

13th Fundamental Truth – The Blessed Hope

Exposition by Dr. Randy Colver. Graphics developed by Cathy Garland. Each of the Sixteen Fundamental Doctrines will be introduced and quoted. Each quote will be highlighted in red font in the text. Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

1. **The AG Statement of Fundamental Truths states:** The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).
2. The Blessed Hope of all Christians is the return of Jesus Christ for His Church: “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns.”
3. “He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’”
4. “He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”—Rev. 19:11-16
5. The Bible uses three key words when talking about the return of Christ: His coming or arrival – “parousia” “We that are alive, that are left unto the parousia of the Lord...”—1 Thess. 4:15-17 “...so shall be the parousia of the Son of Man.”—Mt. 24:27
6. His manifestation – “epiphaneia” The Antichrist will be destroyed “...by the epiphaneia of His parousia.”—2 Thess. 2:8. His revelation – “apokalypsis” “...rest with us, at the apokalypsis of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.”—2 Thess. 1:6-7 (cf. 1 Cor. 1:7)
7. The Bible says some important things about Christ’s coming: He will return bodily, in the same manner as He left (Acts 1:11; cf. Lk. 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:44). He will return suddenly (Mt. 24:32-51; Mk. 13:33-37). He will return in glory with His angels (Mt. 16:27; 19:28).

8. "Apart from His glorious return, God's work will forever be incomplete. At the center of redemption past is Christ on the cross; at the center of redemption future is Christ returning in glory" (Ladd 6). "The sorrows of a world blighted by sin, marred by war, crushed by enmity, will be terminated by the advent of the Prince of Peace" (Menzies 214).

9. There are several other important concepts to understand regarding the Second Coming of Christ. To begin with, Christians recognize that time is linear; there was a beginning (Ge. 1:1) and there will be an end (1 Cor. 15:24). The end will come with the return of Christ and the events surrounding God's final judgment, called the Great Day of the Lord.

10. The prophets termed the future time of God's judgment as "that day," or "the great Day of the Lord" (Is. 13:6-13; Zeph. 1:14-15; cf. Rev. 16:14). "That day" will bring catastrophic visitation to the cosmos, judgment on the enemies of God (Jude 6; Rev. 19:19-21), and victory and blessing for His people (Mt. 25:46; 1 Cor. 15:51-54).

11. "That day" will also bring about the New Creation of God (Is. 34:4; Zeph. 1:2; Rev. 20:11) and the union of heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1-5). The Day of the Lord ultimately occurs with the events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ.

12. We should note that the events of "that day" are not confined to a twenty-four-hour period, but actually occur over an extended period of time.

13. "That day" will be characterized by: Restoration – Is. 27:13; Salvation – Is. 25:9 Holiness; Joy, and Security – Zeph. 3:11; Visitation of the servant of the Lord – Hag. 2:23

14. "That day" will also be characterized by: Rebuilding of the Temple – Zech. 4:9; Power of the Spirit – Zech. 4:6; A Spring of Water from the House of the Lord – Joel 3:18; Resurrection – Lk. 20:35; Jn. 11:24

15. "That day" will also be characterized by catastrophic signs in nature: Darkness – Amos 5:18; 20 Changes to the Sun and Moon – Joel 2:10, 31; Whirlwinds and Storms – Ezek. 38:22; Earthquakes – Joel 2:10

16. Thus, this "present evil age" (Gal. 1:4) will come to an end and the age to come will begin at the Day of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:23-26). "All the sweep of redemptive history is divided into two ages separated by the Day of the Lord" (Ladd).

17. This Age - The Age to Come; Death - Eternal Life; The Day of the Lord/Return of the Lord

18. That day will not come until a great apostasy takes place, the “man of lawlessness is revealed, and the Lord returns” (2 Thess. 2:2-3). The final Day of the Lord is the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:16)!

19. “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?”—2 Pt. 3:10-11

20. Peter is reminding us that what we believe about the future—about the Return of Christ and the Final Judgment—affects how we live today. Moreover, because Christ’s resurrection guarantees our future resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-26), we need not fear death (Heb. 2:14-15).

21. Our resurrection will be like His resurrection. This means that there is both continuity and discontinuity with who we are presently and who we shall be at the resurrection. For example, we remain the same person and we will be raised bodily, but we will be transformed.

22. “So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”—1 Co 15:42-44

23. In addition, there is a sense where we can share in the resurrection power of the Lord now (Phil. 3:10-11). Paul declared, “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”—1 Cor. 15:20

24. “The first fruits was the actual beginning of the harvest which was offered in sacrifice to God for granting a new harvest. “It was not hope; it was not promise; it was the actual beginning of the harvest, which was immediately followed by the full harvest” (Ladd, Last Things 79).

25. Thus, Paul could use all three tenses—past, present, and future—for salvation: “we were saved” (Ro. 8:24), we “are being saved” (1 Cor. 15:2), and we “shall be saved” (Ro. 5:9).

26. Unfortunately, for those who are “in Christ,” this means that we live partly in the old age and partly in the new. We are in a sense living between the times. This is illustrated in the following diagrams:

27. Death, Burial, Resurrection Second Coming New Age Inaugurated - Mt. 4:17. Overlapping Ages "This Age" and "That Age" Lk. 20:34-35; Eph. 1:21. New Age Consummated, Old Age Ends

28. Old Age / New Age Overlapping Ages: "Last Days" Old and New Ages; Now Not Yet Tension

29. Old Age & New Age Overlapping - We live by the Spirit NOW (Gal. 5:16). As the down payment on what is to come (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14), the Holy Spirit:

Helps us in our weakness (Ro. 8:26).

Takes from what is Christ's and makes it known to us (Jn. 16:14).

Helps us understand God's promises (1 Cor. 2:12).

Strengthens us (Eph. 3:16-19).

Gives us wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ (Eph. 1:19).

Helps us testify (Jn. 16:7-11).

"...now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2

30. Old Age & New Age Overlapping - We can enjoy the future NOW.

We are new creations in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

We have already tasted of the powers of the age to come (He. 6:4-6).

We are already citizens of heaven (He. 12:18-24).

We are seated in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1-4).

We already feast with and on Christ, as a foretaste of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (1 Cor. 10:16; Rev. 19:7).

31. However, we must balance what we have now with what we do not yet have.

32. Old Age New Age Overlapping - NOT YET do we see the future in its fullness.

We have not yet become imperishable or immortal (1 Cor. 15:53).

We have not yet received our entire inheritance (Eph. 1:14).

We are not yet perfect or have full knowledge (1 Cor. 13:9-12).

We get sick and are not always healed (1 Cor. 11:30; 2 Tim. 4:20).

33. Our God has moved from creation to New Creation through the redemption in Christ Jesus! We will see the final consummation of all His work at His Second Coming. Come Lord Jesus!