

# What the Bible Says About the Future

---

## A Brief Outline Study of Biblical Eschatology



Michael D. Taylor

January 2023

CONTENTS

**PART 1 INTRODUCTION ..... 1**

- A. WHAT YOU WILL GAIN FROM THIS STUDY ..... 1
- B. FIVE MAJOR FUTURE EVENTS..... 1
- C. IMPROPER REACTIONS TO ESCHATOLOGY..... 1
- D. METHODS OF INTERPRETATION..... 1
- E. WHICH METHOD IS BEST? ..... 2
- F. A TIMELINE OF FUTURE EVENTS ..... 2

**PART 2 THE TRIBULATION ..... 4**

- A. WHAT IS THE TRIBULATION? ..... 4
- B. ITS NECESSITY ..... 4
- C. ITS UNIQUENESS..... 4
- D. ITS OTHER NAMES IN THE BIBLE..... 5
- E. ITS CHARACTERS..... 5
- F. ITS PRIMARY EVENTS ..... 7

**PART 3 THE RAPTURE ..... 10**

- A. WHAT IS THE RAPTURE?..... 10
- B. FIVE VIEWS OF WHEN THE RAPTURE TAKES PLACE ..... 10
- C. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST ..... 12
- D. THE MARRIAGE FEAST OF THE LAMB..... 14

**PART 4 THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST..... 16**

- A. JESUS CAME FIRST AS A SERVANT; HE WILL RETURN AS KING..... 16
- B. THE RETURN OF JESUS CAN BE VIEWED AS ONE MIRACULOUS EVENT WHICH HAS TWO STAGES..... 16
- C. JESUS’ SECOND COMING WILL BE ASTONISHING. .... 17
- D. WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN JESUS’ SECOND COMING WILL OCCUR..... 18
- E. BUT WE ARE TO ALWAYS BE READY FOR THE RETURN OF JESUS..... 19
- F. SEVEN CLUES THAT THE “DAY” IS APPROACHING. .... 19
- G. JESUS IS COMING SOON. .... 21

**PART 5 THE MILLENNIUM..... 22**

- A. WHAT IS THE MILLENNIUM? ..... 22
- B. THE AMILLENNIAL VIEW ..... 22
- C. THE POSTMILLENNIAL VIEW ..... 22
- D. THE PREMILLENNIAL (HISTORIC) VIEW ..... 23
- E. THE PREMILLENNIAL (FUTURISTIC) VIEW ..... 23
- F. CONDITIONS DURING THE MILLENNIUM..... 24
- G. FOUR MAJOR EVENTS DURING THE MILLENNIUM. .... 24
- H. WILL THERE BE A TEMPLE IN THE MILLENNIUM?..... 24

<b>PART 6 HEAVEN .....</b>	<b>26</b>
A. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH .....	26
B. IS HEAVEN A REAL PLACE?.....	26
C. WHERE IS HEAVEN?.....	26
D. FOURTEEN THINGS WE KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN.....	27
E. THE BOTTOM LINE .....	31
<b>PART 7 PERSONAL ESCHATOLOGY .....</b>	<b>32</b>
A. RESURRECTIONS IN THE BIBLE .....	32
B. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF BELIEVERS .....	33
C. THE GLORIFIED BODY. ....	34
D. FUTURE JUDGMENTS .....	34
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# PART 1 INTRODUCTION

---

## A. What you will gain from this study

1. A renewed excitement about God's future plans for believers.
2. An understanding of how this life relates to the next life.
3. How the return of Jesus Christ will complete our salvation.
4. What eternity will be like.
5. Why believers can eagerly anticipate God's future.

## B. Five major future events

1. The Tribulation
2. The Rapture of the Church
3. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ
4. The Millennial Kingdom
5. The Eternal State

## C. Improper reactions to eschatology<sup>1</sup>

1. Eschatomania: An overly preoccupied with prophecy consuming all of the believer's time and study.
2. Eschatophobia: The fear of prophecy due primarily to misguided teachings of this subject on TV and media.
3. Close-mindedness: Holding fast to one view when scripture is unclear about the exact timing or nature of future events.

## D. Methods of Interpretation

The method of interpretation used will have a significant impact on the interpretation of eschatological passages in the Bible.

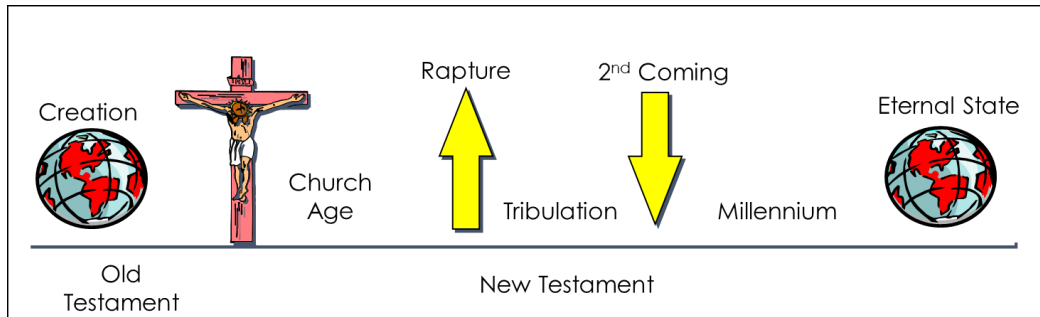
1. Allegorical (Figurative) Method: An allegory is a story in which the details correspond to or reveal a "hidden," or "higher," or "deeper" meaning.<sup>2</sup>
  - a) J. Dwight Pentecost points out three specific dangers of the allegorical method.<sup>3</sup>

- b) First, it does not interpret scripture because it disregards the common signification of words and leaves all manner of speculation to the reader.
  - c) Second, the authority in interpretation ceases to be the Scriptures and moves to the mind of the interpreter.
  - d) Third, one is left without any means by which the conclusions of the interpreter can be tested.
2. The literal Method: The literal method of interpretation gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking.
- a) This method is also called the grammatical-historical method.
  - b) This is the method used most by Christian scholars.<sup>4</sup>

**E. Which method is best?**

- 1. Since eschatological language in the Bible is sometimes figurative and other times literal it can become confusing as to which method of interpretation to use.
- 2. A simple rule to follow is: "If the literal meaning of any word or expression makes good sense in its connections, it is literal; but if the literal meaning does not make good sense, it is figurative" (Lockhart's Rule).<sup>5</sup>

**F. A timeline of future events<sup>6</sup>**



- 1. It is essential to remember in any discussion of eschatology that God does not intend for us to fully understand the timing of his plans.
- 2. Christian scholars may not always agree on the sequence of events, such as:
  - a) The nature of the Millennium.
  - b) The relationship of Christ's return to the Millennium.
  - c) The sequence of Christ's return and the Great Tribulation Period.
  - d) The salvation of the Jewish people—and the relationship between Jews who are saved and the church.
- 3. But all evangelicals agree on the final results of Christ's return.

- a) The judgment of unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7).
  - b) Final reward of believers (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12; Luke 6:23; 1 Cor. 3:12-15).
  - c) Believers will live with Christ in a new heaven and a new earth for all eternity (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1; Isa. 65:17; 66:22; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:17).
  - d) God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will reign and will be worshipped in a never-ending kingdom with no more sin, sorrow, or suffering (Rev. 21:1-4, 23; 22:3).
4. Disagreement should not cause over-heated arguments or breaks in fellowship between believers.
  5. A complete consensus among Christians is not the most important goal when exploring end times. The goal of God's work is to glorify Jesus Christ.
  6. Avoid forcing your interpretation into the Bible (eisegeting) when its meaning may not be clear.
  7. Differences in eschatological views are not considered to be differences in essential doctrines of the church.
    - a) Albert Mohler has suggested a theological triage to distinguish between essential and non-essential beliefs as follows:<sup>7</sup>
    - b) First-order doctrines would include those most central and essential to the Christian faith. Included among these most crucial doctrines would be doctrines such as the Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, justification by faith, and the authority of Scripture.
    - c) Second-order doctrines are distinguished from the first-order doctrines set by the fact that believing Christians may disagree on the second-order issues, though this disagreement will create significant boundaries between believers. Christians across a vast denominational range can stand together on the first-order doctrines and recognize each other as authentic Christians, while understanding that the existence of second-order disagreements prevents the closeness of fellowship we would otherwise enjoy. Examples of second order doctrines include whether a church either will recognize infant baptism, the issue of women serving as pastors, etc.
    - d) Third-order doctrines are doctrines over which Christians may disagree and remain in close fellowship, even within local congregations. I would put most of the debates over eschatology, for example, in this category.

# PART 2 THE TRIBULATION

---

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.” (Matt. 24:21 ESV)

## A. What is the Tribulation?

The tribulation is a future seven-year period when God will finish His discipline of Israel and finalize his judgment of the unbelieving world.<sup>8</sup> It will take place just prior to the return of Jesus (Matt. 24:3) and will be like no other time since the world began. And it will never be so great again (Matt. 24:21).

## B. Its necessity

1. The Tribulation is necessary because sin and wickedness must be judged (Matt. 25:41; Jude 1:14-15; God's theodicy).
  - a) If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why do evil and suffering exist?
  - b) It may seem that God is not doing anything about evil or looking the other way, but someday his judgment will take place.
  - c) Humanity's decadence and depravity will reach its fullness, with God judging accordingly.
2. The Tribulation is necessary to prepare the way, especially for Israel, for the return of Jesus Christ (Rom. 11:26-27; 14:11; Phil. 2:9-11).
  - a) This is the fulfillment of Romans 11:26-27, where Paul declares with great confidence the faithful completion of God's election of Israel. Ethnic Israel will be revived, reconstituted, and redeemed as their Messiah returns to earth at the end of the tribulation.
  - b) Though not all people acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of lords and King of kings, someday they will.
  - c) They can do so voluntarily during the Tribulation by coming to Christ in faith and receiving salvation or later receiving only condemnation.

