

## Eschatology: The Doctrine of Future Things Part One

### Introduction to Bible Prophecy

The role of the pastor or Bible teacher is to expose his listeners to the Word of God, and to encourage his listeners by word and deed to live by the Word of God. Therefore, we approach the topic of eschatology as a segment of Scripture that is eminently comprehensible and thoroughly practical. It is, in fact, one of the elementary doctrinal issues that every Christian is supposed to understand.

“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:1-2 NASV).

We have two aims in this segment of theology: (1) to explore and evaluate the views of eschatology most common among evangelical Christians; and (2) to stir our hearts to greater action for Christ, since “the time is at hand.”

Before we discuss specific biblical predictions of future events, we must determine a standard that will enable us to interpret Scripture statements appropriately. Here are five guidelines:

#### 1. Definitions in Bible prophecy

- What is “prophecy”? What does it mean to “prophesy”?
  - Generally it means “\_\_\_\_\_” – proclaiming a message from God (whether that message speaks of the future or not)
  - Usually we take it to mean “\_\_\_\_\_” – making a prediction of future events.
- What is “\_\_\_\_\_?” It’s any foretelling of the future contained in the Bible.

#### 2. The nature of Bible prophecy

- Genuine prophecy and the character of God

Only God can reveal the future, because only God can \_\_\_\_\_ the future.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 -- "...the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

- Genuine prophecy and the character of God's Word

If the Bible predicts something, then it will \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaiah 44:8 – "'Do not tremble and do not be afraid. Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'"

### 3. The importance of Bible prophecy

- It is more convincing that \_\_\_\_\_.

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:16-21 – "...And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place...."

Luke 16:27-31 – "...They have Moses and the Prophets. If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead."

- Knowing the future affects how we \_\_\_\_\_.

1<sup>st</sup> John 3:1-5 – "...We know that, when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him just as he is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself, just as he is pure."

### 4. How to interpret Bible prophecy

- The problem: Your view of the future depends on your method of interpretation.
- The options:

-- The \_\_\_\_\_ method

This approach implies that the literal sense of a passage is just a disguise for a deeper, spiritual meaning. There are three dangers to this method:

- The passage means whatever the interpreter wants it to mean.
  - The interpretation is not subject to any standard by which truth may be determined.
  - Average Christians are made to feel that only “smart” or “spiritual” people can understand the passage.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ (historical/grammatical) method<sup>1</sup>
- The interpretation is based on the science of hermeneutics and on the facts of the text and its context.
  - The interpretation may be scrutinized by an agreed-upon standard.
  - The interpretation opens the Scriptures to all who read.
- The rules:
    - When studying any Bible passage, ask:
      - What do the \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
      - What does the \_\_\_\_\_ suggest?
      - What was the \_\_\_\_\_ purpose?
      - Can I take this \_\_\_\_\_?
    - When studying Bible prophecy, ask all of the above, *plus*:
      - Could this prophecy be fulfilled in several \_\_\_\_\_?
      - Am I being \_\_\_\_\_ in applying my interpretation method?

## 5. Some practical proposals

- Before we can interpret the Word, we have to \_\_\_\_\_ it!

Revelation 22:7 – “Blessed is he who heeds the prophecies of this book.”

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<sup>111</sup> See the section on Biblical Interpretation, pp. 4-8 of this syllabus.

- After we interpret the Word, we have to \_\_\_\_\_ it!

James 1:22 – “But prove yourselves doers of the Word and not merely hearers deluding themselves.”

### **The History of Bible Prophecy**

I visited Yellowstone National Park. Near the site of the Old Faithful geyser, I read a sign that said, “The next eruption at 11:56 a.m.” Before you left the house this morning or planned what you would do with the rest of this day, how many of you checked the weather forecast? Elder-Beerman and Macy’s and Kohl’s – they’ve all spent millions of dollars obtaining and advertising winter coats and gloves – but aren’t they afraid the weather will decide to stay warm all winter? When you turn on the faucet, you expect to get water. When you sat down on that chair, you expected it to hold you up. Why? Because our experience shows that a whole universe full of things always seem to work a certain way, and we expect the pattern to hold true.

What makes you think that Jesus Christ is coming back? How do you know for sure that there’s a heaven, or that you’re going there? Isn’t it just a little bit presumptuous to believe that stuff about eternal rewards or punishment? When the Bible makes a prediction about the future, why are you so ready to expect it to happen? Because you’ve watched the Bible make thousands of predictions about the future, and *it has never been wrong!*

Considering the mountain of detail which the Bible gives us about the future, what may we conclude about the reliability of God’s Word in the realm of predictive prophecy? Here are three questions to answer:

1. How can we tell when a prophet speaks from God? Deuteronomy 18:9-22 outlines a system for making that determination.

- The criteria for evaluating the godliness of a prophet:

-- Check his \_\_\_\_\_

- No divining
- No witchcraft
- No sorcery
- No casting of spells
- No calling up spirits

-- Check his \_\_\_\_\_

*100% accuracy required!*

- The commands for dealing with a false prophet:

-- \_\_\_\_\_ him!

-- \_\_\_\_\_ him!

2. How are we to know that Bible prophecies are from God?<sup>2</sup>

- Fulfilled prophecies about Old Testament people and places

-- Tyre (Ezekiel 26)

- Nebuchadnezzar destroys the city
- Many nations attack Tyre
- The city is flattened
- Fishermen spread their nets where the city once stood
- Debris from the city is thrown into the sea
- Tyre is never rebuilt

-- Sidon (Ezekiel 28:23)

- Blood in the streets
- Swords on every side

-- Samaria (Hosea 13:16; Micah 1:6)

- The city falls violently
- Nothing is left but a “heap”
- Vineyards are planted there
- The building stones are poured into the valley
- Foundations are laid bare

-- Gaza-Ashkelon (Amos 1:8; Jeremiah 47:5; Zephaniah 2:4-7)

- Philistine occupation ends
- Both cities are utterly destroyed
- Ashkelon becomes a sheep-pasture
- The Jews take over the sites

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<sup>2</sup>McDowell, Josh, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), pp. 168-202. Boyer, James L., *Prophecy: Things to Come* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1973), pp. 24-28).

