



THE END TIMES

“Our Journey into Eternity”

*An Introduction to
End Time Events*

Revision 2

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Rev. 19:11-13

**Prepared for the Safe Haven Berean Fellowship, Ministry of the Word
by Pastor David Braden**

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Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Pastor David S. Braden
7pastordavid7@gmail.com

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Preface

This course of study is an introduction to the prophecy of the Bible related to the “End Times.” In scholastic circles, this is referred to as the doctrine of eschatology.

It is not intended to be an exhaustive study but to focus on the major events and significant timing aspects of the End Times prophecies. A thrust of this workbook is also to provide key information for significant events and times.

I have also provided a “chronological sequence of events summary”, as provided in the Scriptures, towards the end of this workbook.

Numerous books have been written on this subject. In fact, whole books have been written and are available today on single events such as the Rapture and the millennium.

My goal is not to tell you what to believe but to encourage you in your own studies.

But, above all, my hope is that you will get a glimpse of the greatness of our God as He has planned and is orchestrating all of the events that His incredible book, the Bible, has already foretold.

In addition, we should gain a joy and confidence in our great God in seeing the plans He has for those who have entered His kingdom. For the believer, our future is bright beyond description.

Unequivocal Events: There are a variety of interpretations of the end time events and we will look at some of the major positions. However, there are four major, unequivocal events that absolutely will occur:

1. There will be a visible, physical return of Jesus Christ to the earth.
2. There will be a literal resurrection of all of the bodies of those who have died.
3. Everyone will face God and give account for their life on earth, and will exist forever – whether in heaven or hell.
4. For those who have accepted God’s offer of salvation, and have served their Lord, there will be a day in which they will be rewarded for their faithful service.

A word of encouragement and a very sobering thought: The final residence of those belonging to Jesus will be the New Jerusalem but the eternal dwelling of those who are not His will be the place of fire that God prepared for Satan and his angels.

In the outline of topics, I have tried to follow a general progression consistent with that provided in the Scriptures. Note however, that some events in heaven occur simultaneously with events on the earth.

This course will also include two of the foundational doctrines identified in Heb. 6:1-2, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. They will not be discussed separately, but will be addressed as a part of the End Time events.

Note regarding Gog and Magog:

It is my personal belief that there will be two Gog and Magog warfares, one during the first half of the Tribulation and the second after Satan is released from his chains at the close of the Millennium. In constructing this workbook, I tried to maintain the chronological sequence as I understand it. Therefore, Gog and Magog I are discussed in chapter 12 and Gog and Magog II is discussed in chapter 18. If this workbook is being utilized in a classroom setting, it will be advantageous to combine the two Gog and Magogs into a single session.

Within the pages of this book you will see references to Strong's Numbers (SN). These numbers identify the corresponding Greek or Hebrew words in the "Strong's Greek Dictionary" or the "Strong's Hebrew Dictionary". For Example, "SN 726" (see Page 41).

The abbreviations, OT and NT are used for Old Testament and New Testament.

Finally, one of the key features of this course is the preparation of charts which depict a "snapshot-in-time" of a major topic or period of time. Although each of the charts are very similar to each other, they each give a focus on a specified topic. These charts are provided in the chapters to which they apply and include:

- The Stages of a Believer's Journey into Eternity
- Key Prophetic Passages and the Times they Address
- A Summary of the Tribulation
- Pre-Tribulation and Tribulation Events
- Tribulation Events – Daniel's 70th Week
- Mid-Tribulation Events
- Great Tribulation Events
- The 75-Day Interval
- The Millennium (Messianic Kingdom)

Chapter 1: Why study Prophecy

The Principle Issues of End Times Prophecy

I. Why study prophecy?

One of the first questions we want to answer in this course is: “Why take a course on the End Times?”

In my earlier days as a Christian, I was exposed to “End Times” teachings and it usually left me confused and befuddled. What was with all these strange words and figures of speech: amillennialism, pretribulation, the Rapture, the beast from the sea, the seven horns and ten crowns, etc. It didn’t make a lot of sense to me.

But, as I began to look into the subject of “why,” I discovered a number of important reasons for a study such as this:

1. In embracing this course of study, we will become more acquainted with our God...get to know Him better. We will see the greatness of His wisdom, majesty and power at work carefully overseeing the great plan He put into place millennia ago. We will see His great love and care for that which He created.

2. A second reason has to do with the “Law of Proportion.”

Simply stated, this law postulates that you can identify the importance of a topic in Scripture by the frequency in which it occurs. For example, the gospels and the New Testament (NT) use the phrase kingdom of God and its correlating phrases (kingdom of heaven, the kingdom) over 150 times. This tells me that a key focus of Jesus’ life and teaching was the kingdom of God he came to inaugurate. If Jesus gave this much attention to this subject, it’s important and we ought to take time to study it.

As regards prophecy, scholars have shown that more than 28% of the Old Testament (OT) and more than 21% of the NT is prophecy. This means that approximately 27% of the biblical verses relate to prophecy. Embracing this “Law of Proportion” would indicate that we should give serious attention to the issue of prophecy.

Another significant observation: The Bible contains 333 prophecies pertaining to Christ and His coming. Of these, 109 were fulfilled at His first coming as the “Suffering Servant.” This indicates that there are yet 224 prophecies regarding Christ that are unfulfilled, prophecies that we will be privileged to see unfold.

Also, a number of books of the Bible such as Isaiah, Daniel and Revelation are primarily prophetic.

3. The importance of prophecy is demonstrated in the lives of Godly people in the Bible. Daniel diligently studied OT prophetic books when in captivity. The magi from the east who came looking for the “King of the Jews,” without a doubt, had some access to the OT Scriptures. Simeon, (Lk. 2:25ff), was waiting for the consolation of Israel, which he had learned from the OT prophetic Scriptures. Even the chief priests and scribes (though not godly men), when questioned by Herod as to where the Christ child would be born, (Mt. 2:3ff) knew the answer instantly. They didn’t need to go back to their homes and study because they were already acquainted with the OT prophecies regarding the Messiah. They were acquainted with the Word of God but, sadly, did not recognize Him when He came as the Living Word.

4. The Scriptures give the promise of reward to those who read, hear and keep the words of prophecy (see Rev. 1:3)

II Tim. 4:8 says a crown of righteousness will be given to those who look forward to His (Christ’s) appearing.

5. Prophecy is all about Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The very first prophecy in the Bible (Gen. 3:15) talks about the One who will crush the head of the serpent.

From start to finish, the Scriptures are filled with prophecies that point to Jesus.

In studying prophecy, we will learn more about our Lord and Savior, and therefore, more about God, our Father.

6. As we study the prophetic passages, we will gain a deeper meaning and understanding of the entire Bible.

7. Having a sound Biblical understanding of the prophecy of the Bible can be an excellent tool for evangelism.

The prospect of the last days, the New Jerusalem and even the horrific potential of eternity in hell with Satan’s demons can be a powerful (and appropriate) part of evangelical presentations and witnessing. We’re not trying to scare people, but the potential of an eternity with Satan and his demons is a definite reality everyone should want to avoid.

8. Prophecy demonstrates the sovereignty of God over all of time. We will see that He is in control of the events of our lives and that our days lived for Him will result in the confident expectation of a glorious future in the New Jerusalem with Him.

9. A study of prophecy will familiarize you with the symbols and types of prophecy enabling you to better understand a specific passage.

10. A study of prophecy will motivate you to be watchful, ready and alert, to live a life that is pleasing to our Lord. (Mt. 25)

11. Studying and understanding prophecy will guard you against false teachers which will abound in the “last days.”

12. As Jesus was nearing the end of his earthly ministry and beginning to approach the cross, He told his disciples that prophecy would prove that he was the Messiah. (Jn. 13:19, 14:29.)

These are just a few of the reasons why it is important to study prophecy.

II. The Principle Issues of End Times Prophecy:

How should we view the End Times prophecies of the Bible?

One of the significant issues regarding the subject of End Times prophecy concerns the varying views that people hold. These varying views center on three main areas:

1. the timing of the events
2. the Rapture
3. the Millennium

Once we can “get a handle” on these issues, I think much of the other “mysteries of the prophetic” can be resolved.

Let’s briefly review these three categories:

1. The timing of the events

There are four principle approaches to the issue of timing:

A. Idealists/Symbolic (without time) The idealists view the Revelation not as prophecy but as a picture of the struggle between good and evil which ultimately will reach optimum, timeless principles. A main purpose in this teaching is to encourage those who are enduring the sufferings of this life.

A major weakness of this viewpoint is that it fails to interpret the symbols of the Revelation, which contains a great number of symbols (e.g. lampstands, stars, bowl judgments, sickles, grapes, winepress of God’s wrath) that represent something literal. (The next chapter in this workbook will address the issue of interpreting prophecy.)

Note also that of the 5 kingdoms foretold in Nebuchadnezzar's statue (Dan. 2), the first four were fulfilled literally (Babylon, Media/Persia, Greece, Rome). It makes good sense to assume that the 5th kingdom, the feet of iron and clay, will also be fulfilled literally.

B. Preterist (past) – This approach maintains that most, if not all, of the biblical prophetic events were fulfilled in the first century by the events leading up to and culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Extremists in this persuasion hold that all prophecies including the 2nd coming and the resurrection of believers have already occurred, thereby applying the prophecies to the original audience. We are beyond the millennium and presently are in the new heaven and new earth.

This view holds that the Bible does not predict an end to the history of this present evil age.

It is noteworthy to mention that preterists have to date the book of Revelation around 65 A.D. in order for the book of Revelation to be a prediction. (A significant majority of scholars today, however, place the writing of Revelation at 95 or 96 A.D.)

C. Historicists – The historical view first surfaced around the 12th century A.D. and interprets Revelation and many other prophecies as a picture of the events of church history from the apostles until the Second Coming of Jesus.

This view, which was common during the period of the Reformation, held that the pope and Roman Catholicism were the Antichrist.

A primary difficulty with this view is to determine to whom or what do the symbols apply.

A more practical interpretation would say that, during each age, churches are found that exemplify each of the 7 churches depicted in the Revelation.

D. Futurists – This approach interprets NT prophecy as describing real people and events that have not yet occurred.

This was a primary view of the early church.

One objection to this persuasion is that it does not take into account the original setting of the Revelation. Therefore, it has very little for those to whom it was originally written. How could the events, say, of Mt. 24, I Thes. 4 and Revelation been relevant to the first century church if they would not be fulfilled for another 2000 years?

2. The Rapture

Another key issue related to the timing of end time events is “the Rapture.”

The Rapture is the event in which Jesus will return in the atmosphere of the clouds and receive “those that are His” to himself in the air. It is important to note that he will not physically touch the earth at this time.

The timing of this event is identified with reference to the time of Great Tribulation (see Revelation 6-18) upon the earth and focuses on the question of when Jesus will come for His bride.

There are 3 principle views:

1. Pre-tribulation – The Rapture will occur before the period of Great Tribulation upon the earth. In this scenario, Christians will not have to face and endure the great sufferings that are going on during the period of tribulation on the earth. This would include the dilemma of receiving the mark of the beast (666).
2. Mid-tribulation – The Rapture of Christians will occur at the mid-point of the tribulation. Many mid-tribulationists interpret the 7th trumpet of Revelation 11 to be the signal that the Rapture is about to occur. In this scenario, Christians on the earth will have to endure 3 ½ years of God’s wrath judgments on the earth. This includes the 7 seal judgments and 6 of the 7 trumpet judgments. Note that the “mark of the beast will be instituted during the 2nd half of the tribulation (also referred to as “The Great Tribulation.)
3. Post-tribulation – The Rapture will occur at the end of the 7 years of tribulation in conjunction with the 2nd coming of Christ. Jesus will receive Christians into the air as He is coming to the earth and they then will escort him back to the earth. This view maintains that the Rapture and the 2nd coming are the same event.

These things will be discussed in further detail in chapters 5 and 7 of this workbook.

Also, see the second chart at the end of this chapter for a summary picture of the major End Times events and their sequence in which they will occur. This chart assumes a futurist, premillennial, pre-tribulation viewpoint.

3. The Millennium (The Messianic Kingdom)

The millennium is a period of 1,000 years in which, according to Rev. 20:1-6, Satan will be bound with a great chain and cast into a bottomless pit. He will be held there for 1000 years and will not be allowed to deceive the nations during this time.

Christ, His Raptured saints (the church) and those who were beheaded for their witness to Jesus and the Word will reign during this time and bring an unprecedented peace to the earth.

Two key questions regarding the millennium are:

1. Is it literal or figurative?
2. Is it already present today or is it future?

There are three principle positions:

1. Amillennial – This view holds that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual in nature and is presently fulfilled as Christ reigns in the hearts and lives of his people.

The 1000 years is symbolic and represents a long period of time.

Note: In Greek, the addition of an “a” at the front of a word means “no.” In this case, amillennialism means there is no millennium.

2. Postmillennial – “Post” means “after” and therefore this would indicate that Christ will return to the earth after the 1000 years.

Hence, This view holds that the millennial kingdom is figurative, representing an age that the church will bring by the preaching of the gospel. This “new” age will come gradually until the whole earth embraces Christ. After this period, Christ will appear to take us into eternity.

A significant issue: Rev. 20:4-7 indicates that the saints will rule with Christ during the millennium.

3. Premillennial – This view maintains that Christ will return to the earth at His Second Coming and bring a reign of peace for 1000 years. This persuasion holds that the millennium is yet to come.

In summary, the three positions are indicated by the preface to the word millennial and are: none, after and before.

See the chart at the end of chapter 17 for a depiction of the millennial positions.

Review questions:

1. Name some reasons why we should study prophecy:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

2. What are the 3 principle issues of prophecy?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

3. Identify the principle approaches to each of these issues.

- A. timing:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____
 - 4. _____
- B. the Rapture:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____
- C. the Millennium:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____

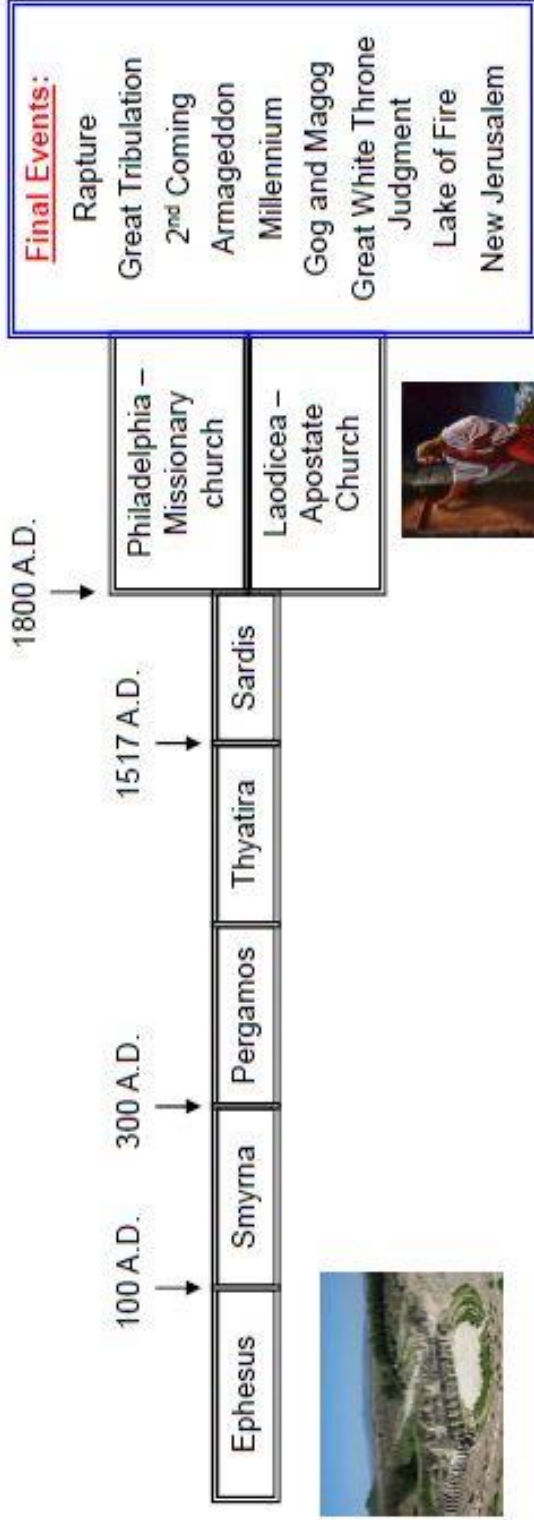
The Seven Churches of Asia Minor

Revelation 2 & 3



Schools of Interpretation:

1. Symbolic - A message regarding the struggle between good and evil. (a series of pictures teaching spiritual truths.
2. Preterist - Only for the 1st century and fulfilled then. Now...only teaching value for Christendom.
3. Continuous historical - applies Revelation prophetically to all the centuries since the time of Christ.
4. Futurist - The 7 churches represent periods of church history up to the rapture.



1. These were 7 churches that actually existed during John's day.
2. Every believer belongs to one of these seven churches, spiritually speaking.

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The Church – Rapture to the New Jerusalem

Living & resurrected saints



The Rapture
I Thess 4:15-17



The Judgment Seat of Christ (bema)



Marriage of the lamb
Rev. 19:7-9

Mt 24:29-31
2nd Coming of Christ



Mt 25:31-46
Judgment of the Living Nations



Great White Throne Judgment
Rev. 20:11ff

It is done!
Rev. 21:6

Above the earth

On the earth

The Tribulation, Reign of Antichrist, 666, Gog/Magog Part I
Matt. 24:3-22
Rev. 6-18, Ezk. 38/39

The Millennial Reign of Christ-1000 yrs
Rev. 20:1-6

Gog/Magog - II consumed by fire from heaven
Rev. 20:7-9



The New Jerusalem
Rev. 21:2

Satan bound - 1000 yrs
Rev. 20:1-5

Satan loosed
Rev. 20:7-9

Lake of Fire
Eternal doom of Satan
Rev. 20:10-15



Beneath the earth

Rev. 19:7 "...and His bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"

A/C & beast to lake of fire
Rev. 19:20

Chapter 2: Principles of Interpretation

Rightly Dividing the Word of truth

Biblical Interpretation is an art and science that is learned over time and with much practice. One does not learn to “rightly divide the Word of Truth” without much prayer and practice.

This is of extreme importance because the key to understanding all of Scripture is in the method of interpretation that is chosen. This is called “hermeneutics.”

A sister subject is called “exegesis” which is the study of the grammar and syntax of the original language to determine “what did this passage mean to the original hearers.”

Note that some combine both exegesis and hermeneutics into one topic labeled as hermeneutics.

For us in this study, we need to answer the question: “How should I interpret prophecy?”

The very word “revelation” (**SN 602** apokalupsis) means uncovering, disclosure, unveiling...to reveal. This indicates that it is the intent of God that the words of prophecy be understood. God gives us the revelation to help us understand the events to come, not to hide or conceal them.

A key fallacy of some prophetic interpretation is to presume that every passage has to be spiritualized or treated as figurative. But the Scriptures nowhere tell us that when we are interpreting prophecy that we should ignore the normal sense of the words and sentences. The consistent approach of a grammatical-historical-contextual hermeneutic should be applied to prophecy as well as other forms of Scripture. (The meaning of each word is determined by the sentence grammar, the historical situation, and the passage context).

So, to clarify the muddy waters, let’s identify some key principles that will guide us as we examine and interpret prophecy.

1. Prophecy should be interpreted literally.

This principle flows from the “golden rule” of Scripture interpretation:

“When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and fundamental truths, clearly indicate otherwise.”

This does not mean that we don't consider non-literal words and phrases such as figures of speech and idioms. It simply means that we examine the text, identify non-literal words and phrases, discover the literal meaning of the word or phrase and then apply it to our interpretation of the passage.

Our language is filled with idioms, figures of speech and symbols. A man I once worked with came to the office one day and declared that an acquaintance of his had "bought the farm." This didn't mean he had gone down to the bank, withdrawn a sum of cash and purchased a farm property. This was his "softened" way of facing the hard reality that this acquaintance had physically died.

A young man goes on a first date and it doesn't go very well. He may very well say that he "struck out" on his date. In our culture, we readily understand his meaning. (He didn't do very well.)

In the Biblical culture of 2000-4000 years ago, these special forms of communication were well-understood by the people of the day and there was no need to explain them.

See Num. 14:9 Caleb speaking to the people: "They are bread for us." (ESV) In our culture, we would say: "It's a piece of cake."

We, however, millennia removed from their culture, need a guide to help us understand the meanings.

This "golden rule" simply says: read the passage and if it makes sense, accept the literal interpretation unless there is something within the passage that indicates we should consider the words otherwise.

An example: At times, the gospel writers, before recording a teaching of Jesus, will say something like: "And Jesus taught them a parable." There is now something within this paragraph that indicates we should apply special rules for interpreting the parable that is being recorded. (See my study book "Making the Most of Your Biblical Studies" Session 9 for more on parables.)

Literal simply means to explain the original sense of the passage according to the normal and customary usage of language.

2. To interpret symbols, look for the Scriptural explanation.

This may occur immediately in the passage or it may be explained in another location in the Scriptures.

Example: In Rev. 1:12 we see Jesus standing in the middle of seven lampstands holding 7 seven stars in his hand. Later, in verse 20, we see the explanation that the seven lampstands are the seven churches and the stars are their angels.