## C. Its uniqueness

1. It will be a period of God's great wrath/judgments (Rev. 14:19; 15:1, 7; 16:1; 19).
  - a) The book of Revelation contains more about this period than any other book in the Bible (Rev. Chapters 6-19).
  - b) The seven seal judgments (Rev. 6:1-17)
  - c) The seven trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:7—9:21; 11:15-19)
  - d) The seven bowl judgments (Rev. 16:2-21)

2. It will be worldwide (Rev. 3:10).
3. It will be different in the way people react during it (e.g., Rev. 9:20; 11:10; 16:16)
  - a) They will recognize the Tribulation judgments as coming from God, yet they will defy God and refuse to repent.
  - b) As the judgments of the Tribulation unfold, some call on the mountains to fall on them to flee from God's wrath (Rev. 6:16).

#### **D. Its other names in the Bible**

1. "The Day of the Lord" (Isa. 2:12; 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14; 1 Thess. 5:2).
2. "Trouble" or "tribulation" (Deut. 4:30; Zeph. 1:1).
3. "Great Tribulation" refers to the most intense second half of the 7-year period (Matt. 24:21).
4. "Time or day of trouble" (Dan. 12:1; Zeph. 1:15).
5. "Time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Probably also referring to the last half of the Tribulation.

#### **E. Its characters**

1. Satan. His name means "adversary" or "one who opposes."<sup>9</sup> Depicted as the dragon in Revelation 12—13. He will use his power to do false signs and wonders by the hands of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:9-10) and the False Prophet (Rev. 13:13-14) and demons (Rev. 16:13-14).<sup>10</sup>
  - a) Satan's final war against God which is yet to be fought. This war will take place during the tribulation period, very likely during the last half of this period.
  - b) He and his angels (demons) will be banished from the presence of God in heaven, most likely at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Rev. 12:12; cf. Isa. 24:21).<sup>11</sup>
2. The Antichrist (Rev. 13; Dan. 7, 8, 11). "Anti" means against. The Antichrist works to oppose everything related to Jesus Christ. Depicted as the "beast out of the sea" (Rev. 13). He will be blasphemous, speaking profanely against God (Rev. 13:5-6). He will claim to be God (Dan. 11:36; 2 Thess. 2:4). He will be arrogant and self-willed (Dan. 7:25).
  - a) The "sea" probably represents the mass of humanity.<sup>12</sup> (cf. Isa. 17:12)
  - b) He will be a master of deceit (Dan. 8:23).
  - c) He will make war with believers (Dan. 7:21).
  - d) He will be controlled by demonic spirits (Rev. 16:13-14).
  - e) He will try to destroy Israel (Rev. 12:1-6, 13-17).
  - f) He will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).<sup>13</sup>



3. The False Prophet (Rev. 13 and 19). Depicted as the "beast out of the earth" (Rev. 13:11-18; 19:20). He will have great power and will mimic the Holy Spirit, even performing great "miracles." He will be an apostate preacher who promotes the worship of the Antichrist.
  - a) The expression "out of the earth" suggests that he may come out of the land that belongs to Israel and could therefore possibly be a Jew.
  - b) He will have great power (Rev. 13:11b). "He has two horns like a lamb." He has some power ("two horns") but not as much as the Antichrist who has "ten horns." Horns in this context are symbols of authority or power. The term "lamb" probably also refers to his religious role as a mimic of Jesus Christ.
  - c) He will mimic the Holy Spirit (Rev. 13:12). In this sense, he mimics the role of the Holy Spirit, who promotes the worship of Christ. He is called the "false prophet" (Rev. 16:13) because of his role in the unholy trinity.
  - d) He will perform miracles (Rev. 13:13-15). He will perform great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people, mimicking Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:36-39).
  - e) He will speak like the dragon (Satan), that is, with blasphemy and false doctrines.
  - f) He will force mankind to build an image of the Antichrist and make it appear to speak. Those who refuse to worship the image will be murdered.
  - g) He will control the world economy (Rev. 13:16-18). He will control all buying and selling by requiring people to place the mark of the Antichrist (666) on their right hand and their foreheads.
  - h) He will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).
  
4. The 144,000 (Rev. 7 and 14). These are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel,<sup>14</sup> so there is no dispute that the "144,000" refers to a group of Israelis (Jews) during the Tribulation.
  - a) It is not referring to the entire nation of Israel but only a few (remnant).
  - b) Since the 144,000 are most likely born-again Jews, and because they were not raptured, it is believed that there is a rapid revival shortly after the church is taken.
  - c) Why is this revival centered on the Jews? Because they were chosen by God to be a race through which He would reach out to the world.
  - d) It is believed that the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14 constitute a special part of the remnant of Israel, set apart by a sovereign act of God, to be special witnesses during the Tribulation.<sup>15</sup>
  
5. The two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-12).<sup>16</sup> They will prophesy and perform miracles for 1,260 days during the Tribulation.
  - a) The 1,260 days corresponds to 3½ years, most likely the last half of the seven-year Tribulation Period.<sup>17</sup>
  - b) At the end of the 1,260 days, they will be killed by the "beast out of the

Abyss" (possibly Satan or an agent of Satan).<sup>18</sup>

- c) Their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days. People will give gifts to each other to celebrate their death.
  - d) After 3½ days they will be resurrected and taken up to heaven striking incredible fear in the hearts of their enemies.
  - e) Some Christian scholars believe these two witnesses will be Moses and Elijah.<sup>19</sup>
6. A "great multitude from every nation" (Rev. 7:9-17; see also Rev. 17:6). This multitude is beyond number, unlike the 144,000 which is a specific number, indicating that it is another group of people. The multitude is defined in verse 14 and as those who have come out of the Tribulation now wearing the white robes which were given to them during the fifth seal judgment (See Rev. 6:9-11). They are individuals who accepted Christ during the Tribulation Period and who were martyred, most likely because of their refusal to worship the Antichrist.
7. The nation of Israel, depicted as the woman Revelation 12:1-5 will be pursued viciously by the Antichrist during the last half of the Tribulation period.
- a) The woman is a representation of the nation of Israel.
  - b) The fact that she is pregnant and in pain, probably refers to the experience of Israel down through the centuries, waiting for the coming of her Messiah (Isa. 26:17-18; 66:7-9; Jer. 4:31).
  - c) Her sufferings refer to the nation as a whole, not to Mary the mother of Jesus).
  - d) Later, after giving birth to the male child, the woman (Israel) flees to the desert for 1,260 days (3½ years) to escape the red dragon.
  - e) This period is probably the last half of the tribulation period that Jesus referred to as the "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21).

## F. Its primary events

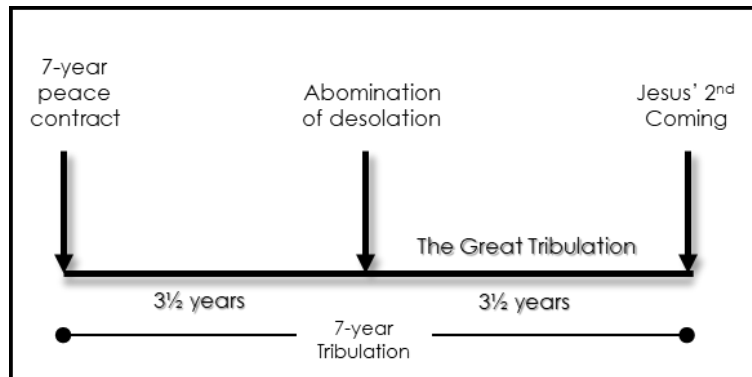
1. It's beginning: a seven-year peace contract (Dan. 9:27): It's beginning when the "ruler" (Antichrist) establishes a seven-year covenant/contract but violates it halfway through this period.<sup>20</sup>
2. Its mid-point: the abomination<sup>21</sup> of desolation/Temple (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15). The False prophet will set up an image of the Antichrist and force people to worship it (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:12-15).
  - a) Some believe Antiochus Epiphanes IV, a Greek Hellenistic king who ruled the Seleucid Empire from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC, fulfilled this event when he invaded Jerusalem in 168 BC, made the Jerusalem altar into a shrine to Zeus, and even sacrificed a pig on it.<sup>22</sup> However, Jesus, in Matthew 24, was clearly talking about a future event.
  - b) Some believe this was fulfilled by Titus in AD 70 when he destroyed the temple, but John wrote about this event after AD 70 as being in his future (Rev. 13:14-15, mid 90s). Also, Titus never had an image of himself set up to

be worshipped.

- c) Dan. 9:27 NIV "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. "
- d) Rev. 13:12-15 NIV. "It (False Prophet) exercised all the authority of the first beast (Antichrist) on its behalf and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. <sup>13</sup> And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. <sup>14</sup> Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup> The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed."
- e) The sacrilegious object Jesus called "the abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15) could be the "image of the beast" that the Antichrist's right-hand man, the false prophet, will order to be set up and worshiped (Revelation 13:14).
- f) For this to take place the temple in Jerusalem will have to be rebuilt before the tribulation begins.

3. Its culmination: the second coming of Jesus and the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:15-16, 19-21).

- a) The Battle of Armageddon will be a real battle in the future, near the end of the tribulation.
- b) Demonic influences will cause the kings of the earth to gather their armies for an all-out assault on Jerusalem.
- c) The Antichrist will lead the charge against Jesus and his followers (Revelation 16:13-16; 19:19).
- d) Jesus Christ will return to earth with the armies of heaven (Matthew 25:31; Revelation 19:14); His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4); He will defeat the forces of evil (Revelation 19:15-16). <sup>23</sup>
- e) Jesus will cast the Antichrist and the false prophet into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:1-6); He will bind Satan; and set up His kingdom on earth for 1,000 years.



- f) At Armageddon the Lord Jesus Christ "treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:19), and all things will be made right.

# PART 3 THE RAPTURE

---

## A. What is the Rapture?

1. The word "rapture" comes from the Latin verb *rapiemur* which means "to carry off" or "catch up."<sup>24</sup>
2. The Rapture is the catching away of the church from earth to heaven<sup>25</sup> (1 Thess. 4:17).