- Moab-Ammon (Ezekiel 25:3-4; Jeremiah 48:47; 49:6)
  - Eastern princes occupy the area
  - The land re-awakens and prospers
  
- Petra and Edom (Isaiah 34:6-18; Ezekiel 25:13-14; 35:5-7)
  - Cities will become desolate
  - Never be populated again
  - Conquered by heathen
  - Re-conquered by Israel
  - Bloody history
  - Inhabited by wild animals
  - All trade ceases
  - Spectators will be astonished
  
- Thebes and Memphis (Ezekiel 30:13-15)
  - Idols destroyed
  - Cities flattened and burned
  - Thebes abandoned
  - No more native prince reigns
  
- Nineveh (Nahum 1:8, 10; 2:6; 3:10, 13, 19)
  - Destroyed in drunkenness
  - Destroyed by flood
  - City burned
  - City never rebuilt
  
- Babylon (Isaiah 13:19-22; 14:23; 51:26, 43)
  - Site totally obliterated
  - Never inhabited again
  - Nomads and shepherds shun it
  - Desert creatures live there
  - Not even the stones are re-used
  - Site not visited very often
  - Covered with a swamp
  
- Corazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum (Matthew 11:20-24)
  
- Jerusalem's enlargement (Jeremiah 31:38-40)

- Palestine (Leviticus 26:31-33; Ezekiel 36:33-35)
  - Cities laid waste
  - Sanctuaries made desolate
  - Land stripped
  - Inhabited by enemies
  - People dispersed
  - Residents persecuted
  - Later reinhabited and revived
  
- Fulfilled prophecies about Gentile world kingdoms (Daniel chaps. 2-3)
  - Head of gold = lion with eagle's wings = \_\_\_\_\_
  - Chest and arms of silver = bear raised on one side = \_\_\_\_\_
  - Belly and thighs of brass = four-headed leopard = \_\_\_\_\_
  - Legs of iron and feet of clay = beast with iron teeth and ten horns = \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Fulfilled prophecies about the first Advent of Christ
  - Prophecies concerning his birth
    - Born of the seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4)
    - Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25)
    - Son of God (Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17)
    - Seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16)
    - Son of Isaac (Genesis 21:12; Luke 3:23)
    - Son of Jacob (Numbers 24:17; Luke 3:23)
    - Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Luke 3:23)
    - Family of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1; Luke 3:23)
    - House of David (Jeremiah 23:5; Luke 3:23)
    - Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1)
    - Presented with rich gifts (Psalm 72:10; Matthew 2:1, 11)
    - Herod kills the children of the area (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16)
    - Christ's pre-existence (Micah 5:2; Colossians 1:17)
  - Prophecies concerning his earthly life
    - Called "Lord" (Psalm 110:1; Luke 2:11; 20:41-44)
    - Called "Immanuel", God With Us (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23)

- Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18; Matthew 21:11)
  - Priest (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 3:1; 5:5-6)
  - Judge (Isaiah 32:22; John 5:30)
  - King (Psalm 2:6; Matthew 27:37)
  - Special anointing of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2; Matthew 3:16-17)
  - Zeal for God (Psalm 69:9; John 2:15-16)
  - Preceded by a messenger (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1-2)
  - Ministry begins in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:12-17)
  - Miracles (Isaiah 35:5-6; Matthew 9:35)
  - Teaches in parables (Psalm 78:2; Matthew 13:34)
- Prophecies concerning his Passion
- Enters Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9; Luke 19:35f)
  - Enters the temple (Malachi 3:1; Matthew 21:12)
  - Betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9; Matthew 10:4)
  - Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15)
  - Money thrown in God's house (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:5)
  - Price given for Potter's Field (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:7)
  - Forsaken by disciples (Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 14:50)
  - Accused by false witnesses (Psalm 35:11; Matthew 26:55-61)
  - Silent before his accusers (Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12-19)
  - Wounded and bruised (Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 27:26)
  - Smitten and spit upon (Isaiah 50:6; Matthew 26:27)
  - Mocked (Psalm 22:7-8; Matthew 27:31)
  - Falls under the cross (Psalm 109:24; Luke 23:26)
  - Hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22:16; Luke 23:33)
  - Crucified with thieves (Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38)
  - Prays for his executioners (Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:34)
  - Rejected by his own people (Isaiah 53:3; John 7:8, 48)
  - Hated without a cause (Psalm 69:4; John 15:25)
  - Friends stand far off (Psalm 38:11; Luke 23:49)
  - People shake their heads (Psalm 109:25; Matthew 27:39)
  - People stare as he dies (Psalm 22:17; Luke 23:35)
  - Garments parted and lots cast (Psalm 22:18; John 19:23-24)
  - Bones not broken (Psalm 34:20; John 19:33)
  - Side pierced (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34)
  - Buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)
  - Resurrected after 3 days (Matthew 20:18-19; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:4)
- Fulfilled prophecies about the Age of the Church
- The Gospel is received with mixed reactions
  - The Church becomes politically powerful



- Evil grows and infiltrates the Church
- False Christianity mingles with the true
- False teachers thrive
- Multitudes are saved
- Church history goes through seven phases

3. What are the implications of so much fulfilled prophecy?

- We can expect all as-yet-unfulfilled prophecies to be \_\_\_\_\_
- We can expect all as-yet-unfulfilled prophecies to be \_\_\_\_\_
- We can praise God for the \_\_\_\_\_ of his Word

*“Yes, that’s it! If you are gods, tell what will happen in the days ahead! Or do some mighty miracle that makes us stare, amazed” (Isaiah 41:23).*

### **The Prophecy of the Rapture**

Promises and predictions are only as good as their source, only as reliable as the person who declares them. Therefore, in studying the Bible’s statements regarding the future, it may be helpful to examine the details of future events through the light of several presuppositions.

