that the prophecy in Matthew 24:15-16 occurred in A.D. 70 when the Roman army invaded Israel and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. They argue that the Romans desecrated the temple in A.D. 70, thus fulfilling Jesus' prophecy because the amillennialists need

Matthew 24:15 to have been fulfilled already. Otherwise, the theological view that they have imposed on Scripture falls apart. They do not want Matthew 24:15-16 to be future prophecy since their view claims that Israel as a nation does not have a role in God's future plans. That is, they believe the kingdom promised to Israel will not exist. For them, it must not exist or amillennialism will be found to be false. So according to amillennialism, the temple must not exist. They teach that believing Israel has been absorbed into the church and all of the prophecies given to Israel have been inherited by the church. This is called Replacement Theology. Thus, they believe Matthew 24:15 must be a historical event.

But this is contrary to Daniel 2:44-45; 7:24-27; and 9:26-27 which reveal that a gap in the prophetic timeline started at Jesus crucifixion. Premillennialists rejoice that Israel returned to the land in 1948. Because that is necessary for the temple to be rebuilt and Matthew 24:15 to be fulfilled. So, that verse is not history. Israel has returned as prophesied in both the major and minor prophets, and we are just waiting for the temple to be rebuilt. The abomination of desolation will occur in the future.

**Why Some Pastors Avoid Eschatology.** As we have already discovered, every doctrine is equally important. Yet, some pastors avoid eschatology because it is a difficult subject. It requires a great amount of time to correctly interpret the prophetic Scriptures. It is not like the Sermon on the Mount or a parable. The doctrine of the future is scattered from Genesis to Revelation. So, some do not want to spend the time to understand which of the four major views or if some other view may be correct. It is easy to avoid studying the amillennial, postmillennial, preterist, and premillennial views, but pastors who do not take time to carefully study the prophetic passages will not be able to avoid God's judgment of their teaching (James 3:1).

Now for an example, consider this problem. How can someone teach Matthew 24-25 since those two chapters are about the future if he does not understand eschatology? If the pastor does not care about the truth, then he may read parts of the chapters, find an application and avoid explaining the text. If he desires to teach the truth, then he may try to quickly understand the two chapters and hope he teaches

truth. The easy solution for some pastors is to avoid any passage that is about the doctrine of the future. They will skip over verses and chapters in the Bible when a passage is about eschatology, assuming that they even understand the passage is about eschatology. They become a topical teacher, skipping sections of Scripture that they consider difficult or do not understand. As a result, they are like the Pharisees in Matthew 23:16-22 where Jesus called them blind guides. John MacArthur in his commentary on Matthew 23:16 makes this important comment,

... Jesus did not call His opponents hypocrites but blind guides, emphasizing their unawareness that they were ignorant of the truth.<sup>1</sup>

That is those who fail to understand God's plan for the future will distort the Scriptures and are blind guides to the blind.

**Conclusion.** One would hope that every teacher of Scripture would want to clearly understand God's plan for the future. God gave us eschatology because He wants us to know and understand it. Every teacher should want to be faithful and encourage believers by sharing God's plan about the future. 2 Timothy 2:1-2 says,

[You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)

One would expect that every pastor and teacher would want to join with the prophets and share God's plan for the future and be a faithful expositor of Scripture.

Finally, we should tell fellow believers what Jesus Himself shared about the future. He urged us to look forward to His return. The last two verses of the New Testament are eschatological.

[He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace](#)

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur. Matthew 16-23. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Moody press. 1988. p. 381.

of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. Revelation 22:20  
(NASB)

Jesus considered the doctrine of the future to be very important. It is an "A" doctrine equal to salvation. The next step in eschatology is the next event as a result of our salvation—eternity in heaven with our God.