In Matthew 13 Jesus tells the parable of the wheat and tares. Later in the chapter, in verse 36ff, He explains that the sower is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom and the tares are the sons of the wicked one, the enemy who sowed the tares is the devil, etc.

See Daniel 2:38 for another “built-in” explanation of symbolic language - “You are the head of gold.”

So, when interpreting symbolic language, look first for the literal explanation in Scripture. Often, this will be found within the immediate context of the passage (chapter before and chapter after)

If there is no explanation in the immediate context, expand your search to the larger “book context.” Ultimately, you may find the interpretation in another book of the Bible or in a “Bible helps” book such as a book on figures of speech or symbols.

3. Review and compare what other related passages teach about the subject being addressed.

Since we rarely find one Scripture that provides all of the information the bible contains on a given topic, it is important to collect and compare the other passages that talk about the subject being addressed.

A good example is the 2nd Coming of Christ. For this study, you will find numerous passages: Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 24:26-31; I Thes. 5:1-11; Rev. 19:11-16 to name a few.

4. Be aware that some Old Testament prophecies may have a two-part prophecy with a length of time between fulfillments, or they may have more than one fulfillment.

An important illustration of the first principle is found in Zech 9:9 where there are two parts to the prophecy:

This passage begins with a prophetic picture of Jesus’ triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem riding on the “foal of a donkey.” This prophecy was fulfilled during Jesus’ first coming (Mt. 21:1ff). The very next verse in Zechariah catapults centuries ahead to the 2nd coming of Christ to establish his earthly kingdom. At this later time, all nations will be subject to Christ and His rule will extend throughout the earth.

An illustration of the second phenomena with a “double-fulfillment” is found in Mt. 2:18 “Rachel weeping for her children.”

In Jer. 31:15, Rachel, who had been entombed some 13 centuries before the Babylonian captivity, is seen as weeping for her children who were being led away into captivity in Babylon in 597 B.C. (See Jer. 29:1)

Then in Mt. 2:18, we again see Rachel weeping for her children who are being violently taken away by Herod's assassins. Matthew very clearly, by the inspiration of the Spirit, indicates that this "tragedy of the innocents" was also a fulfillment of the Jeremiah passage.

These two prophetic fulfillments illustrate that OT prophecies can have more than one fulfillment, usually an early fulfillment during or near the life of the prophet and another fulfillment centuries or millennia later.

5. Determine if a prophecy has already been completely fulfilled.

This may seem like an obvious step but sometimes it's difficult to determine if a prophecy has already been fulfilled. This may require investigation into the historical events of a given period to determine if the entire prophecy has been fulfilled.

In the case of Nebuchadnezzar's giant statue in Dan. 2 and the interpretation given in verses 36ff, we know from a historical search, that the initial stages of the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persian and Greece have been completed. The stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands and broke into pieces the previous kingdoms, is Christ and this kingdom is now beginning to fill the earth. But we also know that the final completion of Christ's "filling the earth" is yet to come.

In the prophecy of Jesus coming for his saints in the clouds (I Thes. 4:13-18), in which his own are caught up to Him, we know that this has not yet occurred.

V. General Hermeneutical Principles:

Following are some additional hermeneutical principles:

1. Always keep in mind the nature of Scripture: that it is divinely inspired and inerrant in all of its parts (in its original autographs).
2. Always keep in mind that God is revealing Himself in the pages of Scripture. Watch to see how and what he is revealing about Himself.
3. Make Christ central in all interpretations.
4. Follow the customary grammatical forms of the languages of the Bible by observing its grammar (word meanings) and syntax (how the words are positioned relative to each other in the sentence).

5. Search for the meaning intended for the original audience. A passage cannot mean something that it never could have meant to the original audience.
6. Observe the context of the passage. "A text without its context is a pretext."
7. Determine literary types (genre) and observe the general guidelines for interpreting each literary type. e.g. Matthew 24 is a prophetic passage embedded in a narrative. Observe the guidelines for interpreting specific literary types. (See my study book "Making the Most of Your Biblical Studies" for an explanation of literary types.)

An example: parables – have one main point; most details are provided to create a "reality" to the story but are not part of the interpretation

Allegories –many details may have a spiritual interpretation

8. Determine figurative (non-literal) passages and make a literal interpretation.
9. Give each passage of scripture one interpretation (one interpretation with the potential for multiple fulfillments or applications).
10. Expanding inclusion - from individual or singular to group or plural

e.g. an OT prophetic passage calls for a "sword from the north." Here, a single sword is representative of multiple swords thereby indicating an army.

See also Paul's comment: "Don't get drunk with wine." (Teaching – Don't get drunk.)
11. Don't build your doctrine on a single verse of scripture (e.g. baptizing for the dead I Cor 15:29).
12. Rule of non-contradiction: If your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of another passage, then at least one of the interpretations is incorrect. God does not contradict Himself.
13. In matters of doctrine, there is no requirement that every key issue related to that doctrine be discussed in every passage relative to the doctrine. As a matter of fact, there are very few scriptures that give all of the available information on a given topic. (e.g. Mt. 4:17 "repent for the kingdom of God is at hand." – There is no mention of faith.) see also Jn. 3:16...no mention of repentance.
14. When doing word studies, look up the word in a word study Bible which identifies the specific word in the original language. (Don't look up the English translated word.)

e.g. In Ps. 23:6, the translator translates the Hebrew word “tov” to mean goodness. Don’t look up an explanation of the word “goodness.” Look up the word “tov.” A search of the meaning of the word “tov” indicates a far-wider definition. (There are more than 25 words which could be the translation of “tov.”)

Having access to a word study Bible is a great help with this one.

This is a very common error for people who are in the beginning stages of Bible study with limited understanding of the language background of the Bible. The temptation is to look up the English translated word in an English dictionary for further explanation.

Keep in mind that interpreting the Scriptures is an art that is learned by repeated practice. You will not become an accurate “divider of the truth” overnight. (I’ve been studying God’s Word for over 58 years now and I’m still learning.)

A chart entitled: “The Stages of a Believer’s Journey to Eternity” is provided at the end of this section. This chart shows clearly God’s plan for each believer that is “saved” during this current “church age.” What an amazing thing God has done. He has shown us within the pages of Scripture, His plan for us, His people, during the trying times of the End Times. And, you can hang your hat on it, it will come to pass just as He has foretold it.

Review questions:

1. What is the golden rule of biblical interpretation? _____

2. Explain the grammatical-historical-contextual principle of interpretation.

3. What should you do if you discover a figure of speech, an idiom or a symbol when reading a prophetic passage? _____

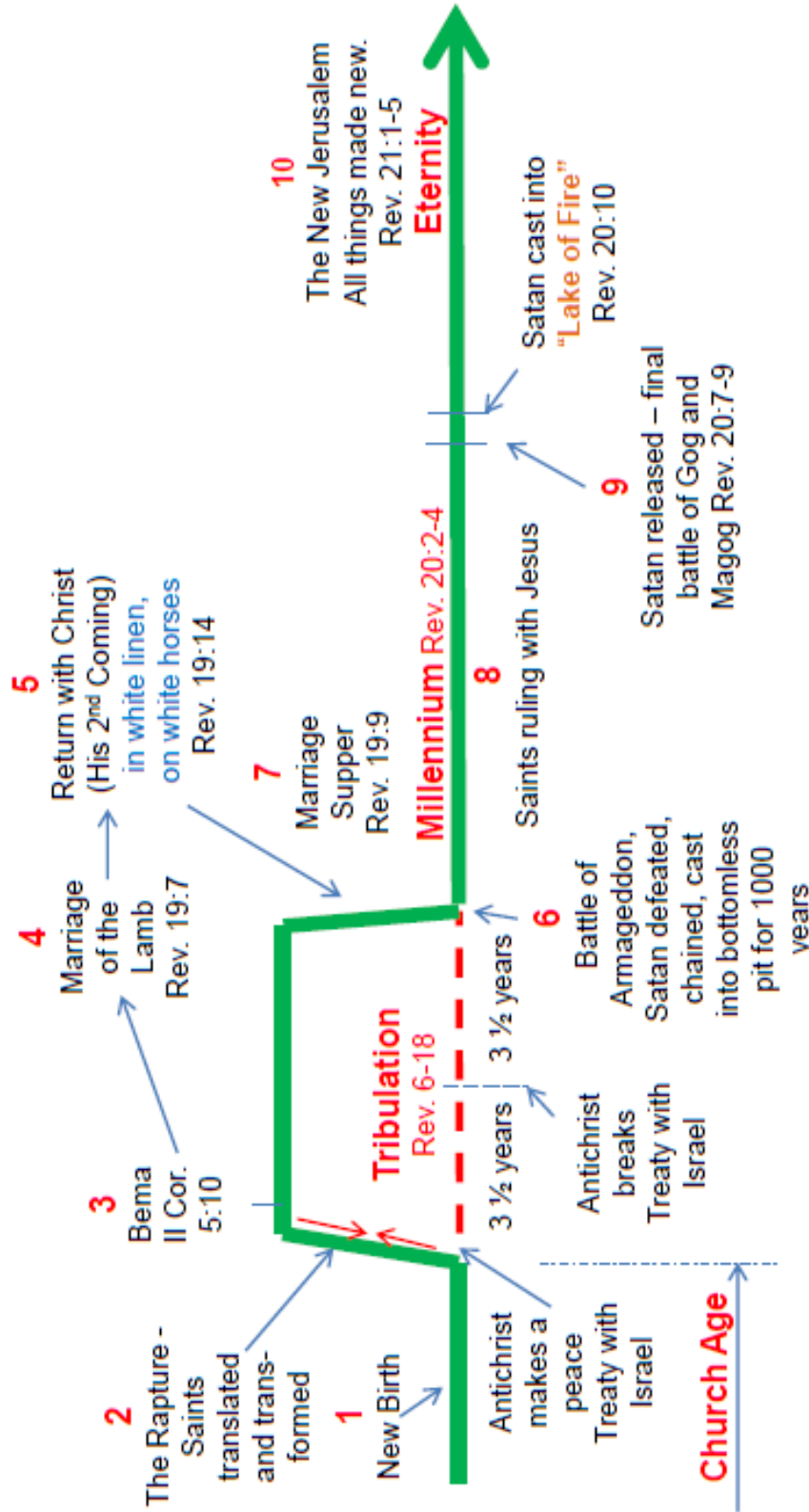
4. What is the rule of non-contradiction? _____

5. Why is it important to consider other parallel passages when interpreting a passage? _____
6. When doing a word study, why is it important to look up the original language word in a passage instead of the English word provided by the translator?

7. To what does the principle of inerrancy apply? _____

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On:

The Stages of a Believer's Journey to Eternity*



*The upper portion of this chart shows the events that will be going on with believers in heaven. The lower portion shows the simultaneous events of the tribulation on earth.

Chapter 3: Key Prophetic Passages

There are numerous passages in the Bible that provide information for the End Times events. But there are three particular passages that contain keys to unlocking the events of the future. These are:

1. the book of Daniel, specifically chapters 2,7,8,9,10-12
Other chapters in Daniel, e.g. 1,3,6 provide examples for living a righteous life
2. Matthew 24, the Olivet discourse by Jesus which was given just before He went to the cross, and
3. the book of Revelation

Let's see what we can learn from these key passages:

1. the book of Daniel

The book of Daniel is most noted for some of its captivating stories of the times of the Babylonian captivity...Daniel in the lion's den, the three Hebrew men in the fiery furnace and Nebuchadnezzar's 7 years voyage into the animal kingdom.

But there is much more in Daniel than just what is used for children's stories. Embedded in its pages are strategic passages that are keys to understanding the End Times.

In specific, there are five sections that reveal God's prophetic program for the future:

- Chapter 2: the great statue of Nebuchadnezzar
- Chapter 7: the four beasts from the Great Sea
- Chapter 8: the ram and the goat
- Chapter 9: verses 24-27: the seventy weeks prophecy relating specifically to "Daniel's city and people" (Dan. 9:24a)
- Chapter 10-12: Daniel's final vision

Chapters 2, 7 and 8 are considered together and outline the period of time known as "The Times of the Gentiles." (see Lk. 21:24) During this period of time, there was no king in Israel. The 10 northern tribes had gone into captivity to Assyria in 722 B.C. and then dispersed to the nations. The final captivity of Judah occurred in 586 B.C. with the fall of Jerusalem and the 3rd deportation of Jewish captives to Babylonia. (Daniel had been taken captive to Babylonia in an earlier deportation.)

The "Times of the Gentiles" began during this period and will continue until Christ comes again.

Some may argue that Israel is not under Gentile domination today but Israel has no Davidic king. Currently Israel is experiencing a brief interruption of Gentile rule.

Daniel 2 contains the basic outline of the “Times of the Gentiles.

The body parts of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the head, chest and arms, belly and thighs of bronze and the feet and toes of clay, represent 4 kingdoms.

The stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands is the kingdom of Christ that shall never end. (His kingdom has already begun on the earth.)

The following chart shows the parallels between Daniel 2, 7 and 8.

Kingdom	Daniel 2 (Man’s perspective)	Daniel 7 (God’s perspective – beasts that ravage and kill)	Daniel 8
Babylon - Nebuchadnezzar	Head of gold	Lion with eagle’s wings	
Medo-Persia - Cyrus	Chest and arms of silver	Bear with 3 ribs in its mouth	*A ram with 2 horns pushing to the west, north and south
Greece (Alexander, and subsequently 4 of his generals)	Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with 4 wings of a bird	**Male goat with a notable horn, eventually replaced by 4 less notable horns (when Alexander died)
Rome 63 B.C.	Legs of Iron	A beast dreadful and terrible, exceeding strong, devouring teeth	
Rome - future	Feet and toes of iron and clay	10 horns	
Antichrist: 2 nd half of Tribulation		Little horn replacing 3 horns	
Christ’s Kingdom	The stone cut out of the mountain without hands	The Son of Man is given dominion, glory and a kingdom	

Note:

Dan. 2 written in 604 B.C. would have been an encouragement to the Jews during the time of the Gentiles knowing that God had already revealed which nations would be ruling over them.

* Dan. 8:20 specifically identifies the ram and goat as Media/Persia and Greece.

** Dan. 8:22 says that the four kingdoms arising out of Greece will not have the same power as the original ruler – which is exactly what occurred when Alexander the Great died. His four generals divided the kingdom.

The stone that destroys the statue represents the 2nd Coming of Christ. When he comes, He will remove the rule of the Gentiles forever.

Note also that in Daniel 2, the kingdoms of the Gentiles are seen from a human perspective. In Daniel 7, they are seen from God's perspective...not glamorous as gold or silver but as beasts which devour and destroy and are, therefore, worthy of the judgment of God.

Daniel 9:24-27: The seventy weeks

In the 9th chapter, Daniel has studied the OT books and understood from prophecies of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10) that the Babylonian captivity would last 70 years. Realizing that this time of captivity was almost complete, he sets his face to pray for the restoration of Israel. He receives an angelic visitor (Gabriel) who gives him an answer to his prayers. But the angel's message goes beyond the immediate restoration of Judah to the land of Palestine. It extends to the final restoration under the Messiah. In the answer to Daniel's prayer, he hears the actual timing of the Messiah's death from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem.

Let's identify some keys that will enable us to understand the "70 weeks."

- The context (Daniel has already been thinking in terms of years) indicates that the prophecy is referring to weeks of years. So the length of the prophecy is $70 \times 7 = 490$ years.
- The prophecy is about Israel. (see v.24 "...for your people and for your holy city.")
- There are 6 things to accomplish during these 70 weeks of years:
 1. finish the transgression,
 2. make an end of sins,
 3. make reconciliation for iniquity,
 4. bring in everlasting righteousness,
 5. to seal up vision and prophecy, and
 6. anoint the Most Holy. (*thing or place*)

It is important to note that Jesus' death and resurrection made atonement for sin but Israel's acceptance of this sacrifice will not occur until they repent at the end of the 70 weeks.

- The prophetic clock began when Cyrus issued the decree to rebuild the temple on March 5, 444 B.C.
- From Dan 9:25 we see that the period of time until the Messiah would be 69 weeks. This exact period of time elapsed from the decree of Cyrus until Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. (referred to as "The triumphal entry.")
- When Israel rejected Jesus as the Messiah, God's plan for Israel was placed into suspension. So there is a prophetic gap between the 69th and 70th sets of 7 years. (much like the prophetic gap between the Dan 2 legs of iron and the feet and toes of iron and clay)

Dan. 9:26 foretells 2 events that will occur during this gap:

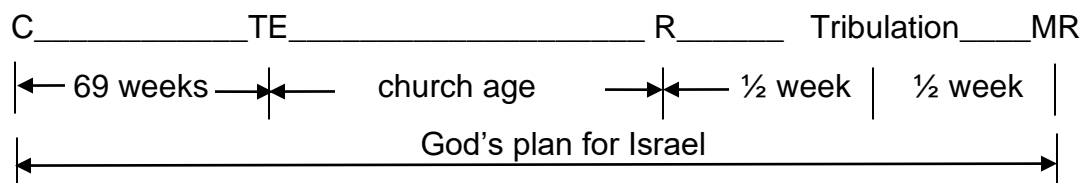
- the death of the Messiah
- Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed.

We are now living in the gap between the 69th and 70th weeks of years. We call it the church age. And, since the church did not exist during the first 69 weeks (444 BC to 33 AD), it makes sense that the church will not be around for the 70th week of 7 years which has to do with Israel and not the church. (This viewpoint supports the idea of a pre-tribulation Rapture of the church.)

- The prophetic clock will begin again when the church is Raptured and the Antichrist comes to ratify a 7-year covenant with Israel (which he will break at the mid-point of the 7 years.) During this period, the Antichrist will set up a sacrilegious image or statue of himself in the Most Holy Place of the rebuilt temple.
- At the end of the 70th week of 7 years, the Lord will kill the Antichrist. (II Thes. 2:8)

The following chart will help to grasp the "picture of the 70 weeks of years."

Chart of the 70 weeks



C - Cyrus decree to rebuild the temple March 5, 444 BC
 TE - Triumphal Entry of Jesus

R - Rapture – the living and the dead belonging to Christ
MR - Messiah Returns

2. Matthew 24, the Olivet discourse (spoken by Jesus 3 days before He was crucified.)

This discourse was given by Jesus in response to his close disciples' inquiry about the destruction of the temple and the end of the age. See gospel accounts in Mt. 24-25, Mk. 13 and Lk. 21.

This sermon provides a concise view of the End Times.

In Matthew 24, Jesus gives the disciples 8 signs that will indicate his Second Coming is near: false Christs, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, false prophets, lawlessness and worldwide preaching of the gospel. Then he tells them they will see what Daniel spoke about...the abomination of desolation. This will mark the midpoint of the Tribulation when the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel.

Beginning with Mt. 24:21, he describes the last 3 ½ years of this age, a time in which terror will be so great that God will shorten the number of days so that some could survive. (This indicates that some who live during the Tribulation will survive to enter the Millennium.)

In Mt 24:29 Jesus describes the signs in the heavens that the Son of man is coming and then the Son comes for his elect from the four winds (Mt. 24:31).

Mt. 24:34 is a controversial verse that some maintain refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Those holding to this interpretation assume that the phrase "this generation" means the generation that originally heard these words.

In the context of the passage, it most likely refers to those living in the trying times of the Tribulation.

This future interpretation of this passage (a picture that occurs long after the destruction of Jerusalem) seems to be the correct interpretation since the disciples had just asked Jesus about the "end of the age" (this present evil age in which we now live).

3. The book of Revelation

The book of Revelation is the final inspired message to the church. It is a fitting end to the whole of God's revelation as it ties up all of the loose ends and takes us into the "age without end."

It includes more than 275 verses that refer back to Old Testament passages.

And it also looks ahead to tell us the destiny of this world and its inhabitants.

Rev. 1:19 provides a top-level outline of the book:

Chapter 1: provides the things which were seen

Chapters 2-3 provide the things which are (letters to the 7 churches)

Chapters 4-22 provide the things which shall take place after these things

Purpose: The purpose of the book of Revelation is to show in advance how Jesus will, by divine judgments, receive His kingdom and take His throne.

The Key: The key to Revelation is found in chapter 5 when Jesus takes the seven-sealed scroll from the Father.

In the OT, the only document sealed in this manner was a last will and testament. When a will was executed, 7 witnesses were present to seal it.

This seven-sealed scroll represents the kingdom that was promised in the Old Testament. It is, in fact, the title deed to the inheritance. By opening the scroll, Jesus is receiving his inheritance to be king over the nations. (Note that He is the only one qualified to open the scroll, this by his sinless life, death and resurrection.)

As He opens the scroll, time moves forward and the judgments begin. The judgments are the actions needed to prepare the world for his reign.

In Revelation 6, the main action of judgments begins.

The first seal opens the door to the Tribulation.

The first 6 seals are opened leading to the 7th seal which contains the 7 trumpet judgments (Rev. 8, 9). Then, the sounding of the 7th trumpet (Rev. 11:15) reveals that it contains 7 “bowl” judgments of God’s wrath (Rev. 15,16). These judgments are quickly poured out before Christ comes to the earth – the Second Coming.

The kingdom of Christ has come but not without severe judgments upon the earth.

Patterns in Revelation:

First, Revelation unfolds like the plays that we present in drama...a long scene, then, an intermission...followed by another long scene followed by an intermission.

Secondly, Revelation is structured so that it presents alternating scenes that shift from heaven to earth. It also provides information regarding the “world beneath” and those who find it to be their “final dwelling place.”