Only God really knows the future. If the Bible is his Word, then Bible prophecies are 100% reliable.

Bible prophecy is essential to our growth as Christians. It is more persuasive than any human experience. A knowledge of future events always affects behavior in the present.

The most logical method for interpreting the prophetic segments of Scripture is to take them at face value unless it is impossible to do so – the same method we have adopted for the historical portions of the Word.

*In order to determine the normal and customary usages of Bible language, it is necessary to consider the accepted rules of grammar and rhetoric, as well as the factual historical and cultural data of Bible times. Therefore, the literal method of interpretation is also called the Grammatico-Historical Method.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Tan, Paul Lee, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1974), p. 29.

Since there are so many Bible prophecies that have come true with 100% accuracy, we have an excellent basis for hope that the as-yet-unfulfilled prophecies will be fulfilled just as they are recorded.

In scanning the pages of Scripture for prophecies still unfulfilled, we discover that the next event predicted by the Bible is the event we have come to call the Rapture of the Church.

1. The Bible makes four kinds of declarations about that event.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Rapture

-- Where does the Bible teach it?

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-52 – “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-17 – “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

-- What does “Rapture” mean?

The English term denotes an event of \_\_\_\_\_. Note the phrase “caught up together” (NASV). The Greek phrase is sometimes translated “seize by force.”

*This is the action which gives us the name ‘Rapture’ for this first aspect of the second coming of Christ. The word does not occur in our English Bibles; it comes from the Latin and means ‘caught up,’ or ‘snatched up.’ Christ is coming to snatch us out of the world and carry us away to be with himself.<sup>4</sup>*

- The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Rapture

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<sup>4</sup> Boyer, James L., *Prophecy: Things to Come* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1973), p. 35.

-- Among premillennial dispensationalists, there have been four theories pinpointing the timing of this event.<sup>5</sup>

- The \_\_\_\_\_ Rapture

The Church is caught up to meet Christ the Returning, Conquering King, and to accompany him back to earth.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ Rapture

Also called the \_\_\_\_\_ Rapture. The Church experiences 3 ½ years of natural disaster, but is whisked away to heaven along with the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11), thus escaping the 3 ½ years of supernatural disaster.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ Rapture

Only those who are “prepared” will be gathered out of the first half of the Tribulation. Those who are unprepared will be forced to wait until the middle of the Tribulation.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ Rapture

The Church will be taken out before the period of war, famine, and disease begins to afflict the residents of earth.

-- There are seven reasons why many premillennial dispensationalists place the Rapture before the beginning of the seven-year period of Tribulation.

- God has promised the Church \_\_\_\_\_ from tribulation.

John 5:24 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life”

Romans 5:9 – “Much more then, having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him.”

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<sup>5</sup> While the Pretribulation Rapture view will be presented at this point (as it was presented in the chapter on “Basileiology: The Doctrine of the Kingdom”), the October segment of our study will examine not only the alternate views of the Rapture, but will also discuss the various views of dispensationalism itself – views which are bringing significant changes in current evangelical theology.

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 1:9-10 – “For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:9 – “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 3:10 – “Because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world.”

Revelation 6:16-17—“Fall on us and hide us from the presence of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?”

- In Revelation 4:1, the Tribulation begins “after these things” – after Christ has finished his dealings with the \_\_\_\_\_.

*The sequence of time marked by the book (of Revelation) itself indicates that the Church has already been caught up to glory. There is no mistaking the movement of things as declared by Christ in chapter 1, verse 19. The things John had already seen were the vision of chapter 1. “The things which are” refer to the seven churches mentioned in chapter 1, verse 4, 11 and chapters 2 ad 3. And “the things which shall be hereafter” must be the things that begin with chapter 4. “Hereafter” is literally “after these things.” Twice in chapter 4, verse 1, the same words appear. “After this” and “hereafter” cannot mean anything other than what the same words mean in chapter 1, verse 19, namely, after the Church things or Church Age is passed.<sup>6</sup>*

- In revelation chapters 4-19, there is no reference to the Bride/Church on the \_\_\_\_\_ during the Tribulation.
- Several statements in Revelation chapters 4-19 place the Church in \_\_\_\_\_ during the Tribulation.
- In 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:6-8, the Holy Spirit is \_\_\_\_\_ from earth in some way before the Antichrist is revealed.

*Why is Satan unable to reveal his “man of sin” sooner? Because God is restraining the forces of evil in the world today.... Notice that in 2*

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<sup>6</sup> Hoyt, Herman A., *Studies in Revelation* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1966), p. 41

*Thessalonians 2:6 Paul referred to this restrainer in the neuter gender (“what restraineth”), while in 2 Thessalonians 2:7, he used the masculine gender (“he who how hindereth”).... Many Bible students identify this restrainer as the Holy Spirit of God.<sup>7</sup>*

- Several times the Bible describes the Rapture as \_\_\_\_\_.

Philippians 4:5 – “Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.”

James 5:7-9 – “Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the oil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

*“Such a belief in imminency marked the premillennialism of the early church fathers as well as the writers of the New Testament.”<sup>8</sup>*

- A Pre-Tribulation Rapture is most consistent with a \_\_\_\_\_ interpretation of Bible prophecy.

*“Pretribulationism is the only view that allows literal interpretation of all Old and New Testament passages on the Great Tribulation.”<sup>9</sup>*

### 3. The details of the Rapture

- A \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ will be heard.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52 – “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound....”

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16 – “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God....”

- The bodies of deceased believers will be \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52 – “...and the dead will be raised imperishable.”

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16 – “...and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

<sup>7</sup> Wiersbe, Warren, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, Volume 2, Ephesians-Revelation* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), pp. 196-197.

<sup>8</sup> Pentecost, J. Dwight, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1958), p. 203

<sup>9</sup> Walvoord, John F., *The Rapture Question* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1979), p. 270.

- \_\_\_\_\_ believers will be caught up.

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:17 – “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds...”

- Instantly, all believers will be \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-53 – “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, for this perishable must put on immortality...”

