



Jeff Sweeten

Thus Saith the Lord
is presented by the

Park Heights Church of Christ

1300 E. Boynton St.
Hamilton
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Schedule of Services

SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Bible Class
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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ESCHATOLOGY

By Jeff Sweeten

Some of the simplest of Bible concepts can be needlessly complicated with \$20 words and a penchant for scholarly snobbery. Most of God's word was written in the simple terms so that we can understand them. Take for instance, the Lord's Second Coming (Hebrews 9:28).

Certainly, there can be no more wonderful or more frightening future event than the return of the Lord, and one's perspective depends largely upon one's preparation. Hence, theories and speculations abound and, too often, confusion reigns when discussing "eschatology" (that is, religious doctrines concerning last or final matters, Webster's); such needless chaos.

Jesus will come at a time unannounced (2 Peter 3:10) and unknown (Mark 13:33). Therefore, there will be no signs of his Second Coming to tip us off and afford us any last-minute preparation. We're encouraged to be ready always (Matthew 25:1ff). Jesus' coming will be cataclysmic and universal, *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17); v. 16 has been called the loudest verse in the Bible. There will be no secret "rapture" and no spiriting away of an "elect" few, but such a clamor as a divine "shout," with the booming voice of an angel, and what will certainly be the loudest instrument ever to be heard on planet earth, a holy trumpet. Even those in their grave will *"hear his voice"* (John 5:28). Further, all the saved will go to be with the Savior, Who will arrive in the clouds of the air though He'll never set foot on earth again. Then, *"the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"* (2 Peter 3:10). "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God" (1 Corinthians 15:24), a kingdom that has existed since He said "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18-19).

There will be no gray area open to barter or bargain, *"for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"* (Ecclesiastes 12:14). If the blood of the lamb covers our sins (Revelation 12:11; cf. 1 John 1:7), we will rejoice to see the Day and glorify God as we witness the resurrection of saints gone before.

And, oh, the bliss of meeting that heavenly host in the air! However, if we constitute no more than a diseased contribution to this world's infestation of unforgiven sin, the Second Coming of our Lord will be like the flash of a flood lamp in a room full of roaches, and the scurry to hide will be eternally vain.