Knowing these two characteristic patterns will help you as you study your way through this difficult book. See also the chart at the end of chapter 1 entitled “The Church – Rapture to the New Jerusalem” for a depiction of the heaven, earth and beneath the earth scenarios that unfold.

We now have the book of Daniel, the Olivet discourse from Matthew 24-25 and the book of Revelation as the stable basis for constructing our doctrine of eschatology.

We have the outline of the “Times of the Gentiles,” Daniel’s 70 weeks beginning with the decree of Cyrus and continuing to the return of the Messiah. We have Jesus’ detailed description of the time of Tribulation and we also see the picture of Jesus pouring out the wrath of God upon the earth through the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments which complete His process of receiving the kingdom.

Other key passages include Ezk. 38-39, I Thes. 4 & 5 and II Thes. 2.

One of the things that we should learn from all of this is that God is a revealer. He wants us to know who He is and what he is doing.

Also, crucial issues like the destiny of mankind are revealed to us so that anyone who will read the words of His book can find access to the joys of eternity with Him in the New Jerusalem.

A chart of the Key Prophetic Passages discussed in this lesson is provided on the next page.

Review Questions:

1. What are the 3 key End Times prophetic passages of the Bible?

2. Describe Nebuchadnezzar’s great statue and the kingdoms it represents. (See Dan. 2:31-34)

A. _____

B. _____

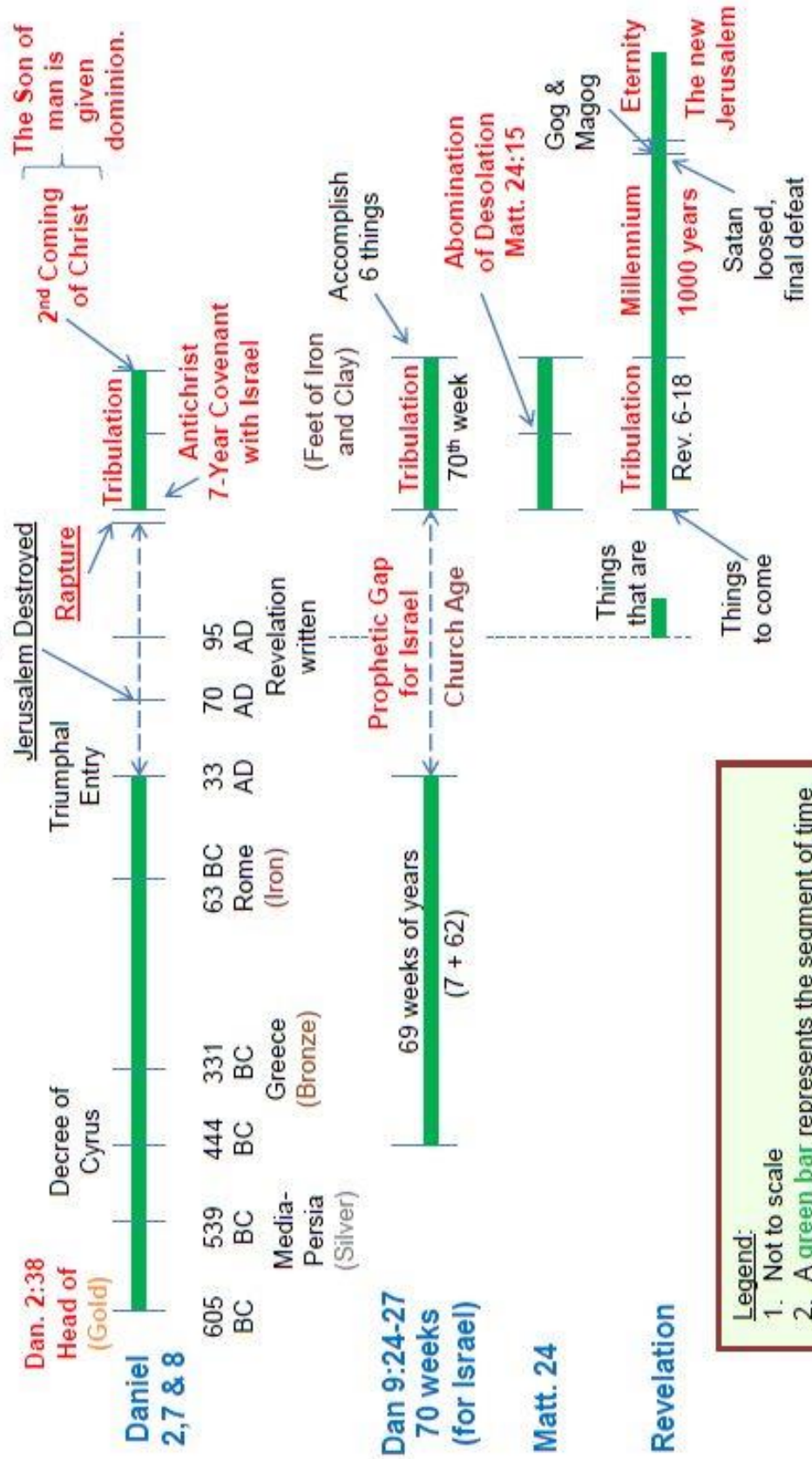
C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On:

KEY PROPHETIC PASSAGES and the Times they Address



Legend:

1. Not to scale
2. A green bar represents the segment of time addressed in the scripture passage identified to the left (in blue)

File: END TIMES - Key Prophetic Passages 02

Chapter 4: Signs of the Times – “Are We Close?”

Definitions:

Eschatology is the study of last things.

In eschatology discussions you will also hear references to the End Times, the last days and the Day of the Lord. These phrases are spread throughout the pages of Scripture and can, at times be a little confusing.

When we discuss “last days” we have to distinguish between the last days for the church (which is our current status) and the last days for Israel (which is yet to come.)

In the Old Testament, “last days” refers to Israel and the establishment of Christ’s Millennial kingdom.

In the New Testament, references to “last days” most often refers to the church (not Israel).

“End times” is a much broader phrase and encompasses all of the events from the Rapture to eternity.

The “Day of the Lord” refers to an extended period of time not simply a 24 hour day or the hours between sunrise and sunset.

The “Day of the Lord” is a period of time that will begin with the Tribulation and be completed with the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

What are we to expect? What will be the signs of the times?

To begin, signs of the times are visible events or evidences that direct our attention to something beyond the sign. These are like signs along the road that give us advance notice of something that is just ahead...a stop sign, a sharp curve, a railroad crossing, a draw bridge, etc.

Jesus used signs to indicate that the kingdom of God was at hand. He said: If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then you know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Mt. 12:28

He performed many miracles during his public ministry to give a sign, an indicator of who he was. His visible healings demonstrated the invisible truth that He was God, that He is the Lord of Creation. Some of His healings/exorcisms (Messianic Miracles) were specifically signs to show Israel and its leaders that He was the Messiah.

His deliverances demonstrated that the kingdom of God was present and overcoming the kingdom of this present evil age. Each exorcism was an individual battle between Satan and Christ with Christ overpowering demonic forces.

In Mt. 24:3, his disciples asked for signs that would indicate his coming was imminent. In response, He gave them many signs...wars, famines, pestilences, etc. (Mt. 24:4-35). Matthew 24 & 25 is in reference to the 2nd coming of Christ. Since the Rapture occurs before His 2nd coming, we need to be ready and watching.

So, what signs can we expect 2000 years after the time of Christ? Will there be signs during our time that indicate his coming is near?

Seven signs of the End of Times

1. The Return of the Jews to Israel

Perhaps the greatest sign of the End Times to date is the return of the Jews to the land given to them by God. There are many biblical predictions that the Jews must be back in Palestine for the end time events to occur. (see Jer. 30:1-3; Ezk. 34:11-16; Zech. 10:6-10)

These verses indicate that God Himself will search for his sheep and will bring them back from the countries to which they have been dispersed.

The Scriptures also indicate that this return will occur in stages. (See Ezk. 37: Israel's valley of bones vision which pictures the stage-by-stage regeneration of the nation.)

The return of the Jews, referred to as "The Miracle on the Mediterranean," has been going on now for about 140 years. It began in the early 1870's when a few Jews returned to the land. By the 1880s, the number of settled Jews was about 25,000.

The World War I Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917 encouraged Jewish hopes for a home in Palestine and, as a result, by 1939, when WWII broke out, approximately ½ million Jews had returned.

On May 14, 1948, the United Nations approved a national homeland for the Jews with British control of the land ending.

Today, more than 7 million Jews now live in Israel, more now than in any other nation in the world today.

The prophetic Scriptures of their return are being fulfilled.

The Tribulation of Rev. 6-18 will begin when Antichrist makes a 7-year covenant with Israel. (See Dan. 9:27) Obviously, Israel will have to be in their homeland for this to occur. The world-wide return of the Jews to their land is a sign that the End Times are nearing.

Summary: Why is this sign so important?

- A. The End Times is focused on the nation of Israel. see Dan. 9:24-27 (The church will be in heaven with Jesus.)
- B. Many prophecies depend upon the existence of the Jews for their fulfillment.
- C. In the last days, God will offer the Jews one last opportunity for salvation.

2. Increasing Apostasy

I Tim. 4:1-3 and II Tim. 3:1-9 tell us that there will be a growing departure from the faith, from the Lord as the church age progresses.

The Scriptures list: depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, perilous times – men become unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – (quite the extensive list in II Tim.), all of these in the last days.

II Thes. 2:1-12 speaks of a “falling away” occurring before the man of sin (Antichrist) arrives.

During these last days, many will depart from the faith; not only will many doubt God’s Word, they will openly reject it.

In my short number of years, I have seen this predicted, moral decline in the details of my own life. For example, in high school in the 1960s, students got into trouble for talking in class, chewing gum or running in the halls. (I once got into trouble with our English teacher because a number of the students in her class initiated a lottery guessing at the day her yet-to-be-born child would be born; I won the lottery.)

Today’s problems in the school systems have magnified exponentially. Drugs, guns, knives and shootings are a strong indicator of the decline of morals in our nation.

Jude has a powerful section (vv. 12-16) that describes those who are apostate and depraved. This short segment of Scripture describes the decadent conditions that will prevail before the Lord comes with 10,000s of His saints.

3. The Middle East Peace Process

It should come as no surprise to learn that the growing interest in “peace in the east” is another sign of the times.

The constant focus of the news media is the continuing hostilities in the Middle East.

Of all the world issues we encounter, this one issue continues to draw world attention.

In the world view, nothing seems to attract greater attention than the unceasing contention in this tiny area.

You have to ask: “Why Israel? Why this tiny nation? Why is this a big deal?”

There are obviously political and humanitarian issues of importance.

But, the reason it is such a “hotbed of tempers” is that this is a key marker on God’s timetable of end time events.

The desire for peace in the east is setting the stage for the covenant of peace between the leader of the Western Confederacy (the Antichrist) and the nation of Israel. See Dan. 9:27a

The event that signals the beginning of the Tribulation is the “7-year Covenant” (see chapter 8 in this workbook).

4. Reuniting of the Roman Empire

The fourth sign is the rebirth of the Roman Empire.

As the End Times emerge, there will be a world-wide struggle for political power and dwindling resources. Out of this volatile scenario will emerge a coalition of 10 nations with the intent of protecting the interests of the west.

This coalition is first identified in Dan. 2:41-44 and is symbolized as the 10 toes on the great “Nebuchadnezzar’s statue.” It is later pictured in Dan. 7:7 and 23-24 as the horns on the beast which represents the last world empire, the revived Roman Empire. It will have the power to control the politics and economics of the Mediterranean.

Its final leader, the Antichrist (Dan. 7:8) will seize control of the ten leaders.

Even today we see the continuing struggles of European countries to form a coalition of nations that will have the political clout to control the economics of the west...another sign of the times.

5. Globalism

Satan's goal has always been to rule the world.

Since Gen. 10-11, when Satan ruled the known world through Nimrod, he has been trying to get the world back together so he can be god and king over all the earth.

Now, for the first time in history, the technology exists such that a global government could be established. With the electronic media, especially the use of satellite technology, instant communication around the world exists.

The capacity for a global, controlled missile warfare system also exists making world rule possible. A ruler with a pinpoint missile system could potentially rule, by duress, most of the nations in the world today.

In Rev. 13:17, the Bible foretells a ruler who can control whether one buys or sells depending upon a person having the mark of the beast.

The ingredients, a need for a world government and the global electronic technology, exist today making this a very real possibility for the first time since the days of Nimrod.

6. Jesus communicates with his bride

It is my belief that, as the End Times draw closer, Jesus will quicken within His church, a renewed desire and interest regarding end-time events. As a loving, protective bridegroom, He will train and prepare his bride for the things to come. He will raise up gifted pastors and teachers to shepherd his flock such that the times of the end will not come upon them as a surprise. This will be part of the preparation of the bride for her marriage to the Lamb of God.

A personal illustration:

For myself, towards the end of 2012, I began to feel a strong desire to prepare for, and teach on, the End Times. Over the past several years God has led me by His Spirit as I have prepared teaching documents for our Equipping the Saints ministry in a local church. I strongly believe that God will do the same with other sons and daughters of His to prepare His bride for the trying times ahead.

As we study the End Times, we will see that God has a plan and that His plan will be fulfilled just as he has foretold.

In Matthew 25, after Jesus had talked about signs of the time of his coming, He gives the disciples 2 parables. In a nutshell, these parables teach – be alert and be prepared, certainly strong exhortations from our King as to how we should live in these last days.

7. The Father Factor

God will move within His people to want to know Jesus better.

God will give his children a growing desire for personal holiness and intimacy with God as Jesus prepares His bride. A growing recognition of the emptiness of the things in this world will prepare us for his coming. We will recognize and focus our time and energies on those things which matter most: “knowing the only true God and Jesus whom He has sent” (Jn. 17:3) and being ready and alert. This will further motivate us to be prepared for His imminent coming.

My experience: Even though I’ve been a Christian for more than 58 years and have sought to know God throughout this time, over the last 3 years God has moved upon my heart to know Jesus better, to draw closer to the “courts of the Lord.”

But I’m not alone...many people throughout the world are experiencing this “moving.” It is a movement that encourages us to separate from the world, to press into our Savior, to live a life in holiness and godliness and to abandon the worthless things of the world as God prepares the bride of Christ for her husband.

Review:

1. Define the following:

- A. Eschatology _____
- B. “End times” _____
- C. “Last days” _____
- D. “Day of the Lord” _____

2. Name and briefly explain the 7 “signs of the times.”

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

F. _____

G. _____

3. Can you think of other events or circumstances that might be considered “signs of the times?” _____

Chapter 5: The Mystery of the Rapture

According to recent polls, more than half of the American people believe in an event referred to as “the Rapture.” (77% of Evangelical Christians believe that we are in the “last days.) There is an expectation by many that Jesus will come very soon to “catch/snatch them away” to be with Him.

In my own life, as long as I can remember, I have personally believed that I would not die but would be Raptured. I pray often for and look forward to the Rapture.

But what is the Rapture, what do the Scriptures say about it and when and how will it occur? What will be the impact of the Rapture on humanity and how does this affect me?

These are some of the questions we will address in this chapter.

Significant Scriptures (NKJV)

Three prominent passages on the Rapture are provided here to facilitate an easy reference when studying this lesson.

I Thes. 4:13-17:

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep 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 will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will 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.”

I Cor. 15:50-57:

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on

incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But, thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jn. 14:1-3:

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 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. And where I go, you know, and the way you know."

At first glance, the John 14 and 1 Thes. 4 passages do not appear to be talking about the same event.

Notice however, in the table that follows, the numerous similarities that indicate they are, in fact, speaking about the same event:

A Comparison of John 14 and I Thessalonians 4 Passages:

	<u>John 14</u>		<u>I Thes.4</u>
v.1	trouble	v.13	sorrow
	believe/trust (from <i>pisteuvo</i>)	v.14	believe (from <i>pistuevo</i>)
	God, me (Jesus)	v.14	Jesus, God
v.2	told you	v.15	say to you
v.3	come again		coming of the Lord
	receive you	v.17	caught up
	to myself		to meet the Lord
	to be where I am		to be with the Lord

What is it?

The clear portrayal of the Rapture comes from I Thes. 4:17: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

In this verse, the Greek word for "caught up" is harpazo (**SN 726**) which means to snatch away, seize upon with force, to take to oneself (especially used of a rapture) from Zodhiates - Word Study New Testament.

There are a number of New Testament passages that use the Greek word, *harpazo*. All indicate a sense of seizing or forcefully taking. Of particular interest are the following three:

Ac. 8:39 the Spirit snatches/transports (SN 726) Phillip away from the Ethiopian eunuch to Azotus, a village about 20 miles away.

In II Cor. 12:2, Paul describes a man (likely Paul) who was "caught up" (SN 726) to the third heaven.

Rev. 12:5 describes a scene in heaven in which a woman gives birth to a child who was immediately "caught up" (SN 726) to God to protect Him from the red dragon.

The scene is consistent. Each time, someone is snatched/caught up/taken from one location and transported to another. We don't know the dynamics or physical laws by which the Spirit does it, but we know that He does do it.

The word "rapture" is not found in the English translation of the New Testament. The word "rapture" is Latin in origin. During the 4th century AD, a scholar named Jerome translated the Greek New Testament into Latin. In I Thes. 4:17, he translated *harpazo* to *raeptius* (from *rapio* –to seize). This word was subsequently brought over into English as Rapture. (We have a number of words in English that have been brought over from other languages. For example, from the Greek language: baptism, metamorphosis, hermeneutics, exegesis.)

In a nutshell, "the Rapture" is the first phase of the End Time events. This event includes the resurrection of those who have died in Christ (the righteous) and the transformation of living believers. Both groups will be caught away in the air to be with Jesus and He will escort them to heaven. In the second phase of Jesus' coming, He will return to the earth (his Raptured believers with Him, see Rev. 19:14), defeat the Antichrist and set up his millennial kingdom.

The resurrection of the righteous is one of several resurrections that will occur. We will discuss these later in this course:

- OT believers
- the unrighteous
- believers who die during the Tribulation (sometimes referred to as "Tribulation saints" because they were martyred.)
- the "two witnesses"

When the Rapture occurs, Jesus will meet us with the perfected spirits of believers who have died. (When a person dies on earth, his body dies, but his spirit goes immediately to be with the Lord. See Lk. 16:19-31, 23:39-43; Ac. 7:56-60; Phil 1:23. He will resurrect their “sleeping” bodies, and transforming them, the spirits of the believers will be clothed in their new bodies. See I Thes. 4:13-18; Jn. 14:1-3 (see the comparison table on page 40) and I Cor. 15:50-57.

Both those who had died on the earth (now resurrected) and those who are still alive on the earth will next accompany Jesus to heaven in preparation for the “Judgment Seat of Christ” (Bema) where He will give rewards for faithful service. (See the next lesson on this topic.)

Who will be Raptured?

I Thes. 4:16 says that “the dead in Christ will rise first.”

The key phrase in this verse is “in Christ.”

Therefore, only those who are “in Christ,” i.e. church age believers, will participate in the Rapture. This includes all those who have believed in Christ beginning on the day of Pentecost up to and including the point in time when Jesus comes to Rapture his people.

On the day of the Rapture, Christ will come to take His bride to Himself and return to His Father’s home in heaven.

The question naturally follows: But what about the Old Testament believers? What will happen to those who had faith in God (were saved) before Christ came to the earth?

Dan. 12:1-3, indicates that the bodies of Old Testament believers (Jews) will be resurrected after the time of Tribulation. (See also Isa. 26:19)

“At that time Michael shall stand up the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as there never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” (Dan. 12:1-3)

Notice this verse speaks of the sons of your (Daniel’s) people which are Jews. The time of trouble unlike any other is the Tribulation. Those who “sleep in the dust” are those which have died (Hebrew euphemism).

What is the duration of the Rapture?

I Cor. 15:52 gives us two clues:

1. “in a moment.” – (SN 823) “*atomos*” – indivisible (cannot be divided), moment
2. “in the twinkling of an eye” (SN 4493) – “*rhipe*” – a jerk of the eye, an instant

I think this gives us a clue that the Rapture, to say the least, will occur very quickly.

The Impact on humanity:

This event will be “the great eye-opener” as people all over the world, in the blinking of an eye, in an instant of time, will be gone, disappeared.

Following are a few suggestions of scenarios that may occur:

Believers from all over the world will suddenly disappear.

A Raptured person may have been standing next to someone in line at Lowe’s.

Suddenly, he is no longer there.

Several people are traveling together in a car, going the speed limit on an interstate highway, when suddenly, there is no driver.

They may have been sitting next to other students in a college classroom.

They may have been sitting and talking with someone at the coffee shop.

They may have been working in the fields with other laborers and “just disappeared.”

They may have been sitting next to unsaved friends in church.

Police headquarters will be flooded with reports of missing persons.

People will be in a panic as brothers and sisters, loved ones and acquaintances all will instantaneously be gone from the face of the earth without a trace left behind.

Terrible calamities will occur as equipment, vehicle and train operators are no longer guiding their equipment.

Airlines pilots in the air will suddenly disappear leaving no one to fly the plane.

And on and on.

The Rapture will be a day of great joy for all those in Christ but a day of great sorrow, perplexity and consternation for those who have been left behind.