## B. Five views of when the Rapture takes place

1. Mid-Tribulation Rapture View: The church (believers) will be raptured at the midpoint of the 7-year Tribulation Period.
  - a) Rapture occurs at the *abomination of desolation* which occurs at the midpoint of the 7-year Tribulation Period (Daniel 9:27) and, therefore, Matthew 24:22 is referring to this point in time when the church is raptured.
  - b) Another argument for this view is that the church, believers in Christ, are raptured before the Great Tribulation (last 3½ years).
2. Partial Rapture View: There will be a series of raptures.
  - a) Whenever a portion of believers are ready, they will be removed from the earth.<sup>26</sup>
  - b) It is contended that not all believers will be taken at the rapture but only those who are "watching and waiting" for that event, and have reached some degree of spiritual attainment that makes them worthy to be included.<sup>27</sup>
3. Pre-wrath Rapture View: The rapture takes place between the beginning of the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord.<sup>28</sup>
  - a) The Tribulation is divided into the three stages described in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24).
  - b) Stage 1: The beginning of sorrows (Matt. 24:8).
  - c) Stage 2: The Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21). The Great Tribulation is the last half of the Tribulation period, three and one-half years in length. It is distinguished from the Tribulation period because the Beast, or Antichrist, will be revealed, and the wrath of God will greatly intensify during this time.<sup>29</sup>
  - d) Stage 3: The Day of the Lord (Matt. 24:30-31). The phrase "day of the Lord" usually identifies events that take place at the end of history (Isaiah 7:18-25) and is often closely associated with the phrase "that day."<sup>30</sup>
  - e) The Rapture will then take place between the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord when the Lord releases his wrath.

4. Post Tribulation Rapture View: The church (believers) will be raptured after the seven-year Tribulation Period. Those holding this view base their position on the following:
  - a) Matthew 24:3-22. Christ's return here refers to the second coming after the seven-year Tribulation Period. The word "elect" refers to Church Period believers.
  - b) Revelation 7:3. The "144,000" symbolically represents the Church Period believers.
  - c) Revelation 13:5-8. "Saints" (NIV) refers to Church Period believers.
  - d) There is no unique group called Tribulation Saints.
  
5. Pre-Tribulation Rapture View: The church (believers) will be raptured before the 7-year Tribulation Period. Most Bible commentators listed in "Charts of Bible Prophecy" (House) and others support this view.<sup>31</sup>
  - a) The word "church" (Gr. *ekklesia*) which had been used extensively in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 is not to be found in Chapters 4 through 19, suggesting that it has already been raptured at this point.
  - b) Since the entire Tribulation Period is a pouring out of God's wrath (Revelation 6:17), the Rapture must occur before this pouring out occurs. This principle is based on Genesis Chapters 19-22 where God removed His own before his wrath was unleashed. The angel could not begin to destroy Sodom until Lot was safely removed from the area. It is also depicted in Genesis Chapter 6-8 where Noah was removed before God destroyed all living creatures in the flood.
  - c) Oliver Greene<sup>32</sup> cites the following verses in support of the Pre-tribulation
  - d) "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:9 NIV) <sup>33</sup>
  - e) "Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth." (Rev. 3:10 NIV)
  - f) Some also believe the term "*the one who now holds it back*" in II Thessalonians 2:7-8, refers to the Holy Spirit, and the phrase "*taken out of the way*" refers to his restraining of sin through the church. This would then occur when the church is raptured.
  - g) This view was held by the early church.<sup>34</sup> Some theologians believe the pre-tribulation view was "invented" by J. N. Darby in 1830, while other Bible researchers have identified several of the early church fathers, such as Irenaeus (AD 130-202), Cyprian (AD 200-258), and Ephraim the Syrian (AD 306-373) as holding a pre-tribulation view as early as the second century AD.<sup>35</sup>
  - h) The doctrine of imminence. The word imminent means "likely to happen at any moment; impending." When we speak of the imminence of Christ's return, we mean that He could come back at any moment. There is nothing more in biblical prophecy that needs to happen before Jesus comes again.<sup>36</sup>

6. Readers who are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the various views of the Rapture are encouraged to research this subject further.
  - a) "Three Views of the Rapture" (Stanley N. Gundry).
  - b) "The Rapture Question" (John F. Walvoord).
  - c) "Understanding Revelation" (Gary G. Cohen).
  - d) "Kept From the Hour" (George B. Stanton).

### C. The Judgment Seat of Christ

1. All believers will stand before the "Bema seat," the judgment seat of Christ to be rewarded for their earthly works (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10).
2. Two different Greek words are used in the NT to describe an instrument or a means of trying or judging anything:
  - a) Criterion: "*kriterion*": meaning to be judged. This word refers to a judicial act or a court of justice.<sup>37</sup> (Jas 2:6; 1 Cor. 6:2, 4)
  - b) Bema: "*bēma*": meaning to be rewarded. The bema refers to a place where all contestants in Grecian games were rewarded. It was never used as a judicial bench.<sup>38</sup>
3. In Greek times a bema was a raised, throne-like stone platform on which rulers or judges sat when making speeches (Acts 12:21) or hearing and deciding cases (e.g., Acts 18: 12-17). It was also used to present awards to the victors in an athletic contest. The "bema seat" is where the presiding officer sat.
4. Bema seat: where the presiding officer sat.
5. Only believers will stand before this judgment seat and will be rewarded for the earthly deeds they accomplished. Their sins are not being judged here since they have already been judged on the cross. The outcome will be a reward (or deprivation of reward). Salvation is not in question (Psalm 103:12; Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 3:15; 1 John 2:12).
6. The time of the bema of Christ: most likely right after the rapture of the church.
  - a) J. Dwight Pentecost provides several good arguments showing the event taking place immediately following the Rapture of the church.<sup>39</sup>
  - b) Charles Ryrie concurs with this timing.<sup>40</sup>
7. The place of the bema of Christ: in heaven.
  - a) Since the bema follows the Rapture, it must take place in the heavens (1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Cor. 5:1-8).
  - b) It will take place in the Lord's presence.
8. The Judge at the bema: Jesus (John 5:22).

- a) **The Judge will be Jesus Christ himself (2 Cor. 5:10).**
  - b) A part of the exaltation of Jesus Christ is the right to manifest divine authority in judgment.
9. The subjects at the bema: believers only.
- a) **The bema of Christ is concerned only with believers.**
  - b) The first personal pronoun "we" occurs with too great a frequency in 2 Cor. 5:1-19 to miss this point.
  - c) Pentecost further states that we will not be judged en masse, or in classes, but one by one in accordance with individual merit.<sup>41</sup>
  - d) **All believers will be judged in heaven. All righteous acts—many of which will have been disregarded and some punished on earth—will be finally rewarded.**
10. The basis of the examination at the bema of Christ: the believer's works, not their sins (Rom. 8:1; cf. Prov. 16:2).
- a) It is not to determine whether the one judged is a believer or not...the question of salvation is not being considered.
  - b) Because of the atoning work of Christ on the cross all sins have been forgiven to those who have accepted Christ as their Savior. This judgment, therefore, is not about the believer's sins.
  - c) Pentecost points out that the purpose of the bema is to make a public manifestation, demonstration, or revelation of the essential character and motives of the individual.<sup>42</sup>
  - d) The believer's works, called "the things done in the body" are brought into judgment in order that it may be determined whether they are good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10). Concerning the word "bad" used in 2 Corinthians 5:10 (Gr. *phaulos*); does not refer to one's sins but simply means worthless<sup>43</sup> possibly a reference to doing works for the wrong motives (1 Cor. 4:5; Prov. 16:2).
  - e) The Lord's purpose here is not to chasten his child for his sins, but to reward his service for things done with the proper motives.
  - f) It must be emphasized that these are not works *for* salvation but works resulting *from* salvation (Eph. 2:10).
  - g) The reward will be based on the individual's inner character and motivation.
  - h) Each believer will be judged in accordance with the abilities ("talents") given to them by God. See the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-29; 1 Pet. 4:11).
11. The rewards of the bema of Christ: crowns (or wreaths), as many as five (1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Thess. 2:19; Jas 1:12; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4). These crowns will most likely be used for worshipping God (Rev. 4:10).
- a) The result of this judgment will be the gain or loss of eternal rewards—not punishment (1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Rom. 14:10-12).



- b) These are sometimes depicted as crowns (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10; 1 Cor. 9:24-25; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; 1 Thess. 2:19).<sup>44</sup>
- c) These represent leadership positions and service for Christ in his kingdom (Matthew 25:21; Luke 19:17; Rev. 20:6).
- d) In the NT there are five areas in which specific mention is made of a crown reward.
- e) Crown of Life (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10): Martyr's crown for those who have persevered under trials and have been "faithful unto death"
- f) Crown of Glory (1 Pet. 5: 1, 4): "Shepherds of God's flock,"..."elders" (overseers), those who felt called to care for a community of believers.
- g) Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8): For those who long for the coming of Christ
- h) Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19): Probably all believers since Paul sees no contradiction in referring to both Christ and his friends as his hope and joy and crown in heaven.
- i) Crown of Victory (1 Cor. 9:25-27): An incorruptible crown given to those who discipline themselves to live a life consistent with their testimony

12. Other rewards are mentioned in the NT:

- a) White robe (Rev. 3:5)
- b) Hidden manna (Rev. 2:17)
- c) White stone (Rev. 2:17)
- d) Seat of honor given to "overcomers" (Rev. 3:21). Overcomers are followers of Christ who successfully resist the power and temptation of the world's system. An overcomer is not sinless, but holds fast to faith in Christ until the end. He does not turn away when times get difficult or become an apostate.

13. The significance of the bema of Christ: a profoundly positive aspect of reward for earthly service.

- a) Randy Alcorn reminds us that the Bible treats this judgment of believers with great sobriety. It's not a meaningless formality, but a monumental event in which things of eternal consequence are instituted.<sup>45</sup>
- b) It has a profoundly positive aspect of reward for earthly service, as well as the sobering aspect of loss of reward for unfaithful service. Jesus says to Christians, "I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds" (Rev. 2:23). He said, "I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward" (Mark 9:41).