1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2 – “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him just as he is.”

- We will meet Christ \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:17 – “(We) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

- We will return with Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:17 – “...and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

John 14:3 – “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

#### 4. The challenges of the Rapture

- \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_!

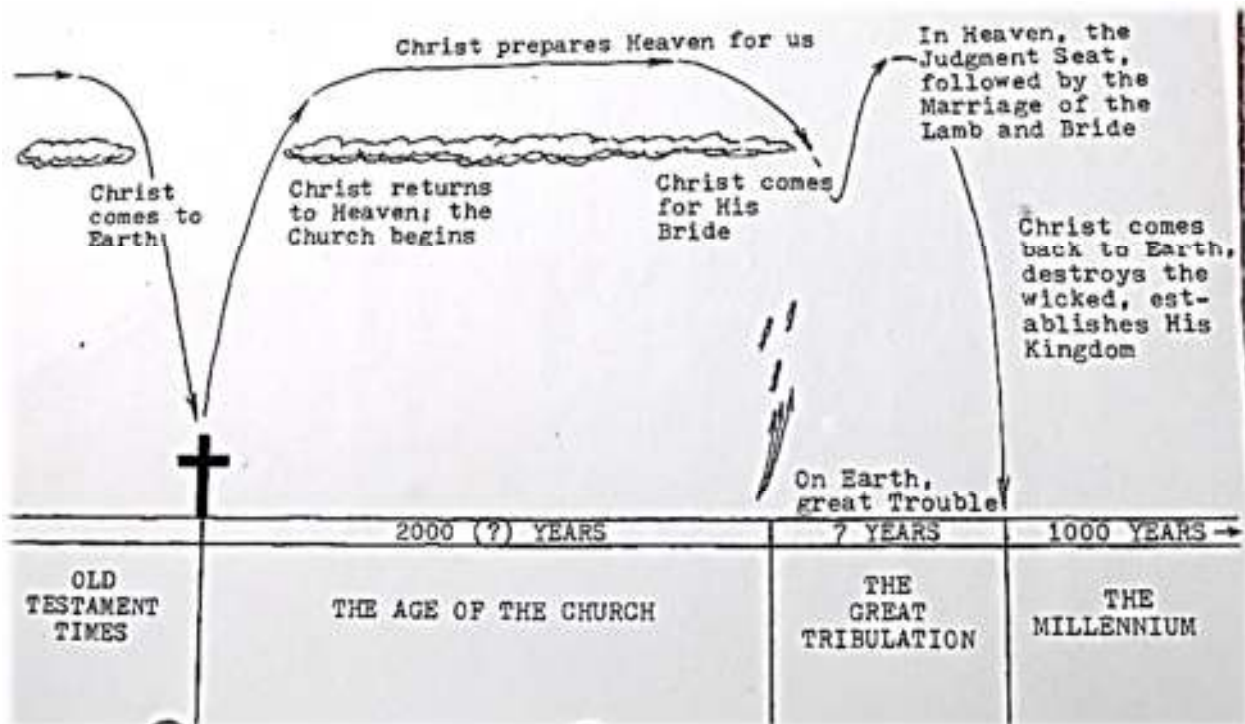
1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:18 – “.”

1<sup>st</sup> John 3:3 – “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

- \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_!

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58 – “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

For us who believe the Bible and who have committed our souls and bodies to Jesus Christ, there is no more fundamentally important belief than the belief that Christ is coming again – *perhaps today!*



*An Overview of the End Times*  
Diagram by Greg A. Ryerson, 1983

### **The Prophecy of the Tribulation**<sup>10</sup>

There will always be prophets of doom – men and women who make it their livelihood to roam the streets warning that the end is near, or who publish news articles alarming us that the globe is ripe for war or pollution or famine or disease. We may be tempted to ignore those who make such dire predictions on the basis of mysterious voices or visions. We may also be tempted to ignore those who warn that we are consuming the earth's resources too quickly. We Christians might respond, "Maybe they're right; but the Lord is coming soon and it won't matter."

But the truth is that there is a large element of reliability in some of the frightening predictions about the future of our planet. For there is a theme running through the pages of the Bible, from the earliest chapters of the Old Testament to the final scenes of the New Testament – a theme which paints a picture of earth's last days – a picture that is shocking,

<sup>10</sup> You will notice that the above chart refers to the 7-year period as "the Great Tribulation." In the pages that follow we will discuss the merits of referring only to the second half of the 7-year period as the *Great Tribulation*.

horrible, staggering – a picture of a world that will indeed be overcome with war and pollution and famine and disease.

In this segment we will analyze the series of events which follow the Rapture of the Church: a seven-year period which we refer to as the Tribulation. The Word of God makes six kinds of statements about the Tribulation Period.

#### 1. The fact of the Tribulation

Here are a few of the Scriptures that talk about it.

Deuteronomy 4:30-31 – “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and listen to his voice. For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; he will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which he swore to them.”

Isaiah 2:19 – “And men will go into caves of the rocks, and into holes of the ground before the terror of the LORD, and before the splendor of his majesty, when he arises to make the earth tremble.”

Isaiah 24:1, 3, 6, 19-21 – “Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface, and scatters its inhabitants.... The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word.... Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.... The earth is broken asunder, the earth is split through, the earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard, and it totters like a shack, for its transgression is heavy upon it, and it will fall, ever to rise again. So it will happen in that day, that the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high, and the kings of the world on earth.”

Jeremiah 30:7 – “Alas! For that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s distress.”

Daniel 9:27 – “And (the prince who is to come) will make a firm covenant with the many for one week; but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Daniel 12:10 – “Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.”



Joel 1:15 – “Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and it will come as destruction from the Almighty.”

Joel 2:1-2 – “Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; surely it is near.”

Amos 5:18-20 – “Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, for what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; as when a man flees from a lion, and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall, and a snake bites him. Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?”

Zephaniah 1:14-15, 18 – “Near is the great day of the LORD, near and coming very quickly; listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.... Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the LORD’s wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of his jealousy, for he will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.”