Rapture Summary:

In reviewing some of the Raptures of the Bible, see previous text in this chapter on Jesus (Rev. 12:5), Paul (II Cor. 12:2) and Phillip (Ac. 8:39), we can determine that the Rapture:

1. will be a literal event. Real people in real time were carried away.
2. will be a physical transferring of people from one location to another,
3. will occur very quickly

The Rapture will include millions of people who are believers who are alive on the earth at the time Jesus' Raptures His bride, plus believers in Christ who have died on the earth after the day of Pentecost.

The precise timing (when it will occur), has not been revealed.

There are some passages that give us some clues as to the timing of the Rapture:

1. I Thes. 4:13-5:9 In this passage, Paul first discusses the Rapture (4:17). After this, 5:2-9, he discusses the "Day of the Lord."

This would indicate that the Rapture occurs before the "Day of the Lord."

Note: "Day of the Lord" is a reference to the events that take place after the Rapture.

2. I Thes. 5:9 Here Paul tells us "that God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." But the wrath of God will be poured out on the inhabitants of the earth as seen in Rev. 6-18.

The salvation we receive in Christ delivers us from the wrath of God. We are no longer His enemies, in danger of His wrath.

This tells me that God will remove his own before the Tribulation (time of God's wrath) begins. We will not be on the earth to suffer God's wrath.

3. Rev. 4-18 In the first 3 chapters of Revelation, the church (ekklesia) is shown to be on the earth. In Rev. 4, the 24 elders around the throne represent the church.

Note that in Rev. 4:4, we are given a description of the elders:

- sitting on thrones
- wearing crowns of gold
- in white robes

These are the same things that are promised to overcomers in the church:

- Rev. 2:10 crowns
- Rev. 3:5 clothed in white robes
- Rev. 3:21 sitting on thrones

This demonstrates to me that these 24 elders represent the church.

When the church appears in these chapters, it is always in heaven.

One way to account for the church in heaven is the Rapture which takes Christ's church to heaven.

Revelation 4-18 give an account of the outpouring of God's wrath on the earth. After these events, the 2nd Coming of Jesus occurs.

The Rapture certainly appears (to me) to precede the wrath of God on the earth and the 2nd coming of Christ.

4. II Thes. 2:5-7 These verses discuss the "one who restrains" and indicate that this "restrainer" will be taken away and then the "lawless one" will come. In these verses, the restrainer is the Holy Spirit and the lawless one is the Antichrist.

The influence of the church in the world will be removed along with the Holy Spirit paving the way for the lawless one to be revealed and for the Tribulation to begin.

Note: It is likely that the Tribulation will not begin immediately upon the Rapture of the church but shortly thereafter. (The beginning of the Tribulation is predicated upon the covenant Antichrist will make with Israel. See Dan. 9:27)

Where are we today?

There are many passages of Scripture that describe events immediately preceding Christ's 2nd coming. However, to my knowledge, there are no signs mentioned that precede the Rapture.

With the sequence of events we've described above: Rapture, removal of restraining influence (Holy Spirit), revealing of the lawless one, beginning of the Tribulation, and the covenant between the beast and Israel, these would seem to indicate that the Rapture comes first and there are no signs or events that need to be fulfilled before it occurs.

Therefore, the Rapture could occur at any day now.

Review Questions:

1. What is the Rapture? _____
2. When will it occur? _____
3. Since the word "Rapture" is not in the New Testament, where did it come from?

4. How is the Rapture described in the Scriptures? _____

5. Can you think of some other (other than the ones I provided in this lesson) illustrations of what might occur on the earth at the time of the Rapture?

Chapter 6: The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema) Our Final Exam!

Introduction:

In this lesson, we want to look at something from the future, something that pertains specifically to all of us who are in Christ, the Judgment seat of Christ (Greek – Bema).

The day is coming when each one of us will stand before Jesus and be called upon to give an account of how we lived our lives on earth.

When Jesus taught on the End Times in Matthew 24 and 25, at the end of His teachings, he gave the disciples two parables which focused on being watchful and being prepared (ten bridesmaids, the talents). We can glean lessons from these parables but we need to keep in mind that these are Second Advent parables, not Bema parables.

These are not nice little stories just to be told in Sunday school classes, but are important End Times lessons for each one of us who embraces Jesus as Savior and Lord.

My hope is that this lesson will encourage you to begin now, if you haven't already, to prepare for that day.

When we stand before Jesus at His judgment seat, I believe that all of us will want to hear Him say: "Well done my good and faithful servant."

Look at the chart (at the end of chapter 1): "The Church – Rapture to the New Jerusalem."

This chart shows a summary of the main events of God's prophetic program from the Rapture to the end of time.

The next major event on God's program for the church is "the Rapture." There are no prophetic events left to be fulfilled before this can occur. This means that it could occur at any moment, any day now.

After that, the very next event is the Bema, the Judgment seat of Christ. II Cor. 5:10:

"For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, (Greek: Bema) that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

Each one of us must come before Jesus and receive rewards or the loss of rewards based on how we have lived our lives for Christ on the earth. God is not only a judge but he is also a rewarder for faithful service. And he will judge our service to determine if it is acceptable to him.

Daniel Webster, an American statesman, once stated that the greatest thought he had ever had was: "My accountability to God."

This is the place where we give an account to God of how we have used the talents and abilities he has given us in his service.

In the parable of the talents, the master of the house gave 3 men in his service large sums of money. When the master returned, he required an accounting from each of them. (Mt. 25:14-30)

God is the master of our house and we are his servants. The talents represent the things of value he has given us. This could include wealth, wisdom, musical abilities, writing abilities, ministry gifts, spiritual gifts, etc.

This is a very sobering thought: One day, at the end of our earthly life, we will stand before God and give an accounting of how we have spent our days and utilized the gifts and abilities he gave us.

This is the last of our final exams of our life on earth. And it is "the biggie" (apart from, "are you saved?")

Since this is true, then we need to make preparations for that great day.

The first preparation is to learn more about what the Bible says about the Judgment Seat of Christ.

So, in this lesson, I want to look at the when, where, whom, what and how of the day of our accountability.

1. When is it going to happen?

I Cor. 4:5 indicates it will be after He comes to take His own to be with Him, after the Rapture.

"Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will [*when He returns*] both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God." I Cor. 4:5 (Emphasis mine to indicate "when")

There are several passages that support this idea:

A. Lk. 14:14 indicates that a system of rewards is associated with the resurrection. And, according to I Thes. 4:13-18, resurrection is a part of the translation. Therefore, upon our translation/resurrection, there will be a time of rewards.

B. When Jesus returns to the earth at his 2nd coming, His bride is already seen as rewarded. The clothes the bride wears are the righteous deeds of the saints.

In Rev. 19:8, the righteous acts of the saints is plural and cannot refer to the imparted righteousness of Christ which is the believer's portion but must refer to the righteousness that has been examined and counted worthy of reward.

C. In two passages, I Cor. 4:5 and II Tim. 4:8 the reward is associated with "the time" or "that day." "That day" must be the day in which He takes His own.

For those who have been Raptured, the Bema is the next event.

2. Where is it going to occur?

II Cor. 5:10 says that it will occur at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

What is this?

"a bema" – Greek – a judgment seat – a raised step or platform like a judge's bench in a court room.

- a place where perceived injustices were addressed
- military camp where commander's addressed the troops and gave out disciplinary actions
- athletic games - used by referees, awards given out

In our case, Christ is the judge.

Jn. 5:22 "The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son."

3. Who will be judged?

II Cor. 5:10 We must all stand before Christ to be judged.

This context makes it clear that Paul is writing to believers.

The judgment of unbelievers will occur later at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). That judgment is for destiny not rewards.

4. What is the reason for the judgment?

A. The issue is rewards for our service to Christ after we have received Him as Savior and Lord.

Our works will be reviewed and rewarded as appropriate.

B. It is not to determine a person's destiny – this has already been determined by a person's choice to receive or reject Christ. This is not an issue of initial salvation, of being transferred into God's kingdom.

The people being judged at the Bema are born-again believers.

5. How is the review conducted?

Frankly, this is a scary subject.

A. The review will be conducted by Jesus. (Jn. 5:22)

B. It will be tested by fire.

I Cor. 3:13 "...each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is."

I Cor 4:5 "...who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts." – our true motivations

Heb. 4:13 "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

The context makes it clear that the author is speaking about the heart, the things that go on in the inner man.

II Cor. 5:10 good or bad

In this passage the word bad is **SN 2556** *kakos* – to give back, to recede, retreat as in battle, wicked, evil, even to the point of leading others astray

Bottom line : The works are done with wrong motives, for selfish reasons.

A parallel: I Cor. 3:12: wood, hay, stubble – not acceptable building materials

Examining our motives is the most searching part of Jesus' evaluation. But the truth is, God already knows our hearts and He certainly knows why we do what we do.

Keep in mind...these are the words of Scripture spoken by the authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

At this judgment, our motives for our actions will be judged for what they were.

We get some important input from Mt. 6:1-2, 5-6,16-18 about:

Giving – don't make a show of it

Praying – in secret

Fasting – in secret

C. Rewards

It's likely that your initial thoughts are that "if that's the case" then I probably won't get any rewards. No matter what I do, I know that my motives are not perfect and sometimes I'm not even aware of the pride, ego and hidden motives that are

involved in what I do or say. Note that David, in Ps. 19:12, asks God to cleanse him from secret faults.

However, I Cor. 4:5 says that each man's praise will come to him from God.

I think this means that God, being the righteous, just and loving Father that He is, will find something in the life of every believer to reward.

5 specific rewards from the NT:

1. Incorruptible crown – I Cor. 9:24-27 – for those who consistently practice self-discipline and self-control;
2. A crown of righteousness – II Tim. 4:8 to those who look forward to his appearing and finish the race;
3. the crown of life – Ja. 1:12 endures temptation;
4. the crown of rejoicing – I Thes. 2:19 for those who win souls to Christ;
5. the crown of glory – I Pet. 5:1-4 shepherds faithful to take care of God's people.

6. How will we be judged?

- A. fairly – parable of the workers in the vineyard shows the landowner to be a just man; Mt. 20:1-16
- B. thoroughly – I Cor. 4:5
Heb. 4:13 – We are not hidden from His sight but all things are naked and open to His eyes;
- C. Impartially – Rom. 2:11 God is no respecter of persons.
Col. 3:24 – from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance;
- D. Individually – We know that each of us will stand alone before the just God who knows the intentions of our hearts. I Cor 3:13-15, 4:5
- E. With grace – Ps 145:8, 17b – We know that God is a gracious God.

7. Pictures of the Judgment:

- A. a building – what materials we use I Cor. 3:10-15
“on the Judgment Day, the fire will reveal what kind of work has been done”
- B. a steward – parable of the talents Mt. 25:14-30

- C. An athlete – I Cor. 9:24-27 run to win
Discipline yourself

We are to live with purpose, dedication, self-control and discipline.

And, we must live according to God’s “Instructions for Life Book.”

How many athletes have we seen today that did not follow the rules and even though they had great achievements, much was lost because they did not follow the rules that were set by those having places of authority to do so.

Mark Maguire, Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens...to name a few.

Even now, those whose achievements were worthy of the hall of fame, are being dismissed and discarded because they did not follow the rules.

And what is worse, the testimony of their lives, achievements that were accrued over many years, have been voided by their inappropriate behavior.

- 8. What can I do to prepare for my personal moment of judgment when I stand before Jesus?

Some Test questions:

- A. Did I love God with all of my heart, mind, soul...?
- B. How did I treat my neighbor?
- C. How did I respond to those in need of a cup of water?
- D. How did I treat my brothers and sisters in Christ?
- E. How did I utilize the gifts and abilities God has given me?
- see the parable of the talents
- F. How did I handle the money and materiel goods God entrusted to me?
- see the parable of the talents
- G. How well did I endure suffering and mistreatment for the name of Christ?
- H. How well did I control my fleshly appetites? I Cor. 9:25-27
“I discipline my body and bring it into subjection...”
- I. Have I been faithful in personal witnessing and soul-winning? I Thes. 2:19-20
- J. Do I look forward to the Rapture? II Tim. 4:8
- K. How faithful have I been to God’s Word? Ja. 3:1
- L. How have I used my tongue? II Tim 2:15, Ja. 3:1-12

} 2 Greatest
Commands

These are just 12 test questions and I'm sure there are some more.

Preparing for my Personal Appointment with Jesus:

In addition to the test questions above:

1. Pray for: the fear of the Lord
 the knowledge of the holy
 clean hands and a pure heart
 renewing of your mind

2. What does God require? Mic. 6:8
 act justly
 love mercy
 walk humbly with your God

3. Pray and seek God to grow in your personal knowledge and intimacy
 with Him.

Conclusion:

Our Lord's coming is very close, very soon.

For some time now, I've believed that I will not die but will be translated in the Rapture. I look forward to it and often ask Jesus to come soon.

Will I be ready? Will you be ready...not only for the Rapture which will be a joyous experience but also for the Judgment Seat of Christ where each of God's children will be judged for rewards?

After he spoke about the End Times, Jesus encouraged the disciples to be watchful and prepared.

In college, one of the professors came into class one day a few weeks before finals week and said: "I'm going to give you all of the questions for the final exam." And he proceeded to give them to us.

We had been forewarned and now it was a matter of preparation.

Some did fairly and some better. (I have no knowledge as to whether any of them flunked the exam.)

Only one got 100%. (It wasn't me, although I did get a good grade.)

How well will you do at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

You now have the questions for THE FINAL EXAM (This is HUGE).

It's up to you to prepare for this moment in your life.

As Jesus instructed his disciples in the parable of the 10 virgins and their oil lamps:

“Be watchful, be prepared.”

When you stand before Him, will you hear Him say:

“Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

The final review and reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ will prepare God's people for the next great event in heaven known as the marriage of the Lamb.

I hope to see you there.

Bema Summary:

1. Rom. 14:10b, 12 “...for we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Christos)...So then, each of us shall give account of himself to God. (Theos)”
2. II Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad.”
3. I Cor. 3:10-15 “According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work shall become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

The Bema: A Summary Table
Who, Where, What, Quality, How

Verse	Who	Where	What	Quality	How
Rom. 14:10b,12	All standing before the Bema (Raptured Christians)	Bema (heaven)	Give account of himself		
II Cor. 5:10	All, each one	Bema (heaven)	Receive the things done in the body	Good or bad	
I Cor. 3:10-15	Each builder			Gold, silver, precious stone, or: wood, hay, straw	By fire

Chapter 7: The Marriage of the Lamb

There are several key “end-time” events that God has planned for his church:

1. the Rapture, when believers (both living and “asleep”) will be caught up to Him in the air,
2. the Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema) where believers will be rewarded for their faithful service,
3. the marriage of the Lamb and His bride, the church,
4. Jesus’ bride (the church) will return with Him at His Second Coming, and
5. God’s people will serve with Jesus during the Millennium, His 1000 year reign on the earth after Satan has been chained and thrown into a bottomless pit for 1000 years.

This lesson is all about the marriage of the Lamb when Jesus, our Lord, is joined to His bride, the church, in heaven. This is where we (believers) will be at that time.

This is the next great event that occurs after the giving of rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ (the Bema). This will occur while the earth is going through great tribulations.

The main passage for this amazing and joyful event is found in Rev. 19:6-8:

“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

From this passage, it becomes very clear that a day is coming when Jesus will be joined to His bride in heaven.

And just as marriages on earth have several key participants, so also will be the marriage of the Lamb and His bride. (God, at times, gives us clues about heaven in earthly events.)

Jesus’ parable of the wedding feast in the gospels begins by saying: The kingdom of heaven is like...” I believe it is a safe interpretation to make that this parable also provides information regarding the marriage of the lamb. God, in heaven, is simply following a pattern that he had already provided us on the earth.

The pattern from the Old Testament is as follows:

1. The father of the groom selects the bride (often with recommendations from the son and the mother)
2. The betrothal of the bride and groom

Each of the parties enters into a legal, binding agreement which included:

- A. oral commitments in the presence of witnesses,
- B. a contract or wedding price was given,
- C. a written contract was prepared.

In the case of Joseph and Mary, they were betrothed to each other before Mary was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. This meant that they were legally married, but Joseph couldn't take her into his home and "know her" (another Hebrew euphemism) until a full year had lapsed.

Gifts were given:

- A. the marriage present – was a gift from the bridegroom to the bride's father
- B. the dowry was a gift from the bride's father to his daughter (which would eventually go to the groom)
- C. the bridegroom's gift to his bride

Something to think about: We are the betrothed of Christ, right here and now. We already belong to Him.

What are the astounding implications of these statements? _____

3. The Marriage

After the betrothal time was completed, the marriage would be officially completed in a "presentation ceremony."

The father of the groom would tell his son the words he had been waiting a year to hear: "Go get your bride and bring her home."

This would usually occur in the evening in a torchlight celebratory procession to the bride's home. After arriving at her home, the father of the bride would place her hand in the hand of his son-in-law and present her to him.

4. The Feast – the Marriage Supper Celebration

After receiving his bride, the groom, with great rejoicing, would lead the celebration back to his father's home for the marriage feast. This feast could last anywhere from 1 to 7 days.

Now...with all of this background information, how does this apply to the Marriage of the church to Jesus?

For the marriage of the Lamb and His bride:

1. The host of the wedding is the Father of the bridegroom, in this case, our heavenly Father. And, according to Mt. 22:2-3, he arranges (selects) the bride, sends out the invitations, and prepares the wedding including the wedding feast. During this time He also oversees and supervises the plans so that all will go well on the wedding day.
2. In Lk. 5:34, Jesus identifies Himself as the bridegroom. And in Jn. 3:27-29 John identifies himself as the "best man."
3. The bride, of course, is the church. (see Eph. 5:25-27)
4. Keep in mind that the marriage ceremony will be held in heaven where the church is joined to Christ. The wedding feast, arranged by the Father, will be held on earth during Christ's Millennial reign with guests being invited. (Rev. 19:9)

The guests will include the Old Testament and Tribulation saints who will be resurrected at the 2nd Coming of Christ.

The host (the Father) chooses believers to be betrothed to His Son.

The church is now in the "betrothal stage."

The Father paid the price for the bride, the gift of His Son.

And, as part of the dowry to the bride, God has given us the Spirit and we will be clothed in fine linen, clean and bright which is the righteous acts of the saints. Rev. 9:8.

We don't know yet how long our betrothal stage will last, but, in the interim, we must keep ourselves pure (no spot or wrinkle). Eph.5:25-27

An aside: In the parable of the kingdom in Mt. 22:11-13, regarding the man who came to the wedding without a wedding garment...it was the responsibility of the host to

provide the appropriate wedding garments for all guests. In the case of this man, he did not have the appropriate wedding garment which, in the kingdom of heaven, is to say that he was not a saved person...he had not gone to the Father to receive from Him the appropriate wedding garment. And I think it would be safe to say that he was wearing the garments of his own making, his own righteousness, which is as filthy rags. It is not a wonder that he was cast into outer darkness.

Our preparations:

Our part in this great event is that we are a part of the church, the bride.

In Rev. 19:7, we see that the bride has made herself ready.

In every wedding I've ever been affiliated with, one thing has been very clear...the bride takes great pains to make sure that all of her preparations are just right. Her dress, hair, makeup, shoes, veil, jewelry...all must be appropriate and immaculately cared for.

So we too, when preparing for our marriage to the lamb, must attend the details with great care (knowing that we are the bride) – an amazing thought!

1. Our first preparation is to open our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ. As we do, He will save us, take away the filthy rags of our own righteousness and give us His righteousness. In this same process, we are born from above (receiving something of God's eternal, incorruptible nature) and He also gives us the Holy Spirit.
2. Rev. 19:8 says that His wife will be arrayed in the finest linen, clean and bright, and that fine linen represents the righteous deeds we have done. So, a part of our preparation will be to live a life of service for our king.
3. During the betrothal period, it was important for the bride to keep herself pure and chaste for her groom. Once we have been "betrothed to Christ," it is now important for us to keep ourselves from other suitors (idols) who would vie for our attention. We need to steer clear of the entanglements of the world, to walk and live in a manner of one who is betrothed to the King of Kings.

To summarize our preparations: new birth, righteous deeds, holy life!!!

To close: The marriage supper of the lamb is an event in God's prophetic plan that absolutely will occur. There is no doubt about it. And we don't want to miss being a part of the greatest marriage celebration of all time. (Have you ever seen an angel dance?)

As those who will be betrothed to Christ, it is our responsibility to prepare and keep ourselves in our “most holy faith.” (Jude 20)

Our preparation: We need to receive the new birth, perform righteous deeds and live a holy life. We need to make sure and take all necessary steps to live a pure life for our amazing, loving bridegroom.

Review Questions:

- 1, In the OT marriage arrangements, who chooses the bride? _____
2. What does “betrothal” signify? _____
How does this relate to us? _____
3. How should we now live, knowing that we are “betrothed to Christ?”
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
4. What does the “fine linen” represent? _____

Chapter 8: The Tribulation – The first 3½ Years

The Covenant with Israel, The Rebirth of the Roman Empire

Those who believe that believers on earth will be Raptured before the Tribulation, often have the view that the Rapture is the beginning of the Tribulation. This may not be the case.

The result of the Rapture is that it ends the church age.

But it is the confirming of the covenant between Israel and the Antichrist that is the catalyst that begins the Tribulation.