## **D. The Marriage Feast of the Lamb**

1. The marriage feast of the Lamb is a future event where the church is joined with Jesus Christ probably after the judgment seat of Christ and before the second coming (Rev. 19:7-10; Eph. 5:25-27).

2. The marriage feast of the Lamb bears similarity to the third stage of a traditional Jewish marriage.
3. Stage 1: The Jewish betrothal. A legal binding between a young boy and a young girl. This resembles the point in time when a person accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior.
  - a) This was the legal binding of a young boy and girl, usually arranged by their parents.
  - b) The children (for they were often ten to thirteen years of age at this point) were legally married; however, there was no physical (sexual) contact for many years.
  - c) It was a period when the two were given a chance to grow in their relationship.
  - d) Analogy: When a person accepts Christ, he becomes a member of the Body of Christ, the Church, also referred to as the Bride of Christ. During this time, the Christian does not physically see Christ but is given the opportunity to grow in his/her relationship with Christ.
4. Stage 2: The Jewish marriage. The bridegroom comes for his bride and is married to her. This resembles the rapture of the church (bride).
  - a) At the appropriate time, usually midnight, the young husband accompanied with his male friends in a torch parade would go to the house of the bride for the marriage ceremony.
  - b) Analogy: When Christ comes for His bride (the Church) at the Rapture, we will physically see Him face to face for the first time (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 John 3:2).
  - c) Christ will adorn the Church in white robes which represent its righteousness and holiness made possible by His shed blood on the cross.
5. Stage 3: The Jewish marriage feast of the bride and groom. This resembles the marriage feast of the Lamb. The groom usually took the bride to his fathers' house where they would live (cp. John 14:1-2)
  - a) Friends of the bride and groom joined them in a happy, celebrative supper, rejoicing in the consummation of their marriage.
  - b) The friends would give the bride and groom lavish gifts.
  - c) Analogy: Christ will also have a Marriage Feast with His bride.
  - d) Whether this marriage feast takes place in heaven or on earth is not clear. In Revelation 19:7-10 only an announcement of the feast is made, and therefore it is possible that the feast may take place after Christ's return to the earth.<sup>46</sup>
  - e) After the marriage and the marriage feast which usually lasted several days, the groom would take the bride to his home which was usually an "add-on" to his father's home (cp: John 14:1-2).
  - f) The complete metaphor of this marriage expresses the tender love of Christ for his people.<sup>47</sup>

# PART 4 THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

The second coming of Jesus Christ is the hope of believers that God is in control of all things, and is faithful to the promises and prophecies in His Word. In His first coming, Jesus Christ came to earth as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem, just as prophesied. Jesus fulfilled many of the prophecies of the Messiah during His birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection. However, there are some prophecies regarding the Messiah that Jesus has not yet fulfilled. The second coming of Christ will be the return of Christ to fulfill these remaining prophecies. In His first coming, Jesus was the suffering Servant. In His second coming, Jesus will be the conquering King. In His first coming, Jesus arrived in the most humble of circumstances. In His second coming, Jesus will arrive with the armies of heaven at His side.<sup>48</sup>

## A. Jesus came first as a servant; he will return as King.<sup>49</sup>

Jesus' First Coming (Servant)	Jesus' Second Coming (King)
He came in humiliation (Phil. 2:5-7)	He will return in exaltation (Rev. 1:5-6)
He came to serve (Matt. 20:28)	He will return to be served (Rev. 22:3)
He came as the suffering servant (Phil. 3:30)	He will return as the conquering King (Rev. 19:16)

## B. The return of Jesus can be viewed as one miraculous event which has two stages.

1. Stage 1: at the rapture Jesus comes for his followers (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thess. 4:16-17 NIV)*

2. Stage 2: At the second coming Jesus comes with his followers (Rev. 19:11-14).<sup>50</sup>

*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 wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean (Rev. 19:11-14 NIV)*

### C. Jesus' second coming will be astonishing.

1. Jesus' second coming will be unexpected (Matt. 24:42-44; 1 Thess. 5:1-2).

*"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come (Matt. 24:42 NIV). Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, <sup>2</sup> for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:1-2 NIV).*

2. Jesus' second coming will be glorious (Matt. 16:27; 25:31).

*For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done (Matt. 16:27 NIV). "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne (Matt. 25:31 NIV).*

3. Jesus' second coming will be visible (Mat. 26:64, Acts 1:9-11).

*"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matt. 26:64 NIV) After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. <sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11 NIV).*

4. Jesus' second coming will be loud (Rev. 19:16-17).<sup>51</sup>

*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first (1 Thess. 4:16 NIV).*

*On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. <sup>17</sup> And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God (Rev. 19:16-17 NIV)*

5. Jesus' second coming will be decisive (Matt. 25:31-46).

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep (believers) from the goats (unbelievers). <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. <sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' <sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' <sup>40</sup> "The King will reply, 'Truly I*

*tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' <sup>41</sup> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:31-41 NIV).*

- a) Survivors of the Tribulation: "Sheep" (right side) represent Christians who naturally cared for Jewish people during the Tribulation; "Goats" (left side) represent the unbelievers.

6. Jesus' second coming will be victorious (Rev.16:12-16; 19:17-21; 20:1-3).

*Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon (Rev. 16:16 NIV). And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, <sup>18</sup> so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small." <sup>19</sup> Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. <sup>20</sup> But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. <sup>21</sup> The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh (Rev. 19:17-21 NIV).*

- a) Mankind's final, and most devastating war, will take place in the Valley of Megiddo, also called the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12-14).
- b) He will defeat the Antichrist, the false prophet, and the world's nations assembled at Armageddon (Rev. 19:17-21).
- c) Satan will be seized by a mighty angel who will bind him and throw him into the Abyss (bottomless pit) for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).

*And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. <sup>2</sup> He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. <sup>3</sup> He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. (Rev. 20:1-3 NIV)*

#### **D. We do not know when Jesus' second coming will occur.**

1. Nowhere in the Scripture are believers commanded to figure out the date of Christ's return. In fact, there is a great deal of Scriptural warning against date setting (Matt. 24:36, 42, 44; 25:13; Mark 13:32-33; Acts 1:7).

*"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father (Matt. 24:36 NIV)"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come (Matt. 24:42)He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. (Acts 1:7 NIV)*

2. Jesus will return when he is not expected (Matt. 24:44; Luke 12:40; 1 Thess. 5:1-2).

*Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to*

*you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. (1 Thess. 5:1-2 NIV)*

- a) There have been over 50 erroneous predictions about when Jesus will return, dates ranging from A.D. 365 to 2011.<sup>52</sup>
- b) Charles Taze Russell: Founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Prophesied that the end of the world would occur by the end of 1914.<sup>53</sup>
- c) Edgar E. Whisenant: A Christian layman, predicted the Rapture of the Church would occur on September 12, 1988. His booklet, "88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Return in 1988," sold over four million copies. He confidently asserted, "Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong." When the event failed to occur, he issued a new date of **Sept. 15, 1988; then Oct. 3, 1988; and then again selected a day in 1989, 1990 and 1991.**
- d) Harold Camping (Civil Engineer): President of the Family Radio Network, set the date for the Lord's return to be in the fall of 1994, later adjusted to May 21, 2011. His prediction was based on a complicated mathematical formula that tied the Rapture to the Jewish holiday of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles). He is now known for issuing multiple failed predictions of dates for the End Times, which temporarily gained him a global following and millions of dollars of donations

#### **E. But we are to always be ready for the return of Jesus.**

1. We must be ready and alert for Jesus' return (Matt. 24:44; 25:13; Titus 2:11-13; Jas. 5:7-8).

*So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (Matt. 24:44 NIV) "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. (Matt. 25:13 NIV) For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope-- the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, (Titus 2:11-13 NIV)*

2. We are to live in continuous fellowship with Jesus so that when he returns we will be confident and unashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2:28).

*And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. (1 Jn. 2:28 NIV)*

#### **F. Seven clues that the "day" is approaching.**

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:24-25 NIV)*

1. Clue No. 1 Israel will be regathered as a nation (Ezek. 37:1-14)
  - a) Ezek. 37:1-14 Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14) came to him after God had directed him to prophesy the rebirth of Israel in

chapter 36. God announced, through the prophet, that Israel will be restored to her land in blessing under the leadership of "David, My servant [who] shall be king over them" (Ezekiel 37:24), clearly a reference to the future under Jesus Christ the Messiah, descendant of David (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33). However, this promise seemed impossible in light of Israel's present condition. She was "dead" as a nation, deprived of her land, her king, and her temple. She had been divided and dispersed for so long that unification and restoration seemed impossible. So God gave Ezekiel the vision of the dry bones as sign.

- b) Israel was dead spiritually (dry bones) but someday God would breath life back into it (Ezek. 37:4-5)
  - c) Scattered Jews would someday be brought back to the land of Israel (Ezek. 37:7, 12)
  - d) Was this vision about the Post-exilic Restoration? (Probably not)
  - e) The Restoration was primarily with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin
  - f) Many Jews were still scattered throughout the world
  - g) Only a few of those returned after the Restoration
  - h) AD 70--1917...Jews ("dry bones") scattered
  - i) Balfour Declaration (Nov. 2, 1917).
  - j) Israel declared as a sovereign nation (May 14, 1948).
  - k) Israel's spiritual revival: "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD." (37:14)
  - l) Romans 11:26 "And so all Israel will be saved..."
  - m) The church has not replaced Israel
2. Clue No. 2: The gospel will be preached worldwide (Matt. 24:14).
- a) Q: Do we have the technology to preach the gospel to the whole world?
  - b) The Bible has already been translated into 2,200 languages (90% of world population).
  - c) GMO, 50,000 decisions for Jesus every 24 hours.
  - d) The gospel is being preached worldwide today!
3. Clue No. 3: There will exist a global means of communication (Rev. 11:9).
- a) Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:9) "For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial."
  - b) The technology already exists today for anyone to see anything that is televised worldwide or sent over the Internet.
4. Clue No. 4: The economy will be controlled on a worldwide scale (Rev. 13:16-18).
- a) The technology exists today for electronic banking worldwide.