Matthew 24:21-22 – “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.”

Luke 21:25-26 – “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:3 – “While they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’ then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”

Revelation 3:10 – “Because you have kept the word of my perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.”

Revelation 6:15-17 – “And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the presence of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?’”

## 2. The length of the Tribulation

- We know that the entire period will last \_\_\_\_\_ years (Daniel 9:24-27).
  - God will take 70 “weeks” to fulfill his \_\_\_\_\_ to Israel.

*The word translated “weeks” (Hebrew shavuah) actually has a broader meaning of “heptads” or “units of seven.” While the word sometimes means a week of days, it may be refer to any group of seven periods of time. There are several reasons why it is suggested that Daniel is referring to 70 groups of seven years each, or 490 years. For instance, 490 days would be just over one year, not nearly long enough to fulfill the prophecies in this passage, including the rebuilding of the temple and the city.<sup>11</sup>*

- At the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> “week,” \_\_\_\_\_ would be cut off.

Sixty-nine “weeks” of years would equal 483 years, almost exactly the amount of time between the Persian decree for the Jews to return to their homeland to the date of Christ’s crucifixion.

- The 70<sup>th</sup> “week” would be ruled by “the \_\_\_\_\_ who is to come.”

God did not reveal to Daniel that, after the Messiah was sacrificed, a long period of time would follow in which God would stop the prophetic time clock as far as his dealings with Israel, and would take some centuries to work with the Gentiles, drawing them to himself, building the Church. When God would finish saving people from every nation and bringing them into the Church, he would whisk those believers out of the world, restart his prophetic time clock, and the 70<sup>th</sup> week would begin to unfold.

- The second half of Antichrist’s reign will last for \_\_\_\_\_ years.
  - It is called \_\_\_\_\_ in Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 12:14.
  - It is called \_\_\_\_\_ in Revelation 13:5.
  - It is called \_\_\_\_\_ in Revelation 12:6.

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<sup>11</sup> Boyer, James, “Exposition of Daniel” (unpublished lecture notes, Grace Theological Seminary, 1973), quoting John C. Whitcomb, “Daniel’s Great Seventy-Week Prophecy: An Exegetical Insight” (unpublished paper presented to the Seventh Foreign Language Conference of the University of Kentucky, 1954).

We know that God is able to open the windows of heaven and pour out his blessings (Malachi 3:10). During the second half of the Tribulation, God will open the windows of heaven and pour out his wrath upon the earth.

### 3. The time of the Tribulation

- In relation to the Rapture of the Church, the Tribulation comes \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians chapter offers two reasons for believing this:

- The Man of Sin (another name for the Antichrist) is revealed after the Restrainer of Evil (the Holy Spirit, who dwells within the believers) is removed from the earth.
- World conditions will deteriorate quickly after the exodus of the Church. We are called “the salt of the earth” – the preservative that withholds moral decay in the world. With the influence of the Church removed, sin will abound.
- In relation to the Day of the Lord, the Tribulation is \_\_\_\_\_
  - It marks the time when God asserts his control over all things.
  - It marks a time when God exerts judgment on sinful mankind.
- In relation to today, the Tribulation may begin \_\_\_\_\_
  - A literal interpretation of Bible prophecy places the Tribulation in the future.
  - Today’s world conditions increasingly make it ripe for the Tribulation to begin.

### 4. The reasons for the Tribulation

- God brings the ages to their \_\_\_\_\_

Five times in Matthew, Jesus refers to this period of time as the “end (or consummation) of the age.” There are two factors that will come to a head during the Tribulation.

- Satan’s power over this world will reach a crescendo.

There are several periods of history marked by unusual demonic activity: the period just before the Flood; the earthly ministry of Jesus; and the future Tribulation. Satan will pour everything he has into the Tribulation. It will be almost his last attempt to assert dominion over the world.

- The sinful nature of man will ripen.

The devil, unfortunately, cannot be blamed for all of the filth that is produced by sinful mankind. As soon as the Holy Spirit and the Church are taken out of the way, the human race will burst forth with a flood of sin like this world has never seen.

- God prepares Israel for \_\_\_\_\_

Two influences will draw the nation of Israel for the first time to faith in Jesus Christ as their Messiah and King.

- The preaching of the Two Witnesses

Revelation 11 tells the story of two men who will appear in the early years of the Tribulation, proclaiming to the Jews and to all who will hear that Jesus was and is the true Messiah and Savior. Their message will persuade many.

- The Antichrist's persecution of the Jews

Nothing sends us into the arms of the Lord more quickly than hard times. As we read Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation, we get the impression that the Antichrist will be the worst enemy the Jews have ever seen. Their existence as a national entity will be threatened by this awful opponent. As a result, thousands of them will sense that the Bible has spoken truly about Jesus Christ. They will turn their hearts and lives to him gladly.

- God pours out his wrath upon an \_\_\_\_\_

- Because of man's wickedness
- Because of the world's treatment of the Jews (Genesis 12)
- Because of humanity's worship of the Antichrist (Revelation 14:9-10)

## 5. The details of the Tribulation

- Year 1: Economic, military, and religious chaos. Antichrist steps in and deludes most people (2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2).
- Year 2: Two Witnesses appear. 144,000 Jews become world missionaries. An untold multitude put their trust in Christ, forfeiting their chances of survival (Revelation 6, 7, and 11).

Year 3: War, famine, death. The king of the North attacks Israel, Egypt, and Arabia. The kings of the East mobilize. Believers begin to be martyred as traitors to Antichrist (Ezekiel 38; Revelation 6).

- Year 4: The king of the North returns to Palestine to face the kings of the East. As supernatural disasters strike everywhere, Antichrist is unmasked. He destroys the army of the North; kills the Two Witnesses; and breaks his treaty with the Jews (Daniel 11; Revelation 11, 12).
- Year 5: Antichrist sets himself up as a god; the False Prophet appears. Plant life and water become scarce. Locusts and demons attack (Daniel 11; Revelation 8, 9, 13).
- Year 6: God pulls out all the stops; earth is plagued with sores, polluted water, darkness, and hail (Revelation 4-18).
- Year 7: Many Jews escape to Petra. Antichrist pursues them, but returns to Megiddo to face Christ in battle (Daniel 11; Revelation 19).