The Scriptures (to my knowledge) do not specify the length of time between the Rapture and the beginning of the Tribulation, but it is likely a short period of time, perhaps 6 to 15 months, depending on how quickly the Antichrist can initiate the covenant with Israel after He is released “conquering to conquer.” (Rev. 6:2)

The covenant:

Dan. 9:27 teaches us several things about the covenant:

1. The covenant will be for 7 years. (1 week equals 7 years)
2. It will be with Israel. Note in Dan. 9:24 that the prophecy is for your people and your holy city. This is Daniel and Israel. Dan 9:25-26 mention the Messiah (of Israel) and then the Prince that is to come (Antichrist.)
3. It will be “confirmed” with Israel. The word “confirm” is the Hebrew word *gabar*. This word has the sense of “strong, prevail, act insolently, be great” which may indicate some aspect of forcefulness on the part of the Antichrist with Israel.
4. It will enable Israel, after years of absence, to offer sacrifices in the temple. (Dan 9:27 says he will bring an end to sacrifice and offering, which would indicate that it will have resumed for a time. This also implies the rebuilding of the temple).
5. It will begin the 7-year Tribulation period.
6. Antichrist will break the covenant at the midpoint, after 3 ½ years.

What will the Tribulation be like?

The descriptive phrases of the Scriptures show us what the times of Tribulation will be like:

From:

Daniel: 12:1 a time of trouble such as there has never been

Zephaniah 1:15 a day of wrath,
trouble and distress
devastation and desolation
darkness and gloominess
clouds and thick darkness
1:16 trumpet and alarm
1:17 distress upon men
blood shall be poured out like dust
their flesh like refuse

I Thessalonians
1:10 the wrath to come
5:3 sudden destruction
labor pangs
no escape

Revelation:
6:16 the wrath of the lamb
6:17 the great day of His wrath
14:7 the hour of His judgment
15:1 the wrath of God

These are only a few of the descriptive words and phrases used in Scripture regarding the days of the Tribulation. These alone are enough to give you the strong impression and desire that you will not be among those who will have to face these sufferings which exceed anything that has ever been seen before. (So...do you know how to escape the "wrath to come?" See "What Must I Do To Be Saved" at the end of this workbook.)

This short, descriptive summary logically gives rise to the question:

Why is God doing this? Why is God allowing this to happen to the earth and the people that He created? And a corollary to these questions: Is this really necessary?

Following are responses to several “people” groups:

1. A demonstration of God’s power: Just as during Israel’s time in Egypt, God displayed his great power through the 10 plagues, so also during the Tribulation God will pour out his plagues to display His power and vindicate His own name.
2. Jews: Through the difficulties of the Tribulation, God will bring about the conversion of many Jews who will cry out to God in repentance during the fires of the Tribulation.
3. Future believers: The shock of the Rapture and the difficulties of the Tribulation will drive men and women all over the earth to cry out to God in repentance. This will result in a great world-wide revival with “salvations too numerous to count.”
4. Unbelievers: The Tribulation is punishment to unbelievers on the earth who, even after the shock of the Rapture, have not only rejected God’s Son and His offer of salvation, but they have embraced the Antichrist and his rule.
5. The devil: God will use the Tribulation to expose Satan for who he really is. Knowing that he is nearing the end of his time, the devil will pour out his great wrath on the earth hoping to do harm to God’s people. (Rev. 12:12ff)

A question often asked in regard to the gospel:

Will it be possible for those who have previously rejected Christ to now turn to God and be saved during the times of Tribulation?

Life will become more difficult during the Tribulation due to the outpouring of God’s seal, trumpet and bowl judgments.

Additionally, the Antichrist and his minions will openly persecute believers who refuse to receive his mark.

Many who have rejected Christ before the Rapture will continue rejecting God due to the hardness of their heart.

But Rev. 7:9-17 indicates that a great number of people will come out of the Tribulation in white robes, standing before the throne and the lamb. These are Tribulation saints, those who have washed their robes and made them white with the blood of the Lamb. Certainly, among the numberless multitudes will be those whose eyes and heart were opened due to the distressing times of the Tribulation.

The rebirth of the Roman Empire:

There is a very interesting parallel between the Scriptures and the world situation as we know it today. According to the Scriptures, during the End Times the world will be divided into 3 major power segments:

- a western power confederacy led by the Antichrist (Dan. 2, 7)
- the kings of the north and south (Dan. 11:40) – Russia and north African nations, and possibly some other peripheral nations
- the kings of the east (Rev. 16:12) – Babylonian area kingdoms. (see reference to the river Euphrates)

In Daniel 7:8, we see the dreadful, terrible and strong devouring 4th beast with 10 horns.

This is the same confederacy as was seen in Dan. 2:42-44, Nebuchadnezzar's great statue. Here, the 10 kingdoms are symbolized by toes.

The beast with 10 horns represents the last world empire in its final form. This "group of 10" will be joined together to protect the interests of "the western power affiliates."

This final form closely resembles what is called today the European Union. A number of Biblical scholars believe that this union of 10 may be an initial form of what may turn out to be the western power confederacy led by the Antichrist.

In Dan. 7:8, from the 10 horns arises a little (not significant initially) horn that replaces 3 of the horns. He has a mouth speaking "pompous" words. This will be the Antichrist.

It is important to note that in Dan. 2:44, Daniel identifies the 10 toes/10 horns to be kings/rulers. It also identifies this coalition as a kingdom (Dan. 2:41) signifying a single unit and not 10 separate kingdoms. This would correlate with the idea of a 10 nation confederacy acting together as one.

Dan. 2:44 says that in the days of these kings, God will set up a kingdom which shall "break in pieces and consume all of these kingdoms." This will be Christ's kingdom.

We can say that this specific picture is not consistent with the historic Roman Empire as it degraded and deteriorated since it gradually deteriorated and declined over a period of several hundred years.

This shows us that the prophecy of the 10 toes/horns is not yet fulfilled.

So, Daniel's prophecy gives us a picture which includes not only the historic Roman Empire but also a future Roman Empire to come. This is the principle reason for believing that, in the End Times, there will be a revival of the Roman Empire.

Principles of Interpretation:

Two important principles of interpretation need to be revisited at this point:

1. the consistent, literal interpretation of prophecy

It is important to maintain a consistent approach when interpreting Biblical prophecy. In our specific case, we have reviewed the kingdoms of Nebuchanezzar's giant statue and the beast of Dan.7 with the 10 horns.

We have seen from history that, for the stages of the "Times of the Gentiles," the head of gold, the chest and arms of silver and the belly and thighs of bronze represented literal kingdoms. (Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece) The legs of iron were literally fulfilled in the historic Roman Empire. Therefore, the final fulfillment of this prophetic picture will also be literal kingdoms.

2. the prophetic skip

Be aware that some prophecies may have a "prophetic skip" in which the author jumps from the present to the future. In presenting the prophecy of the Roman Empire, by the Spirit, the author has jumped centuries ahead from historical Rome to End Times Rome.

This is not unusual in OT prophecy. At times the author will detail events that are fulfilled up to the first coming of Christ and then skip over centuries of time to the End Times describing prophecies of the Tribulation and other finalizing events. (For examples, see Isa. 9:6-7; Zech. 9:9-10)

3 Stages of the coming Roman Empire:

1. Ten kings will come forth from the boundaries of the previous Roman Empire, as described in Daniel's two visions of chapters 2 and 7.
2. A strong man, the Antichrist (the little horn that replaces 3 horns), will arise and consolidate the kings into a unified empire. The 3 kings that were removed will be replaced. (Rev. 17:12-13) The 10 kings will turn over their power to the Antichrist. (Rev. 17:17), the Antichrist will then be ruling over the western power confederacy.
3. He will extend his power over all of the earth. Rev. 13:2, 5, 16-18; Dan. 11:43

A chart is provided at the end of this chapter which shows a summary of the Tribulation.

The next chapter will provide more on the Antichrist, who he is and what he will do.

Review Questions:

1. Name 4 things about the "7-year covenant."
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____

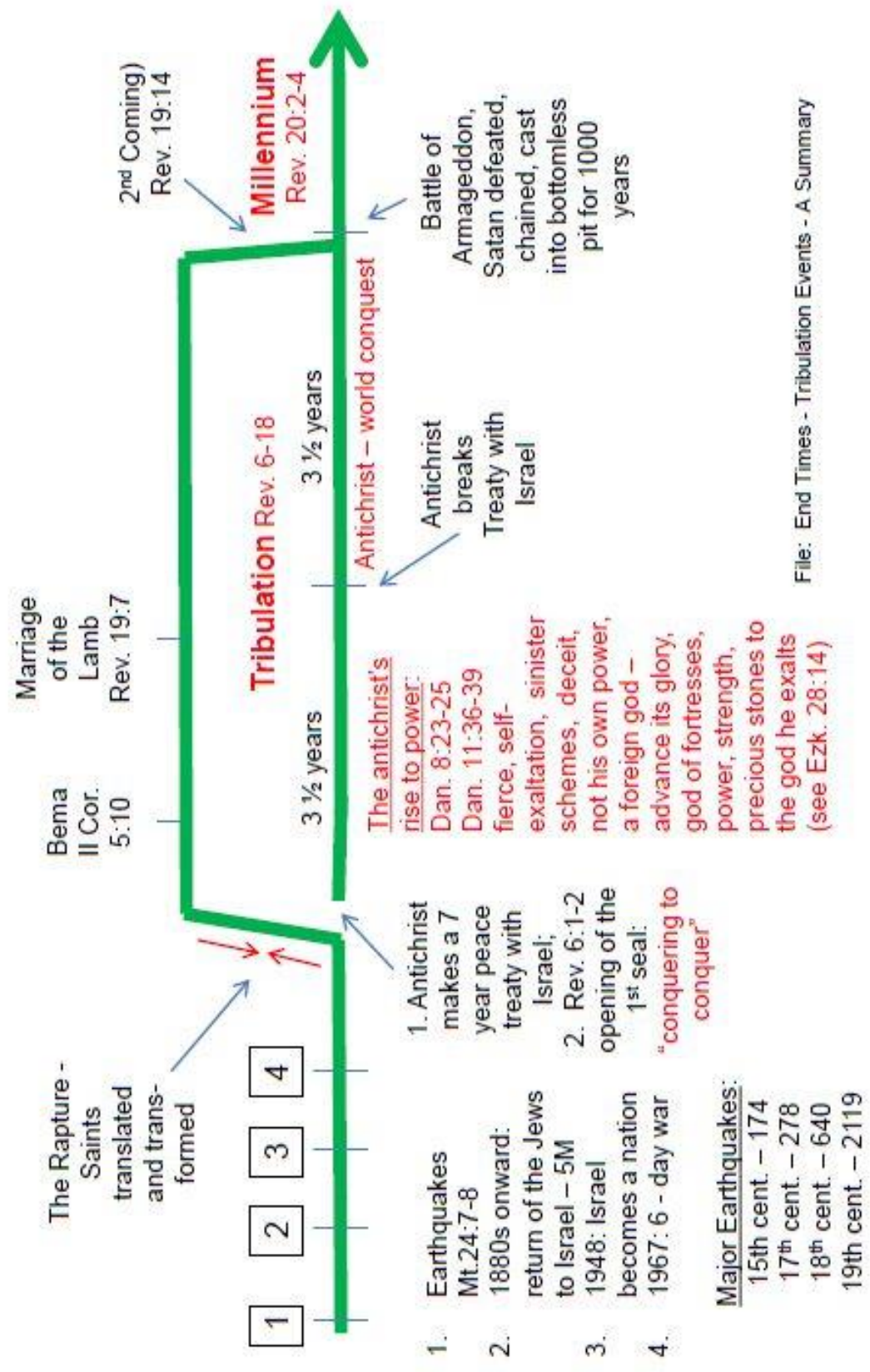
2. Why is God doing this (the Tribulation) for/to:
 - A. God, Himself _____
 - B. The Jews _____
 - C. Future Believers _____
 - D. Unbelievers _____
 - E. the devil _____

3. Name 7 words or phrases that describe the Tribulation
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____
 - F. _____
 - G. _____

4. Explain prophecy that "skips." _____

5. What are the 3 major power segments that will arise in the End Times?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

Snapshot in Time: A Summary of the Tribulation



File: End Times - Tribulation Events - A Summary

Chapter 9: The Reign of the Antichrist, Who He is

There have been many great men that have passed through the pages of time... Abraham, Moses, David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, to name a few. But the greatest of all the men who have set their feet on the earth is Jesus of Nazareth. He has no equal, there are no comparisons, "hands down." It's no contest. Today, we would say the answer to this comparison is "It's a no brainer."

However, another one is being prepared to make the scene on earth. He will not rival Jesus in anything he does. He will try to imitate Jesus, His words and ministry. But in no way will he be like our Savior.

Nevertheless, his name will be great on the earth, perhaps in greatness, second only to our Messiah.

He has a central role in playing out the End Times. He is so significant in fact, that the Bible has provided us with more than 100 passages of Scripture regarding him. This fact alone (Law of Proportion) tells me that God wants people to know who He is and recognize him.

Titles and descriptions of the Antichrist (who he is and what he will do):

In our culture, something about a person's character can be known by the titles and descriptive phrases that are used for and applied to a person. We focus whole studies on the person of God as revealed by His many names...e.g. Elohim, El Shaddai, Adonai, El Elyon, Yahweh, etc.

So looking at some of the titles of the Antichrist instantly tells us: "Here is someone that I do not want to befriend. Here is someone that I do not want to know personally." Nor do I want to spend any time with him.

Titles and descriptions:

From Daniel:

8:23 Fierce features who understands sinister schemes

8:24 He shall destroy fearfully...destroy the mighty, and also the holy people

8:25 Through his cunning, he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;
He shall exalt himself in his heart.

He shall destroy many in their prosperity.

He shall even rise against the Prince of Princes.

9:27 He is the one who shall make desolate.

11:36 ...shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god.

...shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods.

11:37 ...shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

Just as Christ revealed His Father: "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father"...so also Antichrist (false Christ) will reveal his father, the devil.

From II Thessalonians:

2:3 the man of sin, the son of perdition

2:8 the lawless one

These are just a few of the references that identify some characteristics of the Antichrist. From these alone, we can see that he will be a man of great evil, one who is opposed to our God, the God of the heavens. He will, in fact, be the embodiment of evil. He will be like his father, the devil.

To further define him:

Antichrist is the name most often associated with this lawless one. John's letters use both the singular and the plural form. In I Jn. 2:18, we see both the singular (one who is to come) and the plural (those already present) who are the embodiment of the spirit of Antichrist. The presence of those who had "the spirit of Antichrist" were his forerunners. This shows us that he was already at work in the world during John's time (1st century AD). (II Thes. 2:7)

From the descriptive phrases above and from his name "anti-Christ" we know that he will be "against" Christ. He will be the antithesis of the true Christ.

As the antithesis of Christ, he will try to imitate the true ministry of Christ. As you would suspect, since the devil tries to imitate God but doesn't have the power or character to do it, this last Antichrist's behavior will mimic the true Christ but with disastrous results.

He will:

perform signs and wonders. (see Mt. 24 and II Thes. 2)

sit in the temple constructed during the Tribulation (seeking worship for himself). (II Thes. 2:4)

confirm a covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27)

command that his followers have a seal on their foreheads or right hands (Rev. 13:13-16)

sit on a throne (Rev. 13:2)

cause men to worship Satan (Rev. 13:3-4)

to mention just a few of his impersonations of Christ.

When will he come?

He will come on to the world scene shortly after the Rapture. (The exact timing is unknown, but it will likely be shortly after the Rapture...weeks or months.)

The timing of his appearance will be programmed to take advantage of the chaos of the Rapture. Since he will be one who speaks well, he will be well-positioned to speak to nations and even to the world to win their approval. He will appear to be one who can, as a world leader, help the nations recover from the economic disasters and political disarrays of the Rapture. He will appear to be able to bring peace where there has been panic.

According to II Thes.2:7-8, the Antichrist will not be revealed until the One who restrains (the Holy Spirit) is taken out of the way. Then the lawless one will be revealed. (v.8)

This tells me that, before the Rapture, no one can know the identity of the Antichrist. Any attempts to know who the Antichrist is before that time are only futile speculations. He will not be revealed or discovered before the time designated by God in his overarching plan.

What are some of the characteristics and activities of the Antichrist?

1. He will be a man.
2. He will be the embodiment of evil. See previous Scripture references on his character.
3. It is likely (in my opinion) that the Antichrist will be a Gentile.
 - A. From a perspective of biblical types, Antiochus Epiphanes is the biblical type of Antichrist. In fact, he is often referred to as "the Old Testament Antichrist."

He was a Syrian ruler of the 2nd century BC and therefore a Gentile.

B. In Rev. 13:1, we see the origin of the Antichrist as symbolized by the beast rising out of the sea. The word “sea” or “waters” is used symbolically of large numbers of people from every nation and symbolizes the Gentiles.

C. Antichrist will be the last ruler of Gentile world power. His time in power signifies the end of the “Times of the Gentiles.”

D. For me personally, it’s difficult to perceive of a Jew ruling over the Gentiles. In fact, one of the main activities of the Antichrist will be the persecution of the Jews.

4. He will be a great public speaker.

Daniel 7:8 says he will speak great things (pompous words) (SN 7260 – *rabrab* – hugh, domineering in character, very great things)

Dan 7:11 identifies his speaking as “great words which the horn spoke.”

Rev. 13:2 describes the “beast” as having the mouth of a lion. This is a figure of speech to indicate that, just as the roar of a lion gets the attention of all in the neighborhood, so also the voice of the Antichrist will speak with attention getting effects. Note how the roar of a lion exceeds that of any other beast.

5. He will rise from obscurity to become a great peacemaker.

Dan. 7:8 characterizes him initially as a “little horn” coming up among them. This indicates that he may be small or seemingly insignificant at first, but ultimately rises to replace 3 of the other horns. (Some think that this may be by assassination.) He will ultimately become the ruler over all of the horns identifying him as the western world coalition leader. (Rev. 17:13)

6. He will establish a world economy. (Rev. 13:16-17)

With the collapse of the world economy created by the Rapture, the world will turn to the one man who apparently has the ability to bring about a recovery.

He will be given control of the international economy.

The world economy will be run by his close associate, the False Prophet. (Rev. 13:11ff)

7. He will rule the world. (Rev. 13:2, 7; 17:13)
8. He will claim to be God and will require the nations to worship him. (Rev. 13:7-8)
9. He will make a 7-year covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27) which he will break after 3 ½ years.
10. He will speak great blasphemies against God. (Rev. 13:6)

What Scripture tells us about him:

1. He will arrive on the scene during “the End Times.”
2. He will be revealed after “He who restrains” (the Holy Spirit), is taken away. This occurs simultaneously or very closely with the Rapture of the church. This implies that Christians on the earth before the Rapture will not know or be able to identify him. But, I believe, that during the time of Tribulation, new born-again believers will be enabled to know who he is. (He will be revealed.)
3. He will rise to power by his eloquence and his skill at peacemaking. He will make a 7-year covenant with Israel. This will be the start of the 7 years of Tribulation.
4. In the middle of the Tribulation, after 3 ½ years, he will break his covenant with Israel.
5. One of his heads (kingdoms) will be mortally wounded (killed) but will come back to life. Rev. 13:3
6. All nations will marvel at him and will worship him. Rev. 13:3b
7. The dragon (Satan) will give him his power and great authority. Rev. 13:2
8. He will “subdue” (likely by assassination) 3 of the kings of the Roman coalition. Dan. 7:24
9. The 10 kings of the Roman coalition will give their authority to him. Rev. 17:12-13
10. He will invade Israel and desecrate the temple. Dan. 9:27, Mt. 24:15, Rev. 11:2
11. He will want to change times and the law. Dan. 7:25
12. He will sit in the rebuilt temple of God and claim to be God. II Thes. 2:4

13. He will be worshipped for 3½ years (Rev. 13:4-8), all of this occurring on the earth.
14. His “coming” will be with signs and wonders and with unrighteous deception. II Thes. 2:9-10
15. He will open his mouth to blaspheme God, His Name, His tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven. Rev. 13:6
16. He will make war against the saints. Rev. 13:7
17. He will be given authority to rule over all the earth. Rev. 13:7b
18. The number of his name will be 666. Rev. 13:17-18

Even though we know the number, there are many names that can be summed to 666. And the Scripture specifically says that he will be revealed after the restraining influence is removed. This will be after the church has been Raptured and is no longer dwelling on the earth.

19. He will kill the two witnesses. Rev. 11:7
20. He will fight against Christ when He returns and be totally defeated. Rev. 19:19-20. (And it’s really no contest when Christ shows up.)
21. He and the false prophet will be totally defeated and cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 19:20

As you can see from this brief summary about the Antichrist, who he is and what he will do, God has given us much information about this “baddest of the bad” (in the true sense of the meaning of bad).

And there is much more to be mined from the pages of the Scriptures.

God has not given us this information to terrorize us, but to show us, in advance, the “things that shall be.” And in showing us these things, He gives us assurances that He is omnipotent and omniscient, knowing the beginning to the end and having the power and authority to accomplish the things that he has determined to do.

We should not fear, but rejoice that our God is Supreme over all the earth.

A chart is provided at the end of this chapter which provides a view of the Pre-Tribulation and Tribulation events.

Review Questions About the Antichrist:

1. Is he alive today? If yes, where might he be? _____
2. What is the name of the Antichrist? _____
3. Where do we find the word Antichrist in the Scriptures?
I Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; II Jn 7
4. What does Antichrist mean?
Against, opposed to, instead of, in place of
One who denies the Father and the son I Jn. 2:22
A liar I Jn. 2:22
I Jn. 2:18 the Antichrist – a specific person
antichrists – many persons exhibiting the “spirit of antichrist”
Note: “by which we know the hour”
- evidence of increasing apostasy in the world.