- b) As nations become more dependent on each other, a need for a worldwide control system is inevitable.
5. Clue No 5: It will be just like the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37; Gen. 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (Matt. 24:37 NIV)*

*Genesis 6:5 "...every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*"

*2 Timothy 3:1-5 "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them."*

6. Clue No. 6: The rise of a powerful federation of ten (Dan. 2:31-44; 7:1-7, 24).
- a) Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2)—ten toes.
- b) Daniel's vision of four beasts (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24).
- c) Most likely comes out of the old Roman Empire area (legs).
7. Clue No. 7: It will be preceded by scoffers (2 Peter 3:3-4).

*Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." (2 Pet. 3:3-4 NIV)*

### **G. Jesus is coming soon.**

"Jesus Himself said that He is coming soon: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon'" (Revelation 22:20). And then John adds these words: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." John's book was penned nearly two thousand years ago, which leads many people to wonder what Jesus meant by "soon."

The Greek word *tachu*, which is translated "soon" or "quickly," means "without unnecessary delay." It does not mean "immediately." The same word is used in other places in the New Testament, but, interestingly, it is used most often by Jesus in the book of Revelation (Revelation 2:16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7, 12, and 20). The meaning seems to be that events have been set in motion that will usher in His arrival without any unnecessary delay. Everything is moving along according to God's timetable" (Houdmann, S. Michael).

Because he is coming soon...

1. We are to be evangelists (Matt. 28:1-20).
2. We are to be examples (Titus 2:12-13; 2 Pet. 3:11-12).
3. We are to be encouragers (Heb. 10:25).



# PART 5 THE MILLENNIUM

---

## A. What is the Millennium?

1. The term "Millennium" refers to the term "thousand years" seen six times in Revelation 20:2-7 and is one of the most debated issues in eschatology.<sup>54</sup>
2. The term "millennium" is from the Latin *mille*, meaning "thousand," and *annum*, meaning "year." The millennium<sup>55</sup> is a thousand-year period.
3. The "thousand years" refers to the kingdom reign of Jesus with his saints. the time of the reign of Christ and believers over the earth Rev. 20:6.<sup>56</sup>
4. The debate centers on the meaning of the "thousand years" mentioned six times in Revelation 20:2-7.
5. Some seek to interpret the "thousand years" in an allegorical manner. Others prefer a more literal (grammatico-historical) method of interpretation.
6. Following are four views of the Millennium.<sup>57</sup>

## B. The Amillennial View

1. Millennium: There is no literal millennium on earth after the Second Coming of Jesus. The Kingdom is present now in the church age and will exist in the future. Also called "realized millennialism."
2. Tribulation: The Tribulation is being experienced in this present age. There is no seven-year Tribulation period.
3. Rapture of the Church: There is no rapture of believers. When Jesus returns there will be a general resurrection of both believers and unbelievers.<sup>58</sup>
4. Second Coming of Jesus: It will be a single event, not two.
5. Israel and the Church: The church is the new Israel. There is no distinction between Israel and the church.
6. Proponents: This view is held by Reformed theologians and the Roman Catholic Church.

## C. The Postmillennial View

1. Millennium: The present age blends into the Millennium because of the progress of the gospel and resulting improving conditions in the world.
2. Tribulation: The Tribulation is experienced in this present age. There is no "seven-

year Tribulation Period."

3. Rapture of the Church: The Rapture and the Second Coming are a single event. There is no distinction between the two.
4. Second Coming of Jesus: The Rapture and the Second Coming are a single event. There is no distinction between the two. The Second Coming takes place after the Millennium.
5. Israel and the Church: The church is the new Israel. There is no distinction between Israel and the church.
6. Proponents: Augustine, Christian Reconstructionists.<sup>59</sup> This view lost many of its proponents after WWII when the world was seen as getting worse, not better.

#### **D. The Premillennial (Historic) View**

1. Millennium: The Millennium is both present and future. Jesus is reigning as King in heaven. The Millennium is not necessarily 1,000 years.
2. Tribulation: There will be a future seven-year Tribulation period. Historic-Premillennialists hold to a post-tribulation view: the church goes through the future Tribulation.
3. Rapture of the Church: The Rapture occurs at the end of the Tribulation.
4. Second Coming of Jesus: The Rapture and the Second Coming take place simultaneously when Jesus returns to reign on earth.
5. Israel and the Church: There is some distinction between Israel and the church. The church is now seen as "Spiritual Israel," a term sometimes used to suggest concepts related to replacement theology, in which the promises directed toward Israel are now given to the Church, instead.
6. Proponents: This view was the dominant view in the first three centuries of the Christian church. Some noted modern theologians also hold this view.

#### **E. The Premillennial (Futuristic) View<sup>60</sup>**

1. Millennium: At the Second Coming Jesus inaugurates a 1,000-year Millennium on earth.
2. Tribulation: There will be a seven-year Tribulation Period preceded by the Rapture of the church.
3. Rapture of the Church: The Rapture of the church will take place prior to the Tribulation Period. The church will not go through the Tribulation.
4. Second Coming of Jesus: The Second Coming will take place in two phases. First, At the Rapture of the Church when Jesus comes for his saints, and second, at the end of the Tribulation when Jesus comes with his saints.

5. Israel and the Church: There is a consistent distinction between Israel and the church throughout history. God has a program for each. Futuristic premillennialists do not hold to replacement theology.
6. Proponents: This seems to be the dominant view of many modern theologians today. Robert G. Clouse affirms that this view is the prevailing view in many evangelical circles today.<sup>61</sup>

## F. Conditions during the Millennium

1. J. Dwight Pentecost describes the conditions that will exist during the Millennium.<sup>62</sup> A few of these conditions are listed as follows:

Scriptures	Description
Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-3	Jesus will reign in Jerusalem (Mount Moriah) where he will teach his ways. There will be no war. There will be a unifying law from God.
Micah 4:4	There will be universal security.
Isa. 11:6-9	The animal kingdom will be changed.
Zeph. 3:9	There will be a unifying language so that all may worship in unison (reversal of Tower of Babel).
Zech. 14:4, 8	Mount of Olives will split in two, forming a great valley, water will flow to the eastern sea (Dead Sea) and to the western sea (Mediterranean)
Zech. 12:10	The ones who crucified Jesus (Jews) will finally recognize him as the Messiah and will weep and mourn.
Zech. 14:10	Jerusalem will be elevated and never destroyed.
Isa. 62:2	Jerusalem (Zion) will be renamed to reflect Israel's new status (MacArthur, 837).

## G. Four major events during the Millennium.<sup>63</sup>

1. The removal of Satan for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).
2. Jesus will reign on earth with the saints for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4-6).
3. The return of Satan at the end of the 1,000-year period (Rev. 20:7).
4. The revolt of society when Satan returns (Rev. 20: 8-10).

Pentecost,  
537ff,524

## H. Will there be a temple in the Millennium?

1. Millennial Temple (Pentecost 512),

2. See YouTube "Ezekiel's Temple"

# PART 6 HEAVEN

---

## A. Different views of what happens after death<sup>64</sup>

1. Christian Science: Death is not real; heaven is a state of mind.
2. Jehovah's Witnesses: The 144,000 live as spirits in heaven. The rest of the righteous live on earth. Salvation is described as a free gift from God, but is said to be unattainable without good works (e.g. preaching) that are prompted by faith (Wikipedia).
3. Islam: Paradise includes a garden populated with maidens ("companions")<sup>65</sup> designed by Allah to provide sexual pleasures to righteous men.
4. Buddhism: People do not have their own individual souls or spirits, but one's desires and feelings may be reincarnated into another person.
5. Mormonism: Eventually everyone goes to one of three "heavenly" kingdoms, with some achieving godhood. Apostates and murderers go to "outer darkness."

## B. Is Heaven a real place?

1. Heaven is the real place where God most fully makes known his presence to bless. It is in heaven where God most fully reveals his glory, and where angels, other heavenly creatures, and redeemed saints all worship him (Grudem).
2. It is where Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father (Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1).
3. Heaven is a real place, not just a state of mind (Geisler-313).
  - a) Jesus used the word "place" three times in regard to heaven (John 14:2-4)
  - b) Jesus also taught us to pray to "our Father in heaven," and that his will be accomplished "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9-10).
  - c) Heaven is a different place than earth (Rev. 21:9-27).
4. The biblical words for "heaven" (Heb. *Shamayim*; Gk: *ouranos*) are used in three different ways (Geisler 294):
  - a) The sky above us (earth's atmosphere—Matt. 6:26)
  - b) The stars (the realm of space—Matt. 24:29)
  - c) The very abode of God, called "the third heaven"<sup>66</sup> or "paradise"—2 Cor. 12:2, 4

## C. Where is heaven?

1. Heaven may be somewhere in a far corner of the universe, shrouded from

human view behind a cloud of God's glory, or in an entirely different physical dimension (Geisler 313).

- a) In favor of heaven being in a faraway place, some have cited Job's reference to God coming from the north (Job 37:22; cf. 26:7).
  - b) In favor of heaven being in another physical dimension, others have noted that Jesus seemed to step in and out of this dimension when in his resurrected body (Luke 24:31; John 20:26).
2. But it is important to remember that God is always near us when we call on Him ([James 4:8](#)), and we are encouraged to "draw near" to Him ([Hebrews 10:1, 22](#)).
  3. Perhaps God has intentionally covered its location in mystery, for it is more important for us to focus on the God of heaven than the description or location of it. It is more important to know the why than the where (Got Questions Ministries).