#### 6. The challenge of the Tribulation

- Unbelievers, get \_\_\_\_\_!
- Believers, get \_\_\_\_\_!

### **The Prophecy of Christ's Coming Kingdom**

We have waited a long time for Jesus to return. Sometimes we get impatient. The moral condition of this world is deteriorating rapidly. How much worse can it get before Christ comes back? We've heard that "God is the Blessed Controller of All Things," but everywhere we turn it seems that Satan is the one in charge.

Whose kingdom is this, anyway? Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come." When is God going to answer that prayer?

The goal of this section is to answer three questions that will help us to understand what will happen after the end of the Great Tribulation.

1. How has God been leading up to the Glorious Return of Christ?
  - Defining some basic terms

- The Kingdom of God
  - An eternal aspect: God’s sovereign rule over \_\_\_\_\_
  - An earthly aspect: God’s temporal rule over \_\_\_\_\_ through a human king and government
- The Millennium
 

The \_\_\_\_\_ when Christ will rule the earth as King of Kings
- The Bible’s development of the Kingdom idea
  - In the Old Testament
    - In Eden, God reigned supreme, delegating authority to \_\_\_\_\_
    - After \_\_\_\_\_, God’s will was carried out through human government.
    - In \_\_\_\_\_, God selected one man through whose family he would establish his purposes and bless humanity.
    - Starting with \_\_\_\_\_, God administered his kingship through divinely appointed judges.
    - After \_\_\_\_\_, God anointed a human monarch to enforce his authority.
    - After \_\_\_\_\_, God revealed his will directly through the prophets.
  - In the New Testament
    - In the Gospels: Christ offered himself as the long-awaited \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel and mankind.
    - In Acts: Because most Jews rejected Messiah, the Apostles gradually appealed to the \_\_\_\_\_, inviting them to become part of Christ’s Bride, the Church.
    - In the Epistles: The Apostles presented the \_\_\_\_\_ as God’s program for this age, and outlined the proper lifestyle for the King’s future co-regents.

## 2. How does the Bible describe the Glorious Return of Christ?

- The chronology of the Millennium
  - As it begins:
    - The Tribulation climaxes (Revelation 19)
    - The King appears (Revelation 19)
    - The wicked are destroyed (Revelation 19)
    - Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit (Revelation 20)
    - Christ judges the nations (Joel 3)
  - As it progresses:
    - The saints reign with Christ (Revelation 20)
    - Israel is restored to a place of prominence in the world (Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 30:1-10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:16)
    - The earth undergoes dramatic physical changes (Isaiah 35 and 65)
    - New generations are born; many reject the Lordship of Christ (Zechariah 14:16-19)
  - As it draws to an end:
    - Satan is released and leads a failed rebellion against Christ (Revelation 20)
    - God destroys the universe by fire (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3)
    - God calls all the wicked to judgment (Revelation 20)
    - New heavens and earth are created; eternity resumes (Revelation 21, 22)
- The character of the Millennium
  - \_\_\_\_\_ changes
    - Human health will be perfected (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5-6; 65:20-23; Ezekiel 34:25)

- The face of the earth will be altered (Zechariah 14:3-10)
- The climate will be stabilized (Isaiah 4:5-6; 32:15-16)
- Fertility will be increased (Isaiah 35:1-2)
- Animals will be changed (Isaiah 11:6-9)

-- \_\_\_\_\_ changes

- War will be eliminated (Zechariah 9:10; Isaiah 9:7)
- Worthwhile things will be exalted (Isaiah 42:3)
- Men will keep what they produce (Isaiah 65:21-22)
- There will be justice for all (Psalm 72:1-14)
- Education will be reformed (Isaiah 33:6)

-- \_\_\_\_\_ changes

- Values will be sanctified (Isaiah 32:5)
- Moral equity will be restored (Isaiah 40:4)
- Punishment will be swift (Jeremiah 31:28-30)

-- \_\_\_\_\_ changes

- Everyone will get a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-28)
- All will worship God (Zechariah 8:20-23)
- Each will know God directly (Jeremiah 31:34)
- God's Spirit will be on all men (Joel 2:28; Isaiah 32:15)
- Joy will be restored (Isaiah 35:10)

- The purposes of the Millennium

-- God will keep his \_\_\_\_\_



- To Abraham (Genesis 12): “Your seed will occupy your land.”
  - To Moses (Deuteronomy 30): “Israel will be regathered to the land.”
  - To David (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7): “Your heir will rule Israel forever.”
  - To Jeremiah (ch. 31): “Israel will be converted and forgiven.”
- God will bring creation back under \_\_\_\_\_ dominion (Genesis 1:28; Hebrews 2:6-9; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:25, 27)
- God will reveal his righteousness in condemning a human race that is \_\_\_\_\_ (Jeremiah 31; Zechariah 14; Revelation 20)
3. How does the Bible challenge us with the Glorious Return of Christ?
- We are able to have \_\_\_\_\_
    - When he comes, we will come with him (Colossians 3:1-4)
    - Nuclear war will never destroy the world; God isn’t finished with it yet!
  - We are filled with \_\_\_\_\_
  - We should be \_\_\_\_\_ (Mark 13:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:2)

Years ago, I got a call from my wife to come home immediately from the church office. When I arrived, my small children were in hysterics because a neighborhood cat had killed a newborn kitten and laid it at our back door. I picked up the limp body (it was still warm), carried it back to a shady place near the fence, and buried it. As we and our children stood somberly at that tiny grave, I thought of Isaiah 65:19: “And there will no longer be heard ... the voice of weeping and the sound of crying. No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days....” And in that moment I prayed as Jesus taught us to pray: “Thy kingdom come!” “Lord, please let your kingdom come soon, so there won’t be any more death.” We went inside, and I held my oldest daughter on my lap, and explained to her that things like this won’t always happen. Jesus will come someday, and he’ll fix our world.