I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3:1-9;

II Jn. 7: This is a deceiver and an antichrist: They do not confess that
Jesus has come in the flesh.
Why is it important to Satan to spread this lie? _____

5. Is the Antichrist gay? Dan. 11:37 _____
6. Will he be someone who has been resurrected from the past? _____
e.g. Judas, Hitler, Nimrod, Pharaoh, Antiochus Epiphanes
- Judas Jn. 6:70-71 “one of you is a devil”
- Ac. 1:25 Judas went “to his own place”
Some think he is waiting in the abyss for his resurrection as the Antichrist
- Antiochus Epiphanes:
Note the following parallels between Antiochus Epiphanes and Antichrist:
 - Both persecute God’s people, the Jews.
 - Both demand worship
 - Both establish an idol/image in the temple
 - Both impose false religion on the Jews.
 - Both have a relationship with the Roman Empire.
 - Both have a right-hand man who is a religious leader.
 - Both are opposed by a faithful remnant.
 - Both are reported dead and then alive again.

- The duration of their activities in the middle east is about 7 years.
- Both are defeated by a great deliverer (Judas Maccabee and Jesus)

However, the Bible never clearly identifies anyone from the past as the future Antichrist.

So, in the light of no solid evidence, it is not wise to spend time speculating with no Biblical basis.

7. Will the Antichrist actually be raised from the dead or will this just be some monstrous hoax or cheap illusory trick?? Rev. 13:3-4; 17:8
-

8. How long will the Antichrist rule over the earth? _____

9. Can people still be saved after they receive the mark of the beast?
-

See Rev. 14:9-11 Note that the Scripture gives the answer twice.

10. What will be the end of the Antichrist (and the False Prophet)?

Rev. 19:19-21 _____

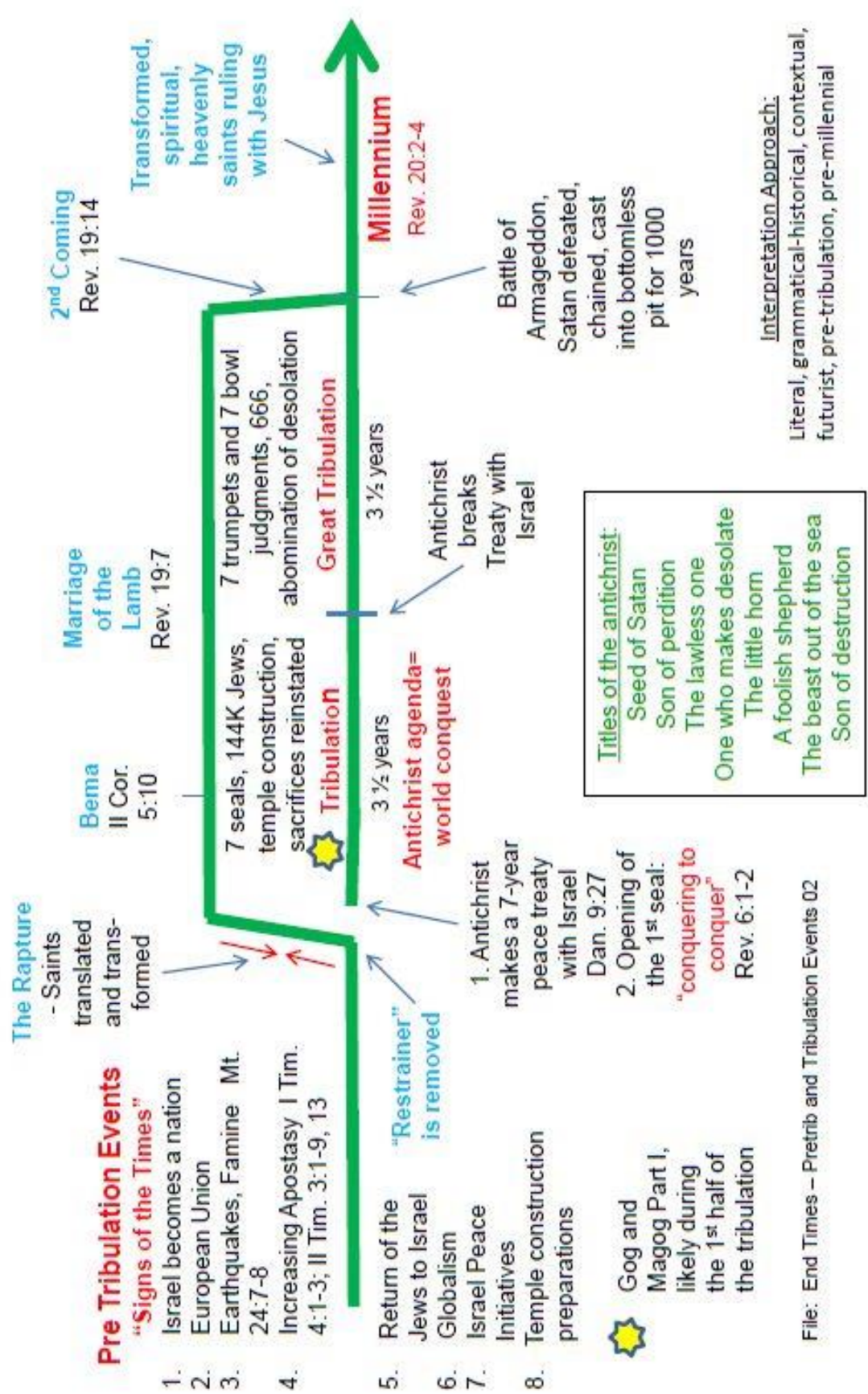
Rev. 20:10 _____

11. Could the Antichrist be a pope? _____

Or...is it more likely that he will be the False Prophet? _____

During the days of the Roman empire, it was not uncommon for a political leader (a Caesar) and a religious leader (a pope) to work closely together.

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On: Pre-Tribulation and Tribulation Events



Chapter 10: The False Prophet

Revelation 13 describes two “beasts” that will rise up, one from the sea and the other from the earth.

The beast from the sea is the Antichrist. The beast from the earth is the False Prophet. Author W. Wiersbe summarizes the activities of the False Prophet as: a wound, a wonder, worship, words and war. I’d like to add the following additional words: “wasted” (as in defeated) and then “wound” (as in wrapped with chains) and cast into the lake of fire.

Rev. 13:11-18 gives a synopsis of the 2nd beast, the False Prophet, likely a religious leader.

Let’s take a quick walk through Rev. 13:11-18 and see what we can learn about this 2nd beast from the earth.

- A. v.11 He speaks like a dragon which is a comparison to Satan, the liar and deceiver. This also indicates that he will be a spokesperson for Satan.
- B. v.12 He exercises the authority of the first beast (from the sea). This shows us that he will receive his authority from the Antichrist. His mission is to induce all of the nations to worship the first beast.
- C. v.12 He will cause (presumably by his speech) all on the earth to worship the first beast (Antichrist.)
- D. v.13 He will perform great signs even having the ability to call down fire from heaven. This would be a use of power to deceive people into believing he was a true prophet. (Recall Elijah, a true prophet) who called down fire on the soldiers who were sent for him.)
- E. v.14 His deceptions continue as he tells those on the earth to make an image of the beast. (Recall from a previous chapter in this series of studies that the image will likely be an Antiochus IV Epiphanes look-a-like – the Antichrist of the OT.)
- F. v.15 He was given the ability to make the image of the beast speak so that the beast would cause those not bowing down to it to be killed.
- G. vv.16-18 He mandates that everyone must receive a mark on their forehead or right hand so that no one can buy or sell without the mark. This will be a mark or tattoo (?) or the name of the beast or the number of the beast which is 666. It will be a physical, visible mark.

He is the final person of the “unholy trinity” which includes himself, Satan and the Antichrist.

This third person of the unholy trinity gives glory to the Antichrist. The correlation with the true and holy trinity is that the Holy Spirit is the one who glorifies Jesus, the Christ (the 2nd person of the holy Trinity), whereas the False Prophet will glorify the Antichrist.

As we saw above, the False Prophet will be the chief spokesperson for the Antichrist.

Now, returning to Rev. 13:11ff, we see a conflicting description of the False Prophet...he has the appearance of a lamb. However, the remaining descriptors (a beast and the voice of a dragon) cast him as anything but a lamb. We also know that his activities will be treacherous, leading people to worship “a false god.” Using shepherding terms, this sounds very much like the “Judas goat.” During the times of the Scriptures, this was a goat from the herd that was trained to lead goats into pens and into corrals prior to their slaughter. And, like a Judas goat, he will lead the world to worship the Antichrist and ultimately to their destruction. (He is anything but a lamb.)

What will be his nationality?

Those who believe he will be a Jew, point to the Scriptures that show the first beast coming up out of the sea. (as we saw earlier, a definite symbolism of the nations of the world).

But, the Jewish interpreters say that “coming up out of the earth” must mean the land of Israel.

However, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will work closely together. One of their main tasks will be to persecute the Jews. It’s difficult to envision a Jew persecuting other Jews.

Since the Antichrist and the False Prophet are working closely together (“joined at the hip” as we would say today), my vote is cast in the direction of the Gentiles.

To summarize what we’ve learned about the False Prophet:

1. He is characterized as a beast, with an appearance like a lamb but speaks like a dragon.
2. He will receive his authority from the Antichrist.
3. His speech is deceptive (leading the world to false worship).
4. He will cause the world to worship the first beast from the sea, the Antichrist.

5. He has the authority to perform signs and wonders. He uses his abilities deceptively.
6. He tells those on the earth to make an image of the beast.
7. He will even be able to give breath to the image so that it speaks.
8. He will control the world economy.
9. He is merciless. Those who won't worship the beast will be killed.
Those without the mark or the name or the number of the beast will starve to death.
10. He is the third person of the "unholy trinity."

Amazing isn't it, that Satan, in all of his imaginations tries to duplicate what God is and does.

God is a trinity, so Satan wants to be a trinity.

God is worshipped, so Satan wants to be worshipped.

God has his Messiah to redeem the earth from death and hell. So Satan has his Antichrist who leads people into death and hell.

Review questions:

See how many characteristics and activities you can name about the False Prophet.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Chapter 11: The Seven Seal Judgments / The 144,000

The Seven Seals

The book of Revelation reveals the final stages of God's great plan of redemption in which, at the end, Jesus takes his rightful place as King of kings and Lord of Lords.

One of the principle themes of this book is the mighty judgments that will come upon the earth. Once the church is Raptured and the "restrainer" (the Holy Spirit working through the church) is taken away, the Antichrist will confirm a 7-year covenant with Israel. This is the beginning of the Tribulation and corresponds with the opening of the first of the seven seals of the scroll which was in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne. (Rev. 5:1) The scroll in this case is the will or testament containing the inheritance of the kingdom. The seals must be removed and the scroll opened for Jesus to receive His inheritance.

Beginning in Revelation 6 (for the next 13 chapters) we will see the awful judgments of God, the wrath of God poured out on an unbelieving mankind.

The first Seal (Rev 6:1-2):

When the first seal is opened, John sees a rider on a white horse. The rider holds a bow, a crown is given to him and he rides out to conquer.

Some believe that this rider is Christ because the rider on the white horse in Rev. 19: 11-21 is clearly Christ.

However, there are some significant differences between the two riders:

- One carries a bow (no arrows) and the other a sword;
- One wears a crown, the other many crowns;
- One initiates war, the other destroys His enemies and brings an end to war;
- One initiates the Tribulation, the other is the climax of the Tribulation.

Also, looking ahead to the other 3 riders, the 2nd one kills and takes peace, the 3rd one brings famine and the last rider is called death and hell. It would be strange indeed to see Jesus (the epitome of love, grace and mercy) riding in consort with these other 3 riders who will bring great tragedies on the earth.

A third line of reasoning regarding the identity of the first rider is that Jesus is the one opening the scrolls. It is very unlikely that he would open a scroll and then show up as the contents of one of the seals.

It is most likely that the rider on the white horse represents a contingency of false Messiahs who will appear after the Rapture. They will come claiming to have the answers for the world chaos resulting from the Rapture. Eventually one will stand out, the Antichrist. He will be the fulfillment of the rider on the white horse.

He has a bow but no arrows. This may signify that peace is achieved without bloodshed. He achieves peace through the art of negotiation. He will bring a temporary world-wide peace. Billy Graham refers to this rider as “a deceiver who seeks to capture the hearts and souls of men and women.”

The 2nd seal (Rev 6:3-4):

The rider on the red horse is given the authority to take peace from the earth. This rider has a great sword. There will be a great war as people kill one another.

The promised peace of the rider on the white horse disappears very quickly.

The 3rd Seal (Rev 6:5-6):

The 3rd seal reveals a black horse on which a rider holds a pair of scales in his hand.

This represents famine as food will be so scarce that a denarius, which is a day's wage, will be required to purchase enough wheat for one person for a day. A person will be able to get 3 quarts of barley for the price of one quart of wheat, barley being a grain of lower quality and lower nutritional value. It was customarily used to feed the animals. People will stoop to desperate measures to satisfy their hunger.

Desperate measures: (an aside to illustrate the previous point):

I once knew a man who had attended the University of Berkeley in California. Being a perpetual student he had numerous degrees. In fact, he was so educated that people wouldn't hire him. Thus, he had limited resources. But being a smart individual, he researched the food groups and learned that cat food was the most nutritious. So, he ate cat food (cheap but the best nutrition for the money he had) thus demonstrating that, in desperate times, people will take desperate measures to deal with their hunger.

Now, back to the seals.

With this food shortage and the global, economic collapse, the world will be ripe for the Antichrist's move to control the world economy.

The 4th seal (Rev 6:7-8):

The 4th horse is pale with this rider being given power over a fourth of the earth to bring death and hunger, using the “beasts of the earth.”

Two interpretations of “the beasts of the earth” are:

1. The beasts of the earth represent wild animals for whom their food supply has been disrupted. They will become especially vicious during this time taking advantage of the weak and defenseless.
2. A second view interprets the wild beasts as military and political leaders who are brutal, domineering and vicious. The Greek word for wild beasts is “theerion” which is used frequently in Rev. 13 and talks about the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

It would seem that the better view is that the wild beasts are political and military rulers who abuse their position and power.

The 5th seal (Rev 6:9-11):

The character of the seal changes now as the 5th seal reveals martyrs under the altar who have been slain for the Word and for their testimony. These are Tribulation saints (those who received Christ during the Tribulation) who have been martyred for their faith. This seal shows the martyrs in heaven asking for God to vindicate them.

The 6th Seal (Rev 6:12-17):

The scene now shifts back to the earth.

The 6th seal unleashes what are described as great cataclysmic disasters on the earth and in the heavens. Everyone, in great fear, flees to the caves and mountains in efforts to hide themselves from the wrath of God (instead of falling on their knees and seeking God to save them).

There is an “intermission” between the 6th and 7th seals.

Just when all hope seems lost, God sends 4 angels who hold back the “winds of judgment” until God’s people are sealed. These “sealed” are the 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. (Rev. 7:1-8)

Rev 7:9-17 gives an account of the numberless saints who came out of the Great Tribulation.

The 7th Seal (Rev. 8:1-6):

After the 7th seal is opened, there is silence in heaven for about ½ hour.

Why the silence and the wait? My take: They were waiting for God to speak or act.

It doesn't seem like much time, but, in light of the events of the first 6 seals, it may be an indication that something of great significance is about to happen.

As it turns out, the 7th seal is not the end of judgments but only the opening of the door to the second series of 7 judgments, that of the seven trumpets.

A Summary of the Seal Judgments:

Seal	Symbol	Interpretation
1 st	Person on white horse, bow, no arrows, crown	"Antichrist – conquering to conquer"
2 nd	Red horse, a great sword	Peace taken from the earth. People kill one another – war
3 rd	Black horse, scales	Food shortage (a quart of wheat for a day's wage), scarcity – famine
4 th	Pale horse - Death and Hell following	power to kill ¼ of the world population with sword, hunger, death, beasts
5 th	Souls under the altar (in heaven), white robes	Tribulation martyrs – a number of martyrdoms yet to be completed
6 th	Cosmic disturbances	Rev. 6:16-17 "Fall on us...the great day of His wrath has come." (wrath of God and the Lamb)
7 th	7 angels given 7 trumpets	Next series of judgments Rev. 8

Note the severity of the judgments – and this is only the beginning. This is not yet "the Great Tribulation."

The sequence of the seals, trumpets and bowl judgments:

Are they sequential or do they occur in parallel??

Evidence for chronological sequence:

- They are recorded chronologically.
- Rev. 15:1: refers to the bowl judgments as "the last plagues."
- In the case of the 2nd and 3rd series of 7 judgments, opening the last judgment of the previous series initiates the next series of 7.
e.g. Rev. 8:1-2, the 7th seal opens to the 7 trumpet judgments.
- The judgments increase in their severity as the action moves forward.

Notes on the Seal Judgments:

(1) The text does not provide the length of time of each of the seal judgments. However, we do know that they occur during the 1st half of the Tribulation. (The 7th seal initiates the 7 trumpet judgments which occur during the 2nd half of the Tribulation.)

(2) the 2nd seal – red horse – People will kill one another.

Note: There is no evidence of the extent of the killing; but peace is taken from the earth.

Note also that this second seal is not far removed from the removal (Rapture) of the church which is a preservative on the earth.

We hear much talk about the love and mercy and grace of God.

Here we are now seeing the justice and judgments of God.

(3) the 5th seal – martyrs in heaven – a change of scenery from the earth to the altar in heaven where the souls of those slain for the Word of God and their testimony are being kept.

(4) the 7th seal – After the seal is opened, 7 angels are given 7 trumpets.

After the seal was opened, there was silence in heaven for about ½ hour.

Everyone in heaven is waiting upon God.

One thought as to why: When the 7th seal is broken and the scroll unrolled, those watching are reduced to silence as they see and anticipate the grim reality of the judgments yet to be poured out. This is the calm before the storm. It is the silence of foreboding, of expectation in awe of what God is about to do. The worst is still to come.

Keep in mind: While these judgments are being visited upon the earth:

- o The world is recovering from the sudden disappearance of millions of “born-again” Christians. (The church is no longer on the earth.)
 - o Antichrist with the False prophet is pursuing world domination and worship.
 - o Israel rebuilds the temple and reinstitutes the temple sacrifices and offerings.
 - o Gog and Magog (Part I) have invaded Israel and have been totally defeated.
- It will take 7 months to bury the dead and 7 years to burn the war implements.

The 144,000

In this section we want to learn something about the 144,000 (from Rev. 7 and 14) which will later give us insight into God’s plan and how he will work during the Tribulation through these, His servants.

Rev. 7:1-8 and 14:1-5 provide us some information on the 144,000.

Revelation 7 tells of the sealing of these servants of God with a “seal” on their foreheads. We are also told that 12,000 come from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Revelation 14 explains that the seal on their foreheads is the name of their Father. These 144,000 sang a new song before the throne that only they could learn.

They are: ones who were not defiled with women...they were, therefore men who were virgins,
 ones who followed Jesus wherever He goes, and
 ones who were redeemed from among men as first fruits unto God and the lamb.

Additionally, there is no deceit in their mouths and they are without fault.

The question arises: “Who are the 144,000?”

A common view is that these represent the church which represents the true spiritual Israel seen in two stages of her history in the End Times: first, standing at the beginning of the time of Tribulation and secondly as having passed through the Tribulation, martyred but victorious.

There are several reasons why I believe this is not a valid interpretation:

1. Rev. 7 specifically identifies the 144,000 as coming from the 12 tribes of Israel. This is significant because the New Testament never uses the word Israel for the church. A distinction is always maintained between Israel and the church.
2. In accordance with the pre-tribulation view of the Rapture, the church will already be in heaven by this time.
3. Rev. 7:1-8 gives a definite number...144,000. Verses 9-10 describe a great multitude which no one could number from all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues.
4. A final distinction between the 2 groups is that the four angels are standing on the earth holding back the winds of judgment from harming things on the earth (Rev. 7:1). From this we can deduce that the 144,000 are standing on the earth.

The great, numberless multitude in Rev. 7:9-10 are standing before the throne and the lamb in heaven.

But, the New Testament pictures of the church consistently show Jews and Gentiles together Gal. 3 and Eph. 3). This then is not consistent with what we see in Rev. 7.

The explanation is that the Rapture, in some way and for God's reasons, must reestablish a division between Jews and Gentiles.

The 144,000 literally are 144,000 Jews that God has raised up to serve Him during the time of Tribulation. This shows me that Israel's 12 tribes are still in existence, albeit, prior to this time, dispersed among the nations. These 144,000 will be specifically assigned to work with Jesus, going with Him wherever he goes.

What are some characteristics of these 144,000?

1. Rev. 14:3 tells us that they have been "redeemed" (NKJV). (NASB says purchased.) We know that it is the blood of Christ that redeems us from our empty way of life and transfers us into God's kingdom. They are God's sons, redeemed for His special purposes.
2. They are all "sealed." (Rev. 7:3) God will put His mark, His name on their foreheads.

A common way of identification of soldiers during the biblical times was to put a mark on their forehead identifying who they served. And, the mark being on the forehead which is one of the most conspicuous parts of the body, would make it very obvious as to whom they served.