#### **D. Fourteen things we know about heaven**

1. Heaven is only for those who have been **born-again** (John 3:3).<sup>67</sup>
  - a) That should compel us to share the gospel while there is still time!
  - b) This contradicts the view of universal salvation
2. Heaven's beauty and wonder will be beyond our **imagination** (1 Cor. 2:9)
  - a) But there are still descriptions that stimulate our imaginations and give us insights that make us long for our eternal home.
  - b) However, in the following verse it continues, "...but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." The context makes it clear that this revelation is God's Word (v. 13), which tells us what God has prepared for us.
  - c) God says he has revealed to us through his Spirit. This means that God has explained to us what Heaven is like—not exhaustively, but accurately. (Alcorn 18-19)
  - d) [See ID3, 4 above]
3. Heaven will be filled with **singing** (Rev. 5:13).
  - a) Q: Who will do you suppose will be singing in heaven and what will they be singing about?
  - b) READ Rev. 5:13
  - c) Q: In what ways is singing so important when it comes to worshipping God?
  - d) Ans: Singing/music is more from the heart (expressive) and is much more pleasing to the ear.
  - e) Q: Do you think there will be different styles of singing in heaven?
  - f) Ans; See Ephesians 5:19
4. A **Holy City, Jerusalem**, will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:10).

- a) READ Revelation 21:10 and 16
  - b) Notice the size and shape of this city...a perfect cube.
  - c) ~1400 miles wide, long, high.
  - d) Q: Why will this city be a perfect cube?
  - e) Ans: READ 1 Kings 6:20 - Possibly to remind us of the Holy of Holies
  - f) The place where God met man in the Tabernacle and provided forgiveness of his sins.
  - g) Possibly also to remind us of the Trinity
5. The gates of heaven will **never be closed** (Rev. 21:25a).
- a) READ Rev. 21:25a
  - b) Q: Why are there gates and walls in heaven since they were designed to keep people out, especially enemies?
  - c) Ans: No enemies to keep out in heaven.
  - d) Read Psalm 122:2-7 → peace, security.
  - e) The open gates may symbolically remind us that our safety has been permanently bought by our God.
  - f) The wall might also give us a sense of permanent security.
  - g) Also, they show that everyone will have access because of Jesus Christ atonement.
  - h) People have always gathered at the gates of a city to share news and tell stories.
6. There will be **no night** in heaven (Rev. 21:25b; 22:5).
- a) READ Rev. 21:25b, 22:5
  - b) Q: Do you think this means we will never sleep in heaven?
  - c) Ans: Sleep is one of life's greatest pleasures, not restless, troubled sleep, but refreshing sleep.
  - d) It is quite possible we will enjoy a wonderful, enjoyable sleep from time to time as part of God's design for the rhythm of life. (Alcorn 318, 264)
7. "**Nothing impure** will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:27).
- a) Q: Will we still be capable of sinning in heaven?
  - b) Ans: No (Rev. 21:27).
  - c) Note: It is not that outside of the New Jerusalem, unsaved people are still roaming around, but this pictures a city with open gates on a new earth where believers will dwell throughout eternity.
  - d) Ans: Hebrews 9:26 says with an air of finality that Christ sacrificed himself to "put away sin" (NASB) or "to do away with sin" (NIV).
  - e) We will be raised "incorruptible" (1 Cor. 15:52, NKJV) or imperishable (NAU).

The Greek word *aphthartos* means uncorrupted (immune to corruption)

- f) Anyone who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:7).
  - g) Christ will not allow us to be vulnerable to the very thing he died to deliver us from (Alcorn 300)
  - h) Three times in the final two chapters of Scripture, we're told that those still in their sins have no access to Heaven, and never will (Rev. 21:8, 27; 22:15)
8. Heaven will have a **river of life** flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb—it will flow down the middle of the great street of the city (Rev. 22:1).
- a) We may need refreshing water in heaven like we need water now.
  - b) Notice the source of the river is the throne of God, and of the Lamb.
  - c) It may remind us of God's thirst-quenching, need satisfying nature. Read John 4:14 and Phil. 4:19. (Alcorn 248)
  - d) READ Gen. 2:10. There was also a river in the Garden of Eden which nourished the garden itself.
9. On each side of the river the tree of life will stand, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit **every month** (Rev. 22:2).
- a) The tree of life is first seen in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9).
  - b) It appears to have been a source of on-going physical life (Alcorn 249)
  - c) However, once Adam and Eve sinned they were banished from the Garden, separated from the tree, and subject to physical death, just as they experienced spiritual death.
  - d) [Note: Although we cannot say for certain that Adam and Eve will be in Heaven, there are enough indicators (God covered them with skins of a sacrificed animal, they knew a Savior would come) for us to work out that this is probably the case, and almost no indicators against it].
  - e) Note: Tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not mentioned in description of the New Earth...no longer to tempt us.
  - f) Time in heaven: "Yielding fruit every month" → time will still exist in heaven. A misleading translation in the KJV says "there should be time no longer" (Rev. 10:6), but other translations correctly translate this phrase "There will be no more delay" (NIV, RSV). (Alcorn 258).
  - g) Time in heaven: The Noachic Covenant, which is everlasting (Gen. 9:16), also stated that seasons would always exist (Gen. 8:22)
  - h) [See Alcorn, 259 for other evidences of time in heaven].
10. The leaves of the tree will be for the **healing**<sup>68</sup> of the nations (Rev. 22:2b).
- a) Why will nations require healing (Grk. *therapeia*) in heaven since there will be no death, or crying, or pain in heaven (Rev. 21:4).
  - b) It could be the leaves will have properties that will help people maintain health and energy (Alcorn 250).
  - c) Another view is that John appears to be quoting from Ezekiel 47:12, where



water from the temple produces trees with healing leaves.

- d) He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth, he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes (Life Application Bible 2333)

11. We will see God's **face**, and his **name** will be on our foreheads (Rev. 22:4).

- a) READ Rev. 22:4
- b) This may be shocking because God said "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"(READ Exod. 33:20)
- c) Even Moses did not see God's face, he saw only his back (Exod. 33:18-23)
- d) "Face" may be an anthropomorphism since God is a spirit (John 4:24), but somehow we will see the Father's face (Alcorn 166-168).
- e) Name on forehead. This name upon their foreheads recalls the dedication of the high priest who wore a plate of gold upon his headdress which was engraved: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Ex. 28:36).

12. All things in heaven and on earth will be together under **one head**, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10).

- a) "To bring all things together" meaning there will no longer be separate realms of heaven and earth.
- b) "Heaven and earth will no longer be separated as they are now," Peter Toon. (Alcorn 183)
- c) New heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem will all be accessible and under one head, Jesus Christ.
- d) No longer will there be two universes, one for humans and one for God. Both will be together (2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3) (Alcorn 177-178).

13. In eternity we will be made perfect and complete—we will no longer need the **spiritual gifts** (1 Cor. 13:10).

- a) Meaning is debated.
- b) View No. 1: All spiritual gifts will no longer be needed in heaven. We will no longer need the spiritual gifts which were needed for the church, so they will come to an end (Life Application Bible 2083)
- c) View No. 2: All miracle gifts will no longer be needed when the Bible ("perfect") is completed [Cessationist View].
- d) View No. 3: Only miracle gifts will no longer be needed in heaven. Others such as S. Michael Houdmann and Matthew Henry believe the phrase "the imperfect disappears" is referring to the gifts of prophecy, knowledge and tongues (vs. 8-9). (Got Questions Ministries 1 Cor. 13:10) (Logos Bible Software 5.2a SR-6 (5.2.1.0155) Matthew Henry's Commentary).

14. No longer will there be any curse (Rev. 22:3).<sup>69</sup>

- a) No longer will the earth be cursed (Gen. 3:17)—a new earth will be made which will be restored to its original design—we have never seen the earth

as God originally made it.

- b) Man will no longer have to “toil painfully” in order to survive (Gen. 3:17-18)—man will work for the sheer pleasure of it, to please and glorify God by developing skills and abilities (Alcorn 104).
- c) No longer will the earth produce “thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:18)—it will produce incredibly pleasant plants and trees.
- d) No longer will man “return to the ground,” (Gen. 3:19)—man will live forever.

### **E. The Bottom Line**

These 14 things are revealed to “unfasten” you from this present life of sin and struggle...and fix your focus on your eternal home in heaven with God.

# PART 7 PERSONAL ESCHATOLOGY

---

## A. Resurrections in the Bible

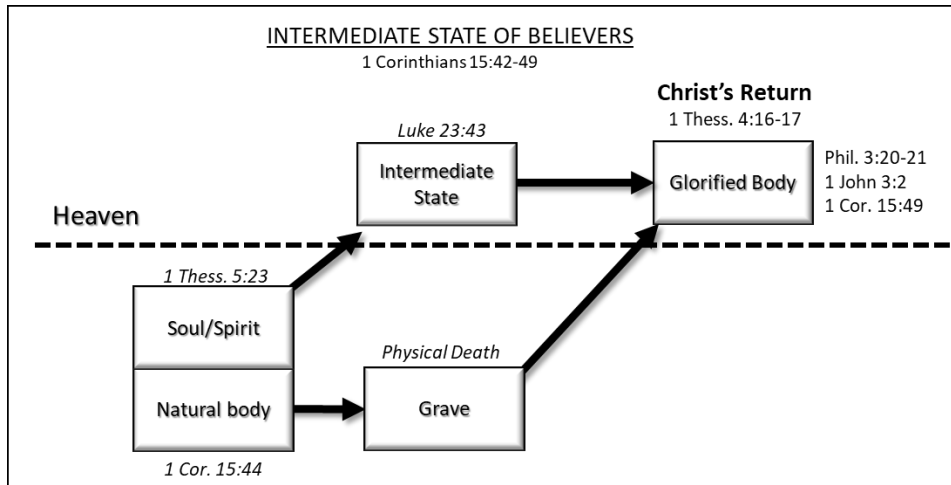
1. The Bible is clear about the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, all believers in Jesus Christ, and all others. All told, there are seven resurrections described in the Bible.
2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ
  - a) See Matt 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-10; Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:32; 10:40; 17:3; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 10:9; I Corinthians 15:4; Eph. 1:20; I Thessalonians 4:14, I Peter 3:18.
  - b) The first resurrection was that of Jesus Christ. Even though others were raised from the dead before Christ, he was the first to rise from the grave with a body that was no longer subject to death (Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18).
3. The resurrection of some saints at the time of Christ's death.
  - a) The bodies of many believers were resurrected at the time of Jesus' resurrection, and they went into the holy city, Jerusalem, and appeared unto many people (Matt. 27:50-53).
4. The resurrection at the Rapture of church believers who had died.
  - a) At the Rapture, those believers who had died will be resurrected first, then those who are still alive will be resurrected (I Cor. 15:51-58; I Thess. 4:14-17).
5. The resurrection of the two witnesses during the Tribulation Period.
  - a) During the Tribulation God will send two witnesses to proclaim the gospel and perform miracles.
  - b) After a period of time the "beast" will kill them and allow their bodies to remain unburied. After 3½ days God will resurrect them (Rev. 11:3-13).
6. The resurrection of the Old Testament saints.<sup>70</sup>
  - a) Even in the Old Testament, the Jewish mind accepted the idea of a future resurrection (Isa. 26:19-21; Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:1-3).
  - b) Scholars such as Charles C. Ryrie place this resurrection at the time of Christ's Second Coming.<sup>71</sup>
7. The resurrection of the Tribulation saints.
  - a) Premillennial bible scholars, such as John Walvoord, and Charles Ryrie place this resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 20:4-6).