The sovereign Lord of the universe invites us to pray, “Thy kingdom come!” Yes, he will someday set in motion the events that will bring about the glorious return of the King of Kings. And if he has urged us to pray that prayer, then we must conclude that the earnest prayer for the kingdom will somehow bring about his return more quickly!

### The Doctrine of Final Judgment

Read John 5:19-29 and 12:20-32. The climax of all human history occurred at the cross. There the eternal fate of all personal beings was sealed once and for all: the fate of men and angels, both good and evil. As a pastor friend of mine said many years ago regarding the eternal impact of the cross: "It's all over but the shoutin'! We're just waiting for the dust to settle!"

According to Hebrews 9:27, it is the firm conclusion and clear teaching of the Bible that every man will inevitably stand before God someday to be judged. The prospect of that judgment can fill a person with joyful anticipation or with horrible dread, depending on how that person has prepared for the Judgment Day.

Among the details which God's Word gives us regarding the future, the fact of coming judgment is one detail that ought to rivet our attention to the pages of the Book. What we know about the future ought to change the way we behave today.

Here are four clusters of data that God has graciously revealed to us about that future time of judgment.

1. There are two ways that God judges his creatures.

- \_\_\_\_\_ judgment
  - Distinctive feature: It takes place in this life.
  - Its purposes: To punish sin; and to chasten men and draw them to God in repentance.
  - Some examples: God judged Egypt because of Israel's bondage (Genesis 15:14). Israel suffered calamity in the wilderness because of sin (Deuteronomy 32:36).
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ judgment
  - Distinctive feature: It takes place after this life, and has eternal and irrevocable consequences.
  - Its purposes: To confirm God's sovereignty over all things; and to determine the degree of every man's reward or punishment.
  - Elements of this judgment:

- All facts will be revealed (including one's deeds, motives, means, and results).
- The facts will be evaluated as to their worth.
- The judged person will be recompensed for his works: for the saved, service is rewarded; for the lost, sin is punished.

2. Several logical factors point toward a final judgment.

- The rational quality of \_\_\_\_\_
  - Man is a moral being, who senses that good must be rewarded and evil must be punished (Galatians 6:7-8; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:24-25; Revelation 14:13).
  - The inequities of the present life must somehow be resolved in the end (Psalm 73; Romans 8:18).

- The sinless character of \_\_\_\_\_

A holy God, total separated from everything sinful, cannot allow sin to go unpunished (Habakkuk 1:13; Psalm 50:21; 89:14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9).

- The person and work of \_\_\_\_\_
  - His position as Messiah-King requires that he deal with all those who rebel against him (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:25).
  - His death on the cross makes sense only if there is a final judgment for sin (John 12:31).
  - His resurrection qualifies him to sit in judgment over every sinner (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 1:9-10)

3. Several persons are involved in the final judgment.

- \_\_\_\_\_ is the ultimate judge.

Isaiah 30:18 – “The LORD is a God of justice; how blessed are those who long for him.”

Hebrews 12:23 – “(God is) the judge of all.”

Deuteronomy 1:17 – “You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God’s.”

- \_\_\_\_\_ is the mediating judge.

Matthew 28:18 – “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.”

John 5:22 – “The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son.”

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:5 – “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

- \_\_\_\_\_ may serve as associate judges.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:2-3 – “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?... Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?”

Revelation 3:21; 20:4-6; 22:5 – “We shall rule and reign with him.”

#### 4. The final judgment will actually unfold in several phases.

- The judgment of the \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:11-15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:10)
  - This judgment will take place when all Christians of this age are gathered to heaven together, sometime after the Rapture and prior to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.
  - Not only will the deeds be judged; but every motive, thought, and intent will be weighed.
  - Faithful service to Christ will be result in eternal reward; unconfessed sins and ill-motivated service will result in “loss.”
  - The result of this judgment is that every Christian will be clothed in white and prepared for the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.
- The judgment of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ saints (Daniel 12:1-3; Revelation 20:4-6)
  - This judgment must take place at the end of the Tribulation period and prior to the inauguration of the Mediatorial Kingdom.

- The Old Testament saints will be evaluated as to their worthiness to enter the long-awaited kingdom.
  - The Tribulation saints will be evaluated as to their endurance through the Tribulation.
  - This judgment will determine the positions of honor and places of authority given to faithful servants of God through the ages.
  - These will be the “friends of the Bridegroom,” the “ten virgins” of Christ’s parables, “the ones invited to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.”
- The judgment of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 20:7-15)
- The Antichrist and his False Prophet will be thrown alive into the Lake of Fire when Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation.
  - Satan will be thrown in with them at the end of the Millennium.
  - Appearing before the Great White Throne will be every human being who has not appeared at one of the judgments for the righteous.
  - The books will be opened which record the entire lifespan of every defendant.
    - This will prove that the defendant is a sinner who deserves death.
    - This will prove that the defendant rejected many opportunities to trust in Christ and be saved.
  - The Book of Life will be opened to prove that the defendant never actually received the gift of life by believing in the Son of God.
  - One by one, each defendant will be pronounced guilty and cast into the place of eternal punishment, the Lake of Fire.

This is a solemn and sobering topic. Hebrews 10:31 says, “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Isaiah 62:11 says, “Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth... ‘Lo, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.’”

God didn’t tell us these things to scare us, but to prepare us, and to keep us always moving ahead in his service (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:10-11).

**The Prophecies about Eternity**

Young believers are filled with questions about eternity. “Will we be able to live on other planets? Will people still get married and have children through eternity? Will we have to sit on a cloud and pluck on a harp forever?” Man’s curiosity about the future is almost insatiable. Many Bible commentators warn Christians not to search the Scripture for details about heaven, for they will be disappointed.