It is interesting to note that two forms of marks are given in the NT. Here the Greek word is *sphragizo* which is symbolic of a spiritual sealing. When Antichrist institutes his program of economic controls, he will require a *charagma* which is literally a brand, a mark or a tattoo.

3. The seal indicates that the 144,000 belong to God and they, therefore, are under his protection.

We should note at this time that the setting of Revelation 7 is at the beginning of the Tribulation and hence the beginning of the ministry of the 144,000. Rev. 14:1-5 gives us a glimpse of the end of the Tribulation with the 144,000 standing triumphantly on Mt. Zion. Note that all 144,000 are there. Not one has perished. God has protected them through the extreme difficulties of the Tribulation.

Here we get a glimpse into eternity that shows believers what awaits them if they endure.

4. They are pure. (Rev. 14:4)

Many interpret this to indicate that they are spiritually pure and undefiled, not polluted by the corruption of the work of the “unholy trinity.”

However, Rev. 14:4 specifically says they have not defiled themselves with women, they are virgins. This indicates that they were literally celibate. They were called by the Lord, because of the pressures of the Tribulation, to refrain from a married lifestyle and to devote themselves entirely to the service of the Lord.

5. They are faithful. (Rev. 14:5)

They will faithfully follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Rev. 14:5 tells us they maintain their faithfulness of character (no deceit) and are “without fault before the throne.”

What an amazing testimony this is to us. They will go through the difficult years of the Tribulation, the absolutely worst conditions possible on the earth, and still maintain a “life of godliness.” (I can’t imagine that anything we may experience during our lives will be a rival to the difficulties of the Tribulation.)

This should be an encouragement to us because the same Jesus that will protect and sustain them during the worst conditions possible is our Jesus. He will also protect and sustain us through the difficulties of our lives.

What do they do?

They are dedicated to God and follow Jesus wherever He goes. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He preached the kingdom of God... “repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.” The heart of his message was evangelistic, calling men out of their darkness into His incredible light, transferring them into His domain, His kingdom, His family.

I believe it is safe to say, since these 144,000 will be dedicated to Him and go with Him wherever He goes, that they will be evangelists.

In Rev. 7:1-8, we see the sealing of the 144,000. In the very next segment (7:9-17), we see the multitudes without number that will be saved during the Tribulation (7:14)

This multitude without number may be the fruit of the 144,000 who will labor with Jesus throughout the Tribulation, fulfilling Jesus’ prophecy of Mt. 24:14 that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached “in all of the world” as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Purpose of the Tribulation:

God: to prove his power and vindicate His reputation

Recall Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord that I should let Israel go?"

Israel: to purge and refine the Jewish people. Many of the Jewish people will cry out to God during the time of the Tribulation. (Zech. 13:8-9)

Note that 2/3 of the nation will be "cut off and perish."

Gentiles: The Tribulation will be "God's rod of punishment for the Gentile nations and unbelievers." (Isa. 13:11-13; Joel 3:2; Obad. 15-16)

Tribulation Believers: to bring men and women to their knees in repentance and faith. (Rev. 7:9-14)

Satan: to display the true character of our great adversary

It is the time when God will pour out His wrath on a sinful, unbelieving, disobedient world.

Words used in Scripture for this event: **trouble, wrath, judgment, trial, destruction, darkness, desolation, punishment.**

Dr. J.D. Pentecost, author of the End Times classic "Things to Come" has said:

"No passage can be found to alleviate to any degree whatsoever the severity of this time that shall come upon the earth."

Survivors of the Tribulation

As many as 2/3 of the Jews will be killed during the Antichrist's reign (Zech 13:8):

4th seal – 1/4 of the world's population will be killed. (Rev 6:8)

6th trumpet – 1/3 of mankind (Rev 9:15)

These 2 judgments will eliminate over 1/2 of the world's population.

3/12 (4th seal) + 4/12 (6th trumpet) = 7/12, more than 50% of the population.

But, in Mt. 25:31-46, we see that when Jesus comes in His glory and is sitting on His throne, there will be "all the nations gathered before Him."

This is after the Tribulation has ended, indicating that many will survive.

If I'm going to be Raptured, why should I care or study the Tribulation?

- A. God's Word teaches it.
- B. We should gain great hope and assurances that God is in control and will do what His Word says He will do: remove us from the earth before the Tribulation comes upon the earth.
- C. In our studies we will learn much about God, man and Satan.

- D. As we see the signs of the times occurring, it will fill us with hope that the coming of our Lord is near.
- E. Becoming acquainted with the magnitude of devastation and suffering that will occur on the earth, will motivate us to pray for and witness to our lost friends and relatives.

Are we in the Tribulation now?

II Thes. 2:1-3 "...the day of the Lord...it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction." (NASB)

Therefore, the "day of the Lord" will not come until there is a "falling away from the faith" and the Antichrist is revealed.

Review Questions:

1. Who are the 144,000? _____
2. How are they described? _____

3. What is their task? _____
4. What lesson of protection and perseverance can we learn from them?

5. Why should I be concerned about the Tribulation?
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
6. Are we in the Tribulation now? Explain your answer. _____

Chapter 12: Gog and Magog, Part I (See also chapter 18 in this workbook)

This chapter is divided into two sections as follows:

Section 1: addresses the question of one or two Gog and Magog wars;

Section 2: addresses the first of the Gog and Magog wars which will occur during the first half of the Tribulation

1. Are there one or two “Gog and Magog invasions?”

Some clues that help us determine our answer:

- A. Between Israel’s physical and spiritual rebirths: the return of Israel to the land (1948) and the restoration of worship in the millennial temple (Ezk. 40-48)
- B. the phrases “latter years and last days” (Ezk. 38:8,16) which refer to the period of time of the Tribulation, begins with the start of the tribulation and ends with the millennium.
- C. Israel at rest/peace (Ezk. 38:14)
The only time Israel will be at peace is during the 1st half of the Tribulation after they have made a covenant with the Antichrist.
- D. No war during the Millennium. Isa. 2:4
Therefore, the only time when Israel is at peace and a time after they have regathered to the land and before their spiritual renewal is a time during the first half of the Tribulation.
(There certainly will not be any peace in Israel after the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel at the mid-point of the Tribulation and insists on the worship of all nations.)

Now, looking at the text of Rev. 20:7-9:

“Now when the 1000 years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle...”

- E. This battle takes place after the Millennium. (Rev. 20:7)
- F. Satan gathers the nations from the 4 corners of the earth. (4 corners is an idiom for north, south, east and west). But the Ezk. 38 passage identifies specific nations referring principally to those from the far north and allies of Russia.

From our workbook study (section 2 of this chapter) we will see that these nations were Russia, Persia, Ethiopia, Put (Libya) and Gomer (Turkey). So, the Ezk. 38-39 list of nations is much more limited than the Rev. 20 listing.

G. Note also the significant differences between the 2 wars in how God annihilates “Gog and Magog:

(1) Ezk. 39:19-22

- a. a great earthquake (v. 19)
- b. a sword (an idiom for many swords) (v. 21)
- c. pestilence and bloodshed (v. 22a)
- d. flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone (sulfur) (v.22b)

(2) In Rev. 20:9, it simply says: ““They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.”

From these clues, it is evident that there are 2 “Gog and Magog” wars.

2. When do these 2 battles occur?

From above, we can see that the first “Gog and Magog” occurs during the 1st half of the Tribulation when Israel is at peace.

The 2nd war occurs after the millennium when Satan is released and makes one “last-ditch,” unsuccessful effort to defeat God.

3. How do the battles go?

A. Part I: Ezk. 38/39 battle: Gog and Magog are thoroughly defeated. It will take 7 months to bury the dead and 7 years to burn the weapons of warfare.

B. Part II: Rev. 20:9 simply says: “They went up on the breath of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

Results of the battles:

In modern terminology, we would say that in each war, it is “**no contest.**” Both of the Gog and Magog wars end in total annihilation of the forces arrayed against the Lord and His people. (except for the 2 beasts and Satan who are cast into the lake of fire.)

Note that the participants in the second “Gog and Magog” are all new persons that have been birthed during the millennium.

It’s “mind-boggling” to observe that, even after 1000 years of peace on earth with Jesus at the helm and no Satan to bring his “troublings to the earth” that this number of people could so quickly be gathered together to take side with the enemy of our souls.

It really does vividly portray the depravity of human nature, which is one of the powerful lessons we learn from this uprising after the millennium, this final demise of Satan.

2. Gog and Magog – Part I:

Chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel prophesy of a great horde that will invade the land of Israel “in the latter days.” This collection of nations will invade Israel during a time of peace with the intent of eliminating Israel and “taking great plunder.”

This coalition of nations and their invasion is known in Scripture as the battle of Gog and Magog.

At this time, Israel will be allied with the Western power group led by Antichrist through the covenant Antichrist has affected at the beginning of the Tribulation. So, any attack against Israel will also be an attack on the Western confederacy of 10 nations.

With the covenant in place, Israel’s defenses will be down and so the attack will catch Israel totally by surprise. They will be covered by an invasion from the north which will cover the land like a cloud. They will, in no uncertain terms, “be at the mercy of God.”

Who are the nations that comprise this horde?

Searching through the verses of Ezk. 38:1-6, we find the following:

1. Gog – Gog is the first to appear and he is said to come from the land of Magog and is a prince. Being addressed in this way indicates that he is a man and is the leader of this “horde of nations.”
2. The following names, Magog, Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, Beth-togarmah are specific geographical locations.

The names of these locations have changed many times over the years, but the land area they encompass has remained essentially the same.

A. Magog - According to Josephus, Scythians lived here. These were tribes that lived in central Asia and parts of Russia. Magog likely includes nations that were formerly a part of Russia such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Afghanistan was likely in this group also.

B. Rosh:

Rosh in Hebrew means head or chief.

Many scholars identify this land as Russia.

Others maintain that it is a proper name referring to a specific geographical location. Additionally, some Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias also are in agreement that it is a proper name.

Another evidence is that, in this context, "the prince of Rosh," translating it as a proper name is the most natural approach to the Hebrew.

Additionally, several verses in Ezekiel make references to the far north (Ezk.38:6, 15, 39:2)

W. Gesenius, a well-known Hebrew scholar from the 19th century makes the confident statement that Rosh is the Russians.

C. Meshech and Tubal

These locations are usually mentioned together in Scripture. Some scholars think that they represent the cities of Moscow and Tobolsk because there is a similarity in the sounding of their names.

Others say that identification due to similarity of the sound of the names is not an appropriate process. These would say that the identification of these names is likely modern-day Turkey.

D. Persia:

Persia became the nation of Iran in 1935. In 1979, the name was changed to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

E. Ethiopia:

Today's versions of the OT translate Cush as Ethiopia. Today, Sudan occupies the land Cush once occupied.

F. Put:

Put was the land to the west of Egypt which, today, could be Libya and may include Algeria and Tunisia.

G. Gomer:

In the cultural context, Gomer is likely a reference to the Cimmerians and is likely central Turkey.

H. Beth-togarmah:

Beth is the Hebrew word for house. So, this can be translated “the house of Togarmah.” This is likely another reference to modern Turkey, north of Israel.

Using these descriptions as a basis, we can say that this invasion of Israel will be conducted by nations north of the Black and Caspian seas, including Iran to the east, Libya to the west and Sudan to the south.

It is interesting to note which nations are not included in this coalition of allies: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

So...when will this battle occur?

It is agreed that there are disagreements regarding the details of these 2 chapters. And, the timing of the battle is not the least of these disagreements. (Note also that Rev. 20:7-9 also tells of Gog and Magog after the Millennium and Satan has been released. We'll discuss this “Gog and Magog” in chapter 18.)

The following views illustrate the divergence of opinions:

1. before the Rapture
2. after the Rapture but before the start of the Tribulation
3. sometime during the first half of the Tribulation
4. at the end of the Tribulation (Armageddon)
5. in two phases
6. at the beginning of the millennium
7. at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7-9)

Some clues that may help us answer this question are provided in Ezk. 38:7-11, 14,16.

An important clue is that the battle will take place between the national and spiritual rebirths of Israel, between the re-gathering of Israel (Ezk. 37) and the spiritual

restoration of Israel as they worship in the millennial temple. This narrows our time-frame down to somewhere between 1948, the rebirth of the nation of Israel, and the institution of the millennial kingdom.

In 38:8, the phrase- “the latter years” and 38:16 “last days” place this battle from the beginning of the Tribulation to the Millennium. The Tribulation begins the “latter years” so the battle would have to happen after this.

Finally, the battle occurs when Israel is at rest. (see 38:8, 11, 14)

Piecing these clues together shows that the battle will occur before the Millennium and when Israel is at rest. And this will occur after the Rapture when Israel has signed a covenant with the Antichrist. This will be during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation since at the half way mark, the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel. There will be no peace in Israeli homes after this act of treachery.

Why this invasion?

Here we find the answers from the text of Ezekiel 38:

1. 38:8 Land – Those invading the land want more land for themselves. (Any invasion of this magnitude naturally includes the quest by the invading parties to expand their own territory.)
2. 38:12 They come “to plunder and take booty.”
3. 38:10, 16 The invaders will come with an evil plan to eliminate the nation of Israel.
4. 38:16 God has his purposes in this invasion. He summarizes them in v.16: “...that the nations may know me when I am hallowed in their eyes.”
5. A final thought: a comment extracted from Prophecy Update: “The End of the Age of Grace” by Carl Worline dated July 2013:

“Israel has struck energy gold in the form of oil and natural gas.

Here is the reason that Gog, from the land of Magog, will attack Israel to seize a spoil, which is straight out of Ezekiel 38. Israel is surrounded in exactly the manner described in Ezekiel 38 and Psalm 83.”

Once again, God will display His mighty power through supernatural signs and wonders. (Anyone remember Egypt and the 10 plagues or the wilderness journey with the fire and cloud or the Red Sea and the waters that parted for Israel but came together to be a graveyard for the army of Pharaoh?)

What will happen on the day of the invasion?

The armies of Gog will invade Israel in a “great company, a mighty army. Ezk. 38:15

They will cover the land of Israel like a cloud. 38:16

Then God’s wrath will be aroused against Gog and He will dispatch the enemies of Israel with his supernatural weapons: (Note the four actions of God for future reference in chapter 18 of this workbook.)

1. A great earthquake 38:19-20
2. He will cause the armies of Gog and Magog to fight against each other. 38:21
3. He will send pestilence and bloodshed. 38:22a
4. There will be flooding rain, great hailstones (some weighing in at 75 lbs.), fire and brimstone 38:22b

This is an amazing scenario at which I’d like to be a “fly on the wall” to see how God dispatches his enemies.

Gog and his hordes have come to take land but the only land they will get will be for their burial plots. See Ezk. 39:11-16

A prophetic view:

Many events in the world today are seen as preparation for the fulfillment of this amazing prophecy.

First of all, the Jewish people are back in their land. Today, there are more than 7 million Jews in the land of Israel. Israel now has a greater population of Jews in the land of Israel than any other location in the world. (This statement could not have been made a century ago.)

Secondly: The nations identified in Ezekiel 38 all have the desire to eliminate Israel from the face of the earth. A person would have to have their head “stuck in the sand” with reference to world events to not be aware that the nations that surround Israel hate Israel. There have been constant, unrelenting demonstrations and attacks fuming with a smoldering hatred against Israel for as long as I can remember. Of all the nations in the world, it has always seemed to me that everyone surrounding them is always against them. Why? What have they done? (except to be the people of God which Satan intensely hates) But God has not deserted His people. He loves them as much today as He ever has. His response to Gog in Ezk. 38:18-22 will be a powerful demonstration of His great love for His people.

Thirdly: Israel will possess the mountains of Israel when this invasion occurs. Since the 6-day war of 1967, the mountains of Israel have been in Israel.

These things tell me that many elements of the prophetic picture are already in place. This war between Gog and God is not far off.

A chart is provided at the end of this chapter which depicts the Tribulation events of Daniel's 70th week (see Dan. 9:24-27)

Review questions:

1. Name 4 of the countries that are allied with Gog. _____,
_____, _____, _____
2. What do the invading nations hope to attain by invading Israel? _____

3. When will this invasion occur? _____
4. How will God respond to the invaders? _____, _____,
_____, _____
5. What prophetic signs do we see today that indicate this invasion may be close?

6. Is Gog and Magog one or two invasions? _____

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On:

Tribulation Events – Daniel’s 70th Week

“Seventy weeks are determined for your People and for your Holy City” Dan. 9:24



S Satan cast out of heaven. Rev. 12:7-9

File: End Times – Tribulation Events – Daniels 70th week 02

Interpretation Approach:

Literal, grammatical-historical, contextual, futurist, pre-tribulation, pre-millennial

Chapter 13: The Middle of the Tribulation

The midpoint of the Tribulation, after 3 ½ years, marks a significant turning point of the Tribulation.

Three major events occur that prepare for the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation:

1. Satanic/demonic war in heaven and on earth,
2. An idol will be created of the beast (Antichrist) which will be worshipped,
3. The Antichrist will be assassinated and then rejuvenated.

From the early days of the Old Testament (see Job 1:6-12), Satan has had access to approach the presence of the Lord. But this access will not last forever. A time will come when he is cast out forever. According to Rev. 12:7-9, that event will occur at the middle of the Tribulation.

This chapter outlines 2 separate but related conflicts that involve Satan and his demonic forces.

1. Satanic/demonic war in Heaven and on Earth:

War in heaven:

Michael and his angels fight against Satan and his minions and are victorious. As a result, Satan and his angels (including 1/3 of the angelic host –see Rev. 12:4), are thrown down to the earth.

Two key changes occur:

- A. Satan no longer has access to approach the presence of the Lord to accuse the saints. He will not be able to gain God's permission to trouble and test the saints. (See Job 1:6-12)
- B. Satan now knows that his time is short and "his fuse has been lit." He will spill out his great rage on the inhabitants of the earth, especially the Jews. This will only serve to intensify the magnitude of suffering being experienced by Israel and by the saints on the earth during the Tribulation.

War on the Earth:

Satan, having been cast out of heaven will now seek "those whom he may devour." His raging anger will be focused specifically on God's people, Israel, whom he passionately hates.

In Rev. 12:1-2, Israel is pictured as a woman with child. She is “clothed with the sun and has the moon under her feet.” She has a garland of 12 stars on her head. This is clearly a reference to Joseph’s dream in Gen. 37. Recall how sharing his dream with his family got him into deep trouble. But note also that God was at work in these circumstances. See Gen. 45:5

The woman gives birth to a child which is Jesus, the Messiah. This further identifies the woman with Israel.

So, Satan’s first attempt on Jesus life in the heavens was thwarted. Now, his second attempt is to eliminate the woman’s offspring, Israel, on the earth. (Rev. 12:17)

Twice in this chapter 12 (vv. 6 and 14), the Scriptures tell us that Satan will continue his plan to destroy Israel for a period of 1260 days (time, times and 1/2 time). This is the time remaining for the Tribulation, 3 ½ years.

In verse 15, Satan spews a great flood of water out of his mouth in pursuit of the woman. This is symbolic of his attacks against her. But God protects her from the devices of the devil.

The next chapter of Revelation (13) now describes the Antichrist. In Rev. 13:2 we see that the dragon (Satan) gives him great authority. He becomes Satan’s henchman to carry out the dragon’s plan for the destruction of Israel. This begins the 3 ½ years reign of terror for Israel.

2. Worship of the beast:

As war is raging in heaven and on the earth, under the covenant with the Antichrist, the Jewish people will rebuild the temple and reinstall the sacrificial system. (See Dan. 9:27) This will be the 4th Jewish temple (referred to as the Tribulation Temple) the first 3 being of Solomon, the exiles from Babylon and Herod.

However, at the mid-point of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel putting a stop to the sacrifices. He will install what is referred to as “the abomination of desolation.” (Mt. 24:15)

Abomination is a word that refers to an idol or image. “On the wing of abomination” (Dan. 9:27) has reference to a spreading influence.

So the abomination of desolation is an image or idol that desecrates the temple and has a spreading influence.

What is the “abomination of desolation?” It is the idol that the False Prophet directs the people to prepare for the beast (Rev. 13:11-15) and is erected in the holy temple of

Israel in Jerusalem. (Note: Since Satan cannot get worship in heaven, he goes to the next best place (in his mind), the temple in Jerusalem where God is to be worshipped.

The False Prophet will be given the ability to do great signs and wonders in order to deceive the people into worshipping the idol. He will even be able to cause the idol to speak and command that those not worshipping the idol be put to death. (Rev. 13:13-15)

What will it look like?

To find our answer, we can turn the pages of history back to 167 BC and the Syrian king Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). He is a prophetic foreshadowing of the 2nd fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 11 regarding the sacrilegious object that causes desecration.

When his soldiers invaded and conquered Jerusalem, they plundered the temple and defiled it by offering a pig on the sacred altar. He then instituted pagan worship and placed a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies. (Incidentally, the face of the statue was very similar to the face of Antiochus.) (see I Macc. 1:10-63 and 2 Macc. 5:1-16 for a description of this event.)

Note: The books of the Maccabees were written during the period of time between the Old Testament and New Testament and are generally not accepted as a part of the Biblical canon but can be useful as a source of historical data.

Dan. 12:11 tells us that this “abomination of desolation” will occupy the “Holy of Holies” for 1260 days, the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation.

3. The Antichrist will be assassinated and then brought back to life.

Rev. 13:3-4 and 17:8 describe the death and resurrection of the beast (Antichrist).