8. The resurrection of the wicked dead.

- a) The wicked dead are unbelievers who will stand before the Great White Throne to be condemned to the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:11-15). This is called the *second death* (Rev. 20:6).

## B. The Intermediate State of Believers

1. The intermediate state is the time between a person's death and some future date when the person's physical body will be resurrected and rejoined to the spirit.
2. Death is the separation of the body from the spirit (Jas. 2:26).
3. In the case of every death, the body is disposed of, usually by placing it in a grave.



4. But the spirit (mind, emotion, will) of a person continues to live for eternity.
5. As to the nature of this intermediate state the Bible is somewhat silent.
  - a) For unbelievers: The spirit goes immediately into Sheol (OT)/Hades (NT) where they are confined until the Day of Judgment (Rev. 20:11-13). Hades describes a temporary place of conscious torment for the wicked.
  - b) For believers: The Bible is somewhat silent on the intermediate state of believers; however, Luke 23:43 tells us "Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."
6. Scripture also gives us three clues as to the nature of this intermediate state:
  - a) Clue No. 1 (Rev. 6:9-11): Since they "called out in a loud voice," they were able to express themselves verbally. Doing this indicates that they are rational, communicative, and emotional beings. Those beings in Heaven are free to ask God questions, which indicates they are in God's presence. These beings know what is happening on Earth. Those in Heaven are

distinct individuals, "Then each of them was given a white robe...". The wearing of white robes suggests the possibility of having physical forms...not disembodied spirits.

- b) Clue No. 2 (Luke 9:28-36): Moses and Elijah appeared physically with Christ at the Transfiguration. They were not disembodied spirits.
- c) Clue No. 3: (Luke 16:19-31): The story of the rich man who asked to have Lazarus put a drop of water on his tongue. He was not a disembodied spirit.

### C. The glorified body.

1. Believers will receive a glorified body at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
2. Our glorified body will be like Jesus' glorified body (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:49).
  - a) "Like his" = *summorphos* (σύμ-μορφος) = of similarity of form or nature.
  - b) "image" = *eikon* (εἰκών), as an artistic representation, such as on a coin or statue image, likeness. This is where we get the word "icon."
  - c) Jesus' glorified body is a prototype of what our glorified body will be like (see Romans 8:29 "firstborn"= *prototokos* (πρωτότοκος), where we get the word prototype, meaning the first of a kind.

### D. Future Judgments

1. The Judgment of Nations (Matt. 25:31-46).
  - a) Matthew 25:31-46 describes the event when Christ will judge the "nations" (Gr., *ethnos*) meaning all living Gentiles. The Gentiles are described as either sheep or goats.
  - b) The sheep, metaphorically representing believers, are those Gentiles who fed and protected Christian Jews ("brothers of mine") during the Tribulation.
  - c) Christ identifies himself so strongly with his people that he refers to them as "I" in these verses.
  - d) For this these Christian Gentiles inherit the kingdom.
  - e) The goats, representing the unsaved, are the followers of the Antichrist who worshipped him and participated in all his treacherous deeds during the Tribulation.
  - f) They despised and persecuted the believing Jews, and for this Christ says they will go away into eternal punishment.
2. Judgment of the Antichrist and False Prophet (Rev. 19:20).
  - a) At the conclusion of the Battle at Armageddon, all enemies of Christ will be killed and the beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).
  - b) The Antichrist and False Prophet will spend eternity in the lake of fire.
3. The Final Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

- a) At the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ, God will sit upon The Great White Throne and judge every unsaved creature, both living and dead. The one on the throne is none other than God Almighty (Rev. 4:2-11), which must certainly refer to Jesus since all judgment has been granted to him (John 5:22, 26-27).
- b) Death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire.
- c) The lake of fire is called the "second death" (Rev. 20:6, 14).

# APPENDIX

---

## Glossary

The following terms are from S. Michael Houdmann's GotQuestions.Org: <<https://www.gotquestions.org/end-times-timeline.html>>. These terms are in chronological sequence.

The rapture of the church. Christ comes in the clouds to “snatch away” all those who trust in Him (1 Corinthians 15:52). At this same time, the “dead in Christ” will be resurrected and taken to heaven, too. From our perspective today, this is the next event in the eschatological timeline. The rapture is imminent; no other biblical prophecy needs to be fulfilled before the rapture happens.

The rise of the Antichrist. After the church is taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:7–8), a satanically empowered man will gain worldwide control with promises of peace (Revelation 13:1; Daniel 9:27). He will be aided by another man, called the false prophet, who heads up a religious system that requires worship of the Antichrist (Revelation 19:20).

The tribulation. A period of seven years in which God's judgment is poured out on sinful humanity (Revelation 6–16). The Antichrist's rise to power is associated with this time period. During the tribulation on earth, the Church will be in heaven. It is thought that at this time the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will occur in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 19:6–10).

The Battle of Gog and Magog. In the first part of the tribulation, a great army from the north, in alliance with several other countries from the Middle East and Africa, attacks Israel and is defeated by God's supernatural intervention (Ezekiel 38–39). (Some commentators place this battle just before the start of the tribulation.)

The abomination of desolation. At the midway point of the seven-year tribulation, the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and shows his true colors. The Jews are scattered, and many of them turn to the Lord, realizing that Jesus is their Savior. A great persecution breaks out against all those who believe in Christ (Daniel 12:11; Mark 13:14; Revelation 12:17).

The Battle of Armageddon. At the end of the tribulation, Jesus returns with the armies of heaven (Mark 14:62). He saves Jerusalem from annihilation and defeats the armies of the nations fighting under the banner of the Antichrist (Revelation 19:11–21). The Antichrist and the false prophet are captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

The judgment of the nations. Christ will judge the survivors of the tribulation, separating the righteous from the wicked as “sheep” and “goats” (Matthew 25:31–46). (It is thought that at this time the Old Testament saints will be raised

from the dead.) The righteous will enter the Millennial Kingdom; the wicked will be cast into hell.

*The binding of Satan.* Satan will be bound and held in a bottomless pit for the next 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1–3).

*The Millennial Kingdom.* Jesus Himself will rule the world, and Jerusalem will be the capital. This will be a 1,000-year period of peace and prosperity on earth (Revelation 20; Isaiah 60–62). Memorial sacrifices will be offered in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 40–48).

*The last battle.* At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released from his prison for a short time. He will deceive the nations once again, and there will be a rebellion against the Lord that will be quickly defeated (Revelation 20:7–10). Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, never to reappear.

*The Great White Throne Judgment.* All those in hell will be brought forth, and all the wicked from all eras of history will be resurrected to stand before God in a final judgment (Revelation 20:11–15). The verdicts are read, and all of sinful humanity is cast into the lake of fire.

*The new creation.* God completely remakes the heavens and the earth. It is at this time that God wipes away all tears and there will be no more pain, death, or sorrow. The New Jerusalem descends from heaven, and the children of God will enjoy eternity with Him (Revelation 21–22).



## Bibliography

- Alcorn, Randy. *Heaven*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004.
- . *Heaven*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004.
- Clouse, Robert G. *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1977.
- Crossways Bibles. *English Standard Version (ESV) Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008.
- Enns, Paul. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1989.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology, Second Edition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1998.
- Freeman, Hobart E. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968.
- Geisler, Norman. *Systematic Theology, Volume Four*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2005.
- Got Questions Ministries. n.d. November 2014. <[www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)>.
- Greene, Oliver B. *Bible Prophecy*. Greenville: The Gospel Hour, 1970.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- . *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- . *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994, 2000.
- . *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan; Intersity Press, 1994, 2000.
- Gundry, Stanley N. *Three Views on the Rapture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Gunn, David. "Is the Pre-Trib Rapture a Recent Innovation?" *Baptist Bulletin* (2023). January 2023. <<https://baptistbulletin.org/the-baptist-bulletin-magazine/is-the-pre-trib-rapture-a-recent-invention/>>.
- Houdmann, Michael. *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the pretribulational view of the rapture (pretribulationism)? 2022-2023*. 2023. <<https://www.gotquestions.org/pretribulationism.html>>.
- Houdmann, S. Michael. *Got Questions Ministries*. Colorado Springs, n.d. <<http://www.gotquestions.org/>>.
- House, H. Wayne & Randall Price. *Charts of Bible Prophecy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

- Ice, Thomas D. "Myths of the Origin of Pretribulationism." *Liberty University Scholars Crossing* (2009): 5.
- Life Application Bible. *Life Application Bible: New International Version*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers and Zondervan Publishing House, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991.
- Little, Paul E. *Know What You Believe: Connecting Faith and Truth*. Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 2003.
- MacArthur, John and Richard Mayhue. *Bible Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*. Wheaton: Crossway Publishers, 2017.
- MacArthur, John. *Because the Time is Near*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007.
- . *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005.
- McDowell, Josh. *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999.
- Mounce, William D. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958.
- Rose Publishing. *Christianity, Cults & Religions*. Fold-out chart. Torrance: Rose Publishing, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008.
- Ryrie, Charles. *Basic Theology: A Popular Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986, 1999.
- Stedman, Ray C. *Waiting for the Second Coming: Studies in Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1990.
- Taylor, Michael D. *Christianity: Know What You Believe*. Scotts Valley: Unpublished, 2005-2010.
- . *Introduction to Systematic Theology*. 2nd Edition. Scotts Valley: Unpublished, 2005-2010.
- . *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Scotts Valley: Unpublished, 2003-2011.
- Terrell, Justin H. "Eschatology: The Doctrine of the Future." n.d. <<https://fbcdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Session-One-Introduction-to-Eschatology.pdf>>.
- Thayer, J. H. *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, 1981.
- Walvoord, John F. *Major Bible Prophecies*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.
- . *Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990.
- . *The Millennial Kingdom*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959.
- . *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990.

