

THE EQUIP INSTITUTE

Theme: Baptist Beliefs

Topic: BF&M (2000): Article X: Last Things

Spring 2026

Introduction

The Equip Institute exists to equip members of Taylors First Baptist Church to think rightly about God and his Word for the sake of living rightly before God in his world. The topic this week is Article X in the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), which is on Last Things.

Article IX

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

Key Biblical Texts

³⁶ "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.... ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (Matt. 24:36, 44)

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' ⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. 25:31-46)

²² And he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them. ²⁴ For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, ²⁹ but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— ³⁰ so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. ³² Remember Lot's wife. ³³ Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. ³⁴ I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. ³⁵ There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left." ³⁷ And they said to him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather." (Luke 17:22-37)

²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24-28)

1 Cor. 15:35-58 – an extended discussion of the resurrected body

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Cor. 5:10)

¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4:14-18)

¹ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ 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. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. (1 Thess. 5:1-4)

²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Heb. 9:27-28)

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ²And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. ⁴Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:1-6)

Revelation 20:7-22:12 – The Last Judgment and the New Creation

Observations

Exposition of Article X

Historical Context

There has been minimal developments between all editions of the BF&M and none of the changes are related to matters of doctrine. This article in the BF&M (2000) has not been controversial. The BF&M adopts a merely Christian affirmation of last things, remaining silent on matters contested among Bible-believing Christians.

Key Ideas

God is sovereign over how last things will play out

Jesus's second coming is promised and certain

The second coming will be personal, bodily, and visible

The dead will be resurrected and face the final judgment of Christ

Unbelievers will go to hell, which is place of everlasting punishment and relational/covenantal separation from the Lord

Believers will receive glorified bodies and other eternal rewards

[illegible]

The BF&M (2000) offers a good basic summary of last things, emphasizing those points of basic agreement. However, here are many aspects of last things debated by Southern Baptists (and other evangelicals). For Southern Baptists, while these debates might affect which church someone joins, they have not been a point of contention in terms of our cooperation. Questions include the following:

1. What is the best way to interpret apocalyptic biblical texts?
2. What is the exact sequence of events at the end of the age, and are they laid out chronologically or thematically in Revelation and other key apocalyptic passages?
3. Will there be a future millennial kingdom on earth that anticipates the kingdom fullness of the new creation, or is the present spiritual reign of Christ among his people the only foretaste of the kingdom?
4. What is the relationship between the current postmortem destinies of the dead and the final eternal destinies of believers and unbelievers?
5. What is the relationship between heaven and the new creation?