*There is remarkably little revealed in the Bible concerning the character of the new heaven and the new earth, but it is evidently quite different from their present form of existence.<sup>12</sup>*

However, Alcorn insists in his recent book that while “a great deal has been written about eschatology ... but comparatively little about Heaven...”<sup>13</sup>

*Scripture provides us with a substantial amount of information, direct and indirect, about the world to come, with enough detail to help us envision it, but not so much as to make us think we can completely wrap our minds around it.<sup>14</sup>*

Here is a brief glance at the three matters that most concern us about eternity.

1. The created universe in eternity

- The physical order will be rearranged.
  - A universe with no \_\_\_\_\_ (Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 66:22; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:5-13; Revelation 21:1)
  - A globe with no \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 21:1)
  - An environment with no \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 8:21; Revelation 21:4; 22:3)
- The official order will be reorganized.
  - God will make his home \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 21:3; 22:3-4)
  - Christ will inhabit \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 21:22-23)

<sup>12</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), p. 311.

<sup>13</sup> Alcorn, Randy, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Alcorn, p. 16.

- The kingdom will pass from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:23-28; Revelation 22:1-5)
  - The social order will be regenerated
    - Men will be freed from any more contact with \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15)
    - Men will be freed to produce things of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Revelation 21:24, 26)
2. Righteous people in eternity
- Their physical condition
    - Perfect \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:35-54; Revelation 21:4)
    - Perfect \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:43; 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2)
  - Their mental condition
    - Full \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:12)
    - Complete \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 8:18-25; Revelation 21:4)
  - Their material condition
    - Unrestrained \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 22:3)
    - Unrestricted \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 21:6; 22:1-2, 14, 17)
  - Their spiritual condition
    - Fellowship \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:12; 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2; John 14:3; Revelation 22:4)
    - Everlasting \_\_\_\_\_ (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 3:4)
    - Unending \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 7:9-12; 19:1)

### 3. Unrighteous people in eternity

- Wrong ideas about their fate
  - Restorationism: “All or some of the condemned eventually will be welcomed into heaven.”
  - Annihilationism: “Either at death, or after a period of torment, the condemned will cease to exist.”
- The biblical teaching about their fate
  - The place of punishment (a literal place!)
    - Sheol/Hades was the abode of all the dead before Christ (Luke 16:19-31)
    - Paradise/Heaven is the eternal abode of the righteous
    - Gehenna/Hell is the eternal abode of the wicked
  - The duration of punishment: \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 18:8 – “And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire.”

Matthew 25:41, 46 – “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ... And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:9 – “And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.”

Jude 13 – “(The false teachers) are wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”

Revelation 14:11 – “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever....”

Revelation 20:10 – “And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”



- The nature of the punishment
  - \_\_\_\_\_ that never dissipates (Matthew 25:30; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:17)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ that never die (Mark 9:47-48)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ that is never quenched (Revelation 20:10)<sup>15</sup>
- The intensifying factors of the punishment
  - The eternal reminder that the sinner had access to \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 12:47-48)
  - The eternal reminder of the seriousness of \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 20:12-13)

Will there be animals in heaven? I don't know, but I know that life on the New Earth will be significantly different from life on this old one. I know that I will be with the One who made me and saved me. I'll be in the company of the redeemed of the ages.

I also know that a lot of my acquaintances will spend eternity dying a death that never ends.

Some of the details of eternity are sketchy, but God has blessed us with a wonderful thing called the imagination; and he has blessed us with enough wonderful experiences in this life that we have a fairly good idea of the sorts of things that we will regard as blessings in the eternal state.

Why must there be a hell? A better question is, "Why did God permit evil to exist in the first place?" God has chosen not to satisfy our curiosity on these matters, but rather demands that we trust him and wait patiently for that great day when he will reveal enough of his plans and purposes that we will praise him for his infinite wisdom and grace.

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### **Assignments for Next Segment ("Eschatology: The Doctrine of Future Things (Part Two)")**

1. Read the article on "Progressive Dispensationalism" at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive\\_dispensationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_dispensationalism); and the article titled "What is Progressive Dispensationalism" at <https://www.gotquestions.org/progressive-dispensationalism.html>.
2. Write a few paragraphs outlining the major differences between the various dispensationalist views. Tell which view seems most reasonable to you and why.

### **Answer Key**

forth-telling	methods	Partial
foretelling	results	Pre-Tribulation
predictive prophecy	Exile	Immunity
know	Ignore	Church
certainly happen	Babylon	earth
human experience	Medo-Persia	heaven
behave in the present	Greece	removed
allegorical	Rome	imminent
literal	fulfilled	literal
words	fulfilled literally	shout
context	reliability	trumpet
author's	fact	raised
literally	emotional intensity	Living
installments	time	physically changed
consistent	Post-Tribulation	in the air
read	Mid-Tribulation	to heaven
act upon	Pre-Wrath	Believe

Hope  
 Work  
 Tell  
 seven  
 promises  
 Messiah  
 Prince  
 3 ½  
 time, times, & half a time  
 42 months  
 1,260 days  
 next  
 Phase One  
 soon  
 climax  
 salvation  
 unbelieving world  
 converted  
 busy  
 all things  
 human affairs  
 1,000-year period  
 Adam  
 Noah  
 Abraham  
 Moses  
 Samuel  
 Solomon  
 Savior-King  
 Gentiles

Church  
 Physical  
 Social  
 Moral  
 Spiritual  
 promises  
 man's  
 totally depraved  
 peace of mind  
 excited praise  
 busy evangelizing  
 Temporal  
 Final  
 nature  
 God  
 Christ  
 God  
 Jesus Christ  
 We Christians  
 True Church  
 Old Testament  
 Tribulation  
 wicked  
 scars  
 ocean  
 curse  
 with man  
 his temple  
 the Son  
 the Father

evil  
 glory and honor  
 health  
 ability  
 retention  
 joy  
 service  
 abundance  
 with God  
 glory  
 worship  
 forever  
 Darkness  
 Worms  
 Fire  
 the Gospel  
 sin