## End Notes

---

- <sup>1</sup> (Terrell)
- <sup>2</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nording, Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1999) 8.
- <sup>3</sup> For more on the two methods of interpreting eschatological literature see J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958) 1-15.
- <sup>4</sup> Pentecost, 38.
- <sup>5</sup> Pentecost, 40.
- <sup>6</sup> Adapted from (Walvoord, The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook, 1990, p. 385)
- <sup>7</sup> R. Albert Mohler, Jr. A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity, May 20054.  
< <http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/05/20/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity-2/>>.  
Accessed October 28, 2011. See also Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, pp. 83-84.
- <sup>8</sup> S. Michael Houdmann <<https://www.gotquestions.org/tribulation.html>>.
- <sup>9</sup> (MacArthur and Mayhue, Bible Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth 676)
- <sup>10</sup> (MacArthur and Mayhue, Bible Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth 685)
- <sup>11</sup> (MacArthur and Mayhue, Bible Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth 706)
- <sup>12</sup> John Walvoord, The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1990) 581.
- <sup>13</sup> (House 122)
- <sup>14</sup> Notice that the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are missing, and the tribe of Joseph is included. This is most likely because the tribes of Dan and Ephraim were so consumed with idolatry.
- <sup>15</sup> (Pentecost 297)
- <sup>16</sup> (Pentecost 304)
- <sup>17</sup> Walvoord, The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook, 233.
- <sup>18</sup> Life Application Bible: New International Version (Grand Rapids: Tyndale House Publishers and Zondervan Publishing House, 1991) 2316.
- <sup>19</sup> John MacArthur, Because the Time is Near (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007) 171-188.
- <sup>20</sup> (Dan. 9:27) "One seven" (NIV) refers to seven years.
- <sup>21</sup> βδέλυγμα, *Bdelugma* (abomination) denotes an object of disgust, repulsion, and abhorrence. In Scripture, it is used primarily to denote things associated with idolatry and gross ungodliness.
- <sup>22</sup> (MacArthur, The MacArthur Bible Commentary 1172-3)
- <sup>23</sup> GotQuestions.org <<https://www.gotquestions.org/battle-Armageddon.html>>. (Houdmann, S. Michael)
- <sup>24</sup> It was used in the Latin Vulgate (about 405 A.D.) translation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, which is the primary biblical reference to the event in question. See Latin Vulgate Bible <<http://www.drbo.org/lvb/chapter/59004.htm>>. Accessed September 30, 2011.
- <sup>25</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.

- 
- <sup>26</sup> Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 1230.
- <sup>27</sup> Pentecost, 158-163.
- <sup>28</sup> H. Wayne House & Randall Price, *Charts of Bible Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) 90. See also Charles Cooper, *The Prewrath Rapture*, Nov. 15, 2005, <[http://prewrathrapture.com/2005/11/the\\_prewrath\\_rapture\\_1.php](http://prewrathrapture.com/2005/11/the_prewrath_rapture_1.php)>. Accessed September 30, 2011.
- <sup>29</sup> S. Michael Houdman <<https://www.gotquestions.org/Great-Tribulation.html>>.
- <sup>30</sup> S. Michael Houdman <<https://www.gotquestions.org/day-of-the-Lord.html>>.
- <sup>31</sup> (House 97)
- <sup>32</sup> (Greene 171)
- <sup>33</sup> Greene writes, "salvation" in this verse from 1 Thessalonians does not only refer to the redemption of the soul from the penalty of sin but to the fullness of salvation—soul, spirit, and body redeemed from sin and the curse. Greene is describing the completeness of salvation—glorification. (Greene 171)
- <sup>34</sup> Ice, Thomas D. "Myths of the Origin of Pretribulationism." *Liberty University Scholars Crossing*, 2009. See also, "Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology." J. Dwight Pentecost (Zondervan), 202-204;
- <sup>35</sup> Some theologians believe the pre-tribulation view was "invented" by J. N. Darby in 1830, while other Bible researchers have identified several of the early church fathers, such as Irenaeus (AD 130-202), Cyprian (AD 200-258), and Ephraim the Syrian (AD 306-373) as holding a pre-tribulation view as early as the second century AD. See Beginning and the End <<http://beginningandend.com/what-did-ancient-church-fathers-believe-about-the-rapture/>>, Matt Ward, What the Ancient Church Fathers Believed <http://www.raptureready.com/2015/08/30/ancient-church-fathers-believed-matt-ward/>. See also (Pentecost 202-204); (MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* 1758); (Gunn); (Houdmann GotQuestions. Org)
- <sup>36</sup> S. Michael Houdmann, "Can the return of Christ truly be said to be imminent?" <<https://www.gotquestions.org/imminent-return-Christ.html>>.
- <sup>37</sup> (Mounce 1196)
- <sup>38</sup> Pentecost, pp. 219-220.
- <sup>39</sup> Pentecost, p. 220.
- <sup>40</sup> Ryrie, p. 597.
- <sup>41</sup> Pentecost, p. 223.
- <sup>42</sup> Pentecost, p. 223.
- <sup>43</sup> "Bad" (2 Cor. 5:10) *phaulos* meaning worthless (Thayer 650)
- <sup>44</sup> Crown (Gr. *stephanos*), a victor's crown, one bestowed with honor and dignity. Whether these are literal crowns or figurative crowns is uncertain. Scriptures such as Psa. 103:4, and 149:4 speak of crowns figuratively while Revelation 4:4 speaks of literal crowns.
- <sup>45</sup> Randy Alcorn, *In what sense will believers be judged in heaven?* <<http://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Mar/28/what-sense-will-believers-be-judged-heaven>>. Accessed June 6, 2016.
- <sup>46</sup> Walvoord 618.
- <sup>47</sup> Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001) 745.

- 
- <sup>48</sup> S. Michael Houdmann; < <https://www.gotquestions.org/second-coming-Jesus-Christ.html>>.
- <sup>49</sup> MacArthur, *Because the Time is Near* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007) 29.
- <sup>50</sup> Charles J. Woodbridge, *Bible Prophecy* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible institute, 1962), 22.
- <sup>51</sup> Ray Stedman does not think the whole world will hear this trumpet call, only believers will hear it. (Stedman 78).
- <sup>52</sup> Dr. Phil Stringer, *The Danger of Date Setting*, Ravenswood Baptist Church, <<http://www.ravenswoodbaptist.com/articals/dangerofdatesetting.htm>>. Accessed Sept. 26, 2011.
- <sup>53</sup> Charles Taze Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, 1889, p.99.
- <sup>54</sup> The term "millennial" used in this document is not to be confused with "millenarianism," which is the belief in a coming ideal society and especially one created by revolutionary action <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/millenarianism>>.
- <sup>55</sup> The term "millennial" used in this document is not to be confused with "millenarianism" which is the belief in a coming ideal society and especially one created by revolutionary action
- <sup>56</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999) 1247.
- <sup>57</sup> These four views of the Millennium are based on several key sources including "The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views" by Robert G. Clouse (InterVarsity Press), "Things to Come" by J. Dwight Pentecost (Zondervan), "The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook" by John Walvoord (Zondervan), "Charts of Bible Prophecy" by H. Wayne House and Randall Price, pp 72, 134 (Zondervan), and others listed in the bibliography of this document.
- <sup>58</sup> (Clouse 182-183.)
- <sup>59</sup> Christian Reconstructionism (also known as theonomy) is a highly controversial movement within some conservative Christian circles. It maintains that the world should be brought under (reconstructed) the lordship of Jesus Christ in all areas: social, moral, political, judicial, military, family, art, education, music, etc. Christian Reconstructionism advocates the restoration of Old Testament civil and moral laws in order to reconstruct present American society into an Old Testament-type Mosaic form and that the three main areas of society – family, church, government – should all be biblically modeled, the Bible being the sole standard. This would include severe punishments for lawbreakers. Some Christian Reconstructionists would advocate death for adulterers, abortionists, idolaters, murderers, homosexuals, rapists, etc. <https://carm.org/christian-reconstructionism-theonomy/christian-reconstructionism-theonomy/>.
- <sup>60</sup> Also called "Dispensational Premillennialism."
- <sup>61</sup> (Clouse 12)
- <sup>62</sup> (Pentecost 487ff)
- <sup>63</sup> MacArthur, 296-303.
- <sup>64</sup> *Christianity, Cults & Religions* (Rose Publishing)
- <sup>65</sup> Surah 33:33; 37:48-49; 38:52; 44:54; 52:20; 55:56-58, 70-76; 56:22-23, 35-38; 78:33 (Mohammad)
- <sup>66</sup> There are no biblical references to celestial, *terrestrial*, or *telestial* heavens, or of three degrees of glory in heaven.
- <sup>67</sup> Heaven is also occupied by good angels (Rev. 7:11; 12:7, 9; 14:10).
- <sup>68</sup> Why will nations require healing in heaven? It could be the leaves will have properties that will help people maintain health and energy (Alcorn 250). Another view is that John appears to be quoting

---

from Ezekiel 47:12, where water from the temple produces trees with healing leaves. He is not implying that there will be illness in the new earth, he is emphasizing that the water of life produces health and strength wherever it goes (Life Application Bible 2333)

<sup>69</sup> Nothing accursed will be in God's presence (Life Application Bible 2333)

<sup>70</sup> Which possibly occurs at the beginning of the Millennium. Walvoord, 105

<sup>71</sup> Ryrie, 604.