

Statement from the Elders on 'End Times' doctrines
19th November 2015

We believe in **'The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.'** This sentence is taken from the Evangelical Alliance basis of faith which may be accessed in full from our website under the section: 'what we believe.'

This includes three essential truths which all Christians agree about. Jesus will return to earth in bodily form at some point in the future (Matthew 24:36-44; Mark 13:32-37; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 2:28). Jesus will judge all humanity (Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1). God will physically resurrect all humanity at some point in the future (Revelation 20:5, 12-13). We believe that Scripture clearly teaches that we should eagerly long for and prepare for Christ's return (Revelation 22:20; Titus 2:12-13). Several passages indicate that we do not, and cannot, know the time when Christ will return (Matthew 24:44; Matthew 25:13). Jesus said, 'only the Father knows' (Mark 13:32-33).

The end point and goal of God's work in human history is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus himself declared, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13). Jesus is the source of the created order, the one for whom and through whom everything exists (Hebrews 2:10, Colossians 1:16). The foundation for what Scripture teaches about the future hope is the resurrection of Christ because God has given all authority to him (Matthew 28:19-20). For example, in Corinthians we are taught that of primary importance is that 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...(1 Corinthians 15:2-3). This is the basis for the teaching on Christ's victory over death and the Christian end-time hope that 'we will be raised imperishable.' (1 Corinthians 15:52). Creation is currently groaning but has a glorious future which expectantly awaits the revealing of Christ and a redeemed multitude of believers (Romans 8:18-25). In Thessalonians, Paul's teaching about the coming of the Lord is preceded by the statement 'we believe that Jesus died and rose again.' (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

Christians disagree over specific details leading up to and immediately following Christ's return. Specifically, they differ over the nature of the millennium and the relationship of Christ's return to the millennium, the sequence of Christ's return and the great tribulation period that will come to the earth, and the relationship between Jews who are saved and the church. We affirm the genuine evangelical standing of those who have differing positions on these questions (Historic Premillennialism, Dispensational Premillennialism, Postmillennial and Amillennial). We affirm that each position upholds the authority of Scripture and has a firm commitment to believe whatever is taught by Scripture. The interpretation of the details of prophetic passages regarding future events is often a complex and difficult task involving many variable factors. Therefore, the degree of certainty that attaches to conclusions in this area will be less than with many other doctrines. Within CCC we believe it is right not to define our doctrine on these matters and we encourage that considerable grace and respect is shown as we discuss any differences. For clarity we state again the primary truths regarding the second coming of Christ:

'The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.'

Agreed at the elders meeting on 19th November 2015