

# UNDERSTANDING WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE

## Part 10: The Doctrine of Future Events (Eschatology)

Mike Taylor

[www.TaylorNotes.Info](http://www.TaylorNotes.Info)



### A. The Future Tribulation Period

The Tribulation is a future seven-year period of great hardship and suffering prior to the return of Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:21; Dan. 9:24-27).

It will be worldwide (Rev. 3:10), and it will be different from all other periods in history (Matt. 24:21-22; Rev. 6:16-17).

### B. The Future Rapture of the Church

Definition: The rapture<sup>1</sup> is a future event when Jesus Christ comes for the church (1 Thess. 4:16) and meets believers in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). Bible scholars hold five views about when this event will take place.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ view: that church (believers) will be raptured before the tribulation.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ view: that church (believers) will be raptured at the midpoint of the tribulation.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ view: only faithful Christians will be taken in the rapture, with unfaithful Christians left on earth to suffer through the tribulation.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ view: The rapture will occur somewhere in the later part of the tribulation and removes the church from the trumpet and bowl judgments, which it defines as the wrath of God.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ view: The church (believers) will be raptured after the tribulation.

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<sup>1</sup> While the word "rapture" does not occur in the Bible, its use in describing what takes place when the Lord Jesus returns is most appropriate. The word "rapture" is taken from a Latin word *rapio* or *rapere* which means to snatch out of the way, as one would snatch a person out of the way of an oncoming automobile.

## **C. The Future Marriage Feast of the Lamb**

1. The wedding feast of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) and His bride (the Church) which most likely takes place shortly after the church is raptured (Rev. 19:9)
2. The marriage supper of the Lamb is a glorious celebration of all who are in Christ!

## **D. The Future Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

This is a future event when Jesus Christ comes *with* the church (Rev. 19:14). He physically returns to earth at the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:10-11) and conquers all evil, including the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and Satan (Rev. 19:20—20:3). This event takes place at the end of the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-18)

## **E. The Future Millennium**

The period of 1,000 years as the time of the reign of Jesus Christ and believers over the earth (Rev. 20:1-7). There are at least three major views concerning this period.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_View: Jesus Christ will return *before* the millennium
2. The \_\_\_\_\_View: Jesus Christ will return *after* the millennium
3. The \_\_\_\_\_View: there will be *no literal* thousand-year bodily reign of Jesus Christ on earth prior to the final judgment and the eternal state

## **F. Seven Resurrections in the Bible**

The Bible describes at least seven resurrections. These are:

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:1-7)
2. The resurrection of some saints at the time of Jesus Christ's death (Matt. 27:50-53)
3. The future resurrection at the rapture of church believers who had died (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4:14-17)
4. The future resurrection of the two witnesses during the tribulation (Rev. 11:3-13)
5. The future resurrection of the Old Testament saints (Isa. 26:19-21; Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:1-3)<sup>2</sup>
6. The future resurrection of the tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4-6)
7. The future resurrection of the wicked dead (Rev. 20:11-15)

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<sup>2</sup> Which possibly occurs at the beginning of the Millennium (Walvoord, 105)

## G. Four Future Judgments

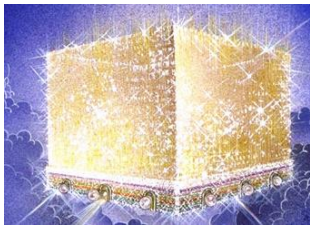
Definition: A judgment in the Bible is God's act of determining who will be blessed, and who will not be blessed according to his Word. The Bible describes four future judgments:

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ judgment: The judgment of believers' works, sometimes called the judgment (2 Cor. 5:10)
2. The Judgment \_\_\_\_\_, "sheep and "goats" (Matthew 25:31-46)
3. The Judgment \_\_\_\_\_ (Rev. 19:20)
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15)

## H. The New Heavens and New Earth

The new heavens and the new earth is a description of the entirely renewed creation in which believers will dwell after the final Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 21:1).

## I. The New Jerusalem



The New Jerusalem is a totally different place than the old Jerusalem on the present earth and is created to be the center of population in the new earth (Rev. 21:10-21).<sup>3</sup>

It is referred to in the Bible in several places (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 11:10; 12:22-24; and 13:14), but it is most fully described in Revelation 21. The New Jerusalem, which is also called the Tabernacle of God, the Holy City, the City of God, the Celestial City, the City Foursquare, and Heavenly Jerusalem, is literally heaven on earth.

The city will be dazzling in every way. It is lighted by the glory of God (verse 23). Its twelve foundations, bearing the names of the twelve apostles, are "decorated with every kind of precious stone" (verse 19). It has twelve gates, each a single pearl, bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (verses 12 and 21). The street will be made of pure gold (verse 21).

The New Jerusalem will be fantastically huge. John records that the city is nearly 1,400 miles long, and it is as wide and as high as it is long, a perfect cube symbolic of God's presence with man in the OT Tabernacle Holy of Holies (2 Chron. 3:8).

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<sup>3</sup> Walvoord 632.