Upon viewing this incredible event, the entire world will be amazed and, as a result, will worship the beast.

There is a question that surfaces regarding the identification of the beast at this point. Some think it may be a reference to the Roman Empire. Others think it is the individual, the Antichrist.

As we review the pertinent passages in Revelation, for the most part they refer to an individual and use personal pronouns such as he and his.

Also, the 2nd beast of Rev. 13 builds an idol to the first beast. This would be strange semantics if this were a reference to an empire. The resurrection of the beast and the response it creates seem more likely to be due to the events related to an individual instead of an empire.

I believe we are still looking at an individual.

A second question that arises is: Did the Antichrist and False Prophet get together and fake the death and resurrection?

Some maintain that Satan does not have the power to raise the dead. Therefore, this had to be a great pretense.

However, a review of the related passages indicates the following:

A review of the NT accounts of Jesus, John and Paul, show that they each describe Satan's miracles as truly miraculous. (see Mt. 24:24; II Thes. 2:9 and Rev. 13:13-15, 16:13-14; 19:20.) Words such as signs, wonders and miracles definitely contain the connotation of the truly miraculous.

II Thes. 2:9 says that the coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with power, signs and lying wonders. This gives that impression that these "workings" are similar "in form" to the ones done by Jesus.

It would appear that the Tribulation is a unique time in history when God will allow the use of signs and wonders to deceive those who have rejected Christ.

In addition, similarities in the languages used of Christ's resurrection and that of the Antichrist would indicate a real resurrection.

In Rev. 17:8, the language "which was and is not" refers to the physical death of the Antichrist followed by his ascent from the abyss. It further states that: "he was, and is not and yet is" another reference to his coming back from death.

So, in copying Christ, the Antichrist (beast) has two comings: first he comes out of the sea (Rev. 13:1) and then he comes up from the abyss (Rev. 17:8).

A final consideration in these matters is that the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit has been removed (at the Rapture). It should not surprise us then, that during this time of increased, unrestrained Satanic activity on earth, God will use Satan for his own purposes in ways that will stagger the minds of men.

A final thought: Here again, we see the efforts of Satan to duplicate the activity of God in Christ on the earth. And just as the death and resurrection of Christ became the grounds for the spread of the gospel into all the world, in a similar manner, the death and resurrection of the Antichrist will lead to the universal worship of the beast as recorded in Rev. 13.

A chart is provided at the end of this lesson which focuses on the Mid-Tribulation events.

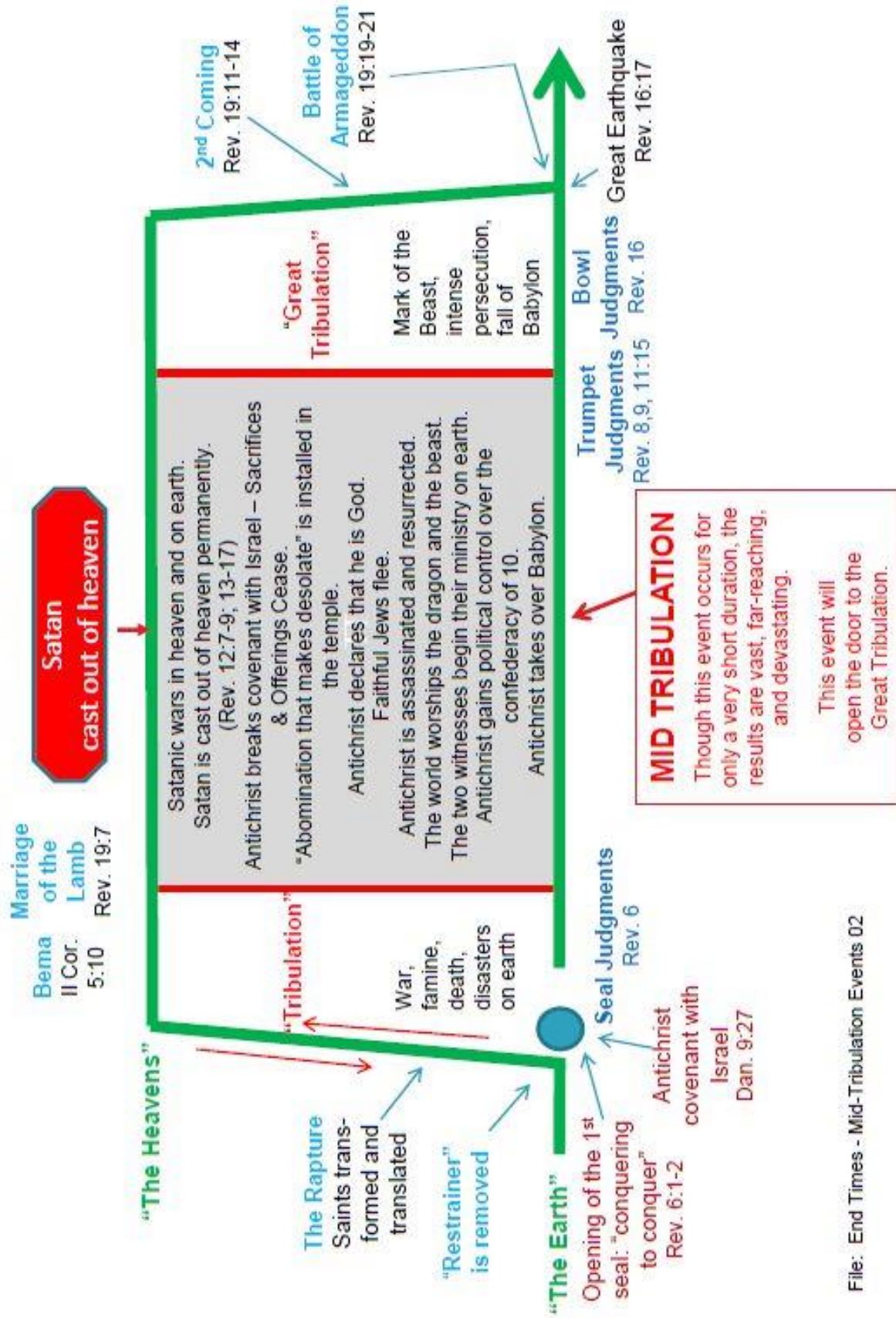
Review Questions:

1. What are the 3 major events that will prepare for the entrance into the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
2. What was the effect of Satan being cast out of heaven? (See Rev. 12:7-9)

3. What is the “abomination of desolation?” _____

4. Did the Antichrist and the False Prophet get together and fake the events of the death and resurrection of the beast? _____

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On: Mid-Tribulation Events



Chapter 14: The Great Tribulation – The Final 3½ Years

“For then there will be Great Tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Mt. 24:21

In this chapter:

- I. The Mark of the beast
- II. The Two Witnesses
- III. The 7 Trumpet and 7 Bowl Judgments
- IV. The Fall of Babylon
- V. Armageddon

I. The Mark of the Beast:

Several questions need to be answered with reference to the mark of the beast:

A. Has it already occurred or is it yet future?

Those who hold that it has already occurred (preterists) contend that Nero was the beast and that the mark of the beast was fulfilled during his reign.

Several arguments, however, would mitigate against this view:

- (1) It is well-recognized that the Revelation was written in 95 or 96 AD. This is about 30 years after Caesar's reign. And, since revelation is a prophetic book, the mark of the beast could not refer to him.
- (2) Nero did not fulfill numerous prophecies about the beast: e.g.
 - Rev. 13:3 - The beast was killed and then came back to life.
 - Rev. 13:8 – Worship by the entire world was mandated.
 - Rev. 13:17 – All peoples throughout the world have to receive the mark of the beast and worship him. And, if they don't, they will not be able to buy or sell.
 - Rev. 13:11ff The beast will have an associate who will call down fire from heaven in addition to having the power to give breath to the image of the beast.
- (3) The number of the name Nero does not equal 666. (Rev. 13:17-18) The precise name would have to be Neron Caesar for it to be equal to 666. But Caesar is not a name but a title (like president) and therefore not appropriate to the calculation of the number.

- (4) The fathers of the early church after Caesar's time all held that this prophecy was future.

B. What is the mark of the beast?

The key passage for answering this question is Rev. 13:16-18. We see the following:

- (1) It would be received on the right hand or forehead;
- (2) No one could buy or sell unless they had the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.

The Greek word for "mark" is "charagma" (**SN 5480**) which means an engraving, a tattoo, an impression or mark. The definition includes etching and branding.

OT uses of the word indicate a physical mark that identified the "marked one" as unclean (e.g. for leprosy)

Also, during this time, a brand or tattoo of some sort was placed on soldiers, slaves and religious devotees to designate the person to whom they belonged.

Clearly then, this is a physical, visible mark of some sort.

C. What does the number 666 mean?

Rev. 13:18 says that a person with understanding can calculate the number of the beast. (It is the number of a man.)

Many languages have numerical values for the letters of their alphabet.

For example, in Hebrew, each character is assigned a number:

Aleph = 1, beth = 2, gimel = 3, daleth = 4 and so on.

This indicates that, if the numerical values of the letters in the Antichrist's name are summed, the value will be 666.

As to meaning, one author gives this interpretation: "The number 666 is God's way of demonstrating that the Antichrist, who is Satan's masterpiece, is a fallen man who is completely under the sovereign control of the great God of all the ages."

D. Why the mark?

From Rev. 13:16ff:

- (1) to give visible evidence of dedication to the Antichrist,
- (2) to authorize the bearer of the mark to buy and sell,
- (3) to give visible evidence of those who are not devoted to the Antichrist, thereby precluding them from buying and selling.

Final words: Since the Antichrist will not be revealed until after the Rapture, it is meaningless for born-again believers to speculate on who the Antichrist will be.

Technology today certainly has the ability to accomplish the economic sanctions portended by the mark, but we don't really know yet what the mark will be.

I believe, however, that believers during the Tribulation will be able to determine who the Antichrist is.

E. When?

Believers that now live on the earth don't need to be concerned about the mark because they will not be on the earth when this Antichrist policy is being enforced. They will be removed from the earth at the Rapture. The mark will be imposed after the midpoint of the Tribulation.

II. The Two witnesses

During the Great Tribulation, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be used by Satan to carry out his purposes on the earth.

While this is going on, God will raise up two witnesses to shine into the darkness of this era. Rev. 11:3-14 gives us information concerning what they will do.

From this passage, we can know the following:

- (1) - They are literally two men.
- They will wear sackcloth (like John the Baptist) indicating a ministry of repentance.
- Their prophetic ministry will continue for 1260 days (3 ½ years)
- They are the two olive trees and 2 lampstands that stand before God.

- If anyone wants to harm them, fire will come from their mouths and kill them.
- They have the power to withhold rain from the earth.
- They have power to turn water into blood and to strike the earth with plagues whenever they want to.
- When they complete their testimony, the beast (Antichrist) that comes up from the bottomless pit will kill them.
- Their bodies will lie in the street for 3 ½ days. No one will bury them.
- People will look upon their dead bodies and rejoice at their apparent demise.
- After the 3 ½ days, God will resurrect them and they will ascend into heaven. Their resurrection and ascension will be seen by those dwelling on the earth (causing great sorrow and fear).

(2) Who are they?

The lampstand and the olive oil are symbols of oil and light. They will shine in the darkness of the Tribulation and be sustained by the strength of the Holy Spirit.

There is much speculation about who these men are. Some say Enoch who didn't die and was translated into heaven. Others say Elijah who was carried away into the heavens in a chariot pulled by horses.

Still others say Moses, the great lawgiver.

Some reasons suggest that Moses and Elijah may be the two witnesses:

1. They were both present at the transfiguration in Mt. 17 which occurred before the major event of his death and resurrection.
2. They are both mentioned together in Mal. 4:4-5. Note that in this passage, Malachi, by the Spirit says: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers..." the very work that these two witnesses will be doing.

Additional evidences:

- Moses – also turned water into blood in the exodus account, one of the things they will be empowered to do.
- Elijah was the prophet that withheld rain from the earth (like the two witnesses will do).

However, this is speculation and there doesn't appear to be sufficient information provided to establish with certainty the identities of the two witnesses.

(3) When?

Rev. 11:2-3 says that the Gentiles will tread (**SN 3961** to trample upon or have in subjection) the holy city for 42 months (3 ½ years). The very next verse says that “God will give power to his two witnesses...”

This indicates that the 2 witnesses will prophesy during this same period of time, the 2nd half of the Great Tribulation after the 6th trumpet judgment.

Additionally, after the two witnesses are resurrected, Rev. 11:13-15 says that in the same hour a great earthquake occurs ...the second woe is past and the third woe is coming. Then the 7th angel sounded his trumpet...the announcement of the coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. This indicates that the two witnesses will prophesy during the 2nd half of the Great Tribulation.

III. The 7 Trumpet and 7 Bowl Judgments:

As we saw in a previous lesson, 6 of the 7 seal judgments occur during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. The 7th seal opens and reveals 7 trumpet judgments which will sound during the 2nd half of the Tribulation.

Several reasons lead me to believe that the judgments are in series:

1. The 7th seal introduces the 7 trumpet judgments which will occur after the 6 seal judgments are completed.
2. There are interludes between the 6th and 7th seals and trumpets.
3. The bowl judgments of Rev. 15 are identified as the last judgments indicating a sequence. (Rev. 15:1)
4. The last bowl judgment says “It is done.” (Rev. 16:17) which indicates that it is the last of the series of judgments.

The seven trumpets are supernatural judgments of God:

The first four are natural calamities – 1/3 of the vegetation is burned up, 1/3 of the sea becomes blood and 1/3 of the creatures of the sea die, etc.

When the 5th trumpet sounds, locusts come out of the bottomless pit. They are described in Rev. 9:7-10. They have a king over them named Abaddon (Rev. 9:11) which is the angel of the bottomless pit which is Satan. This is a demonic hoard from the pit.

The 6th trumpet sounds (Rev. 9:13-21) and an army of 200 million is released to kill 1/3 of mankind. They are led by four angels who had been bound at the river Euphrates. (likely the capital city of the Antichrist at Babylon – see later lesson in this workbook)

Many interpret this trumpet judgment to be an army of 200 million composed of soldiers from China since they, alone in the world today, seem able to put together an army of this magnitude.

However, it would seem logical to interpret this army as another hoard of demonic forces since v.12 connects the 5th and 6th trumpets. Also, these forces are led by 4 demonic beings. By their description in Rev. 9:17, they are not earthly men but demonic beings.

Whichever view you adopt, great calamity and destruction will be visited upon the earth, such as has never been seen before.

The 7th trumpet is sounded and announces the kingdom of God (Rev. 11:15). This indicates that the 7th trumpet includes the 7 bowl judgments.

These bowl judgments are poured out consecutively (Rev. 16). The pouring out of the 6th bowl dries up the river Euphrates preparing the way for the great army that will come from the east.

The 7th bowl judgment occurs during the battle of Armageddon. It will bring a great earthquake and hailstones that weigh as much as 75 pounds.

This will be the final hour of judgment on a world that, in the midst of these terrible judgments, still refuses to turn to God in repentance.

Table: The 7 Trumpet and 7 Bowl Judgments

Type	#	Description	Result	Rev. verse
Trumpet	1	Hail and fire mingled with blood	1/3 of the trees and all grass is burned up	8:7
Trumpet	2	Something like a great burning mountain is thrown into the sea	1/3 of sea became blood, 1/3 of sea creatures die, 1/3 of ships destroyed	8:8-9
Trumpet	3	A great, burning star (Wormwood) fell on 1/3 of rivers and springs	1/3 of the waters became wormwood, many men died	8:10-11
Trumpet	4	1/3 of sun, moon and stars are struck becoming darkened	1/3 of the day and 1/3 of the night did not shine	8:12
Trumpet: woe #1	5	Locusts from the pit, descend on the earth. Authority given to them to torment men on the earth not having the seal of God on their foreheads for 5 months	Torment of a scorpion. When it stings a person, they want to die, but can't.	9:1-12
Trumpet: woe #2	6	200 million released to kill 1/3 of mankind. 1/3 + 1/4 4 th seal= 7/12	Plagues of fire, smoke and brimstone	9:13-21
Trumpet: woe #3	7	Announcing the "kingdom of God" –	encompasses the bowl judgments	11:15-19
Bowl	1	Loathsome sores	Upon men with the mark of the beast	16:2
Bowl	2	Poured out on the sea – became like blood	All creatures in the sea die.	16:3
Bowl	3	Poured out on the rivers and springs – became like blood	"blood to drink" It is their just due.	16:4
Bowl	4	Poured out on the sun - power to scorch men	The men blasphemed the name of God and did not repent nor give Him glory	16:8-9
Bowl	5	Poured out on the throne of the beast and his kingdom	Their kingdom became darkness	16:10-11
Bowl	6	Poured out on the river Euphrates	The river dried up.	16:12
Bowl	7	Poured out into the air. Noises, thunderings, lightnings, a great earthquake, hail (1 talent= 75#)	"It is done."	16:17-21

Notes:

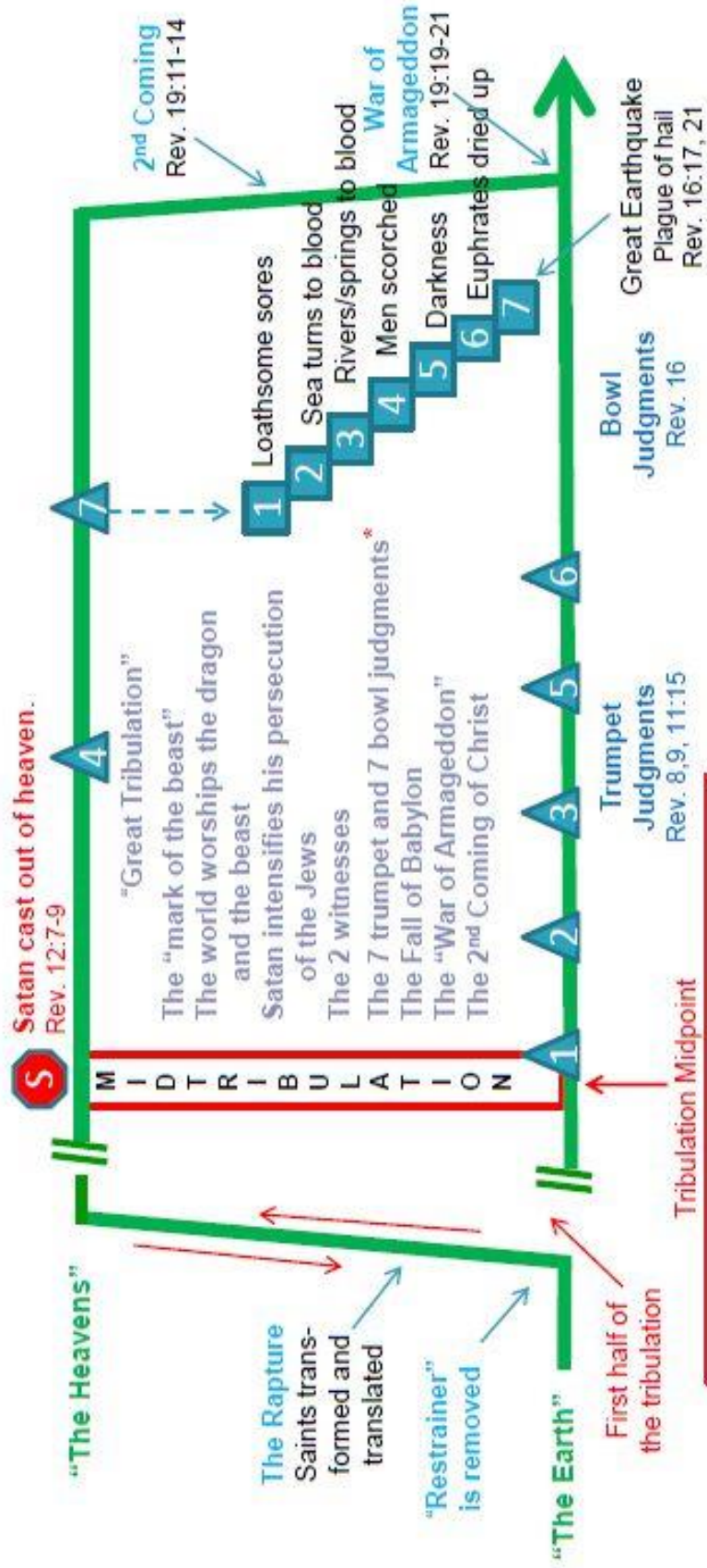
1. Judgments are in series (see text above)
Note that the bowl judgments appear to be in a “rapid-fire” sequence.
2. These are supernatural judgments of God on unbelievers.
3. The 6th trumpet of 200 million are likely demons.
Their leader is Abaddon/Apollyon = Satan
4. Note that trumpets 5-7 are intensified to “woes.”
‘oy’ – wasting or leanness, wretchedness, grief, lamentation, misery
Woe: a lament or wail concerning the final end of evil people.
See Jesus’ denunciation of the Pharisees in Mt. 23 (7 woes) – likely the strongest language in the gospels.
5. Trumpet #7 encompasses the 7 bowl judgments because it announces the kingdom of God thereby extending to the end of the Tribulation at Christ’s 2nd coming.
Just as the 7th seal judgment opened to the 7 trumpet judgments, so also the 7th trumpet judgment opens to the 7 bowl judgments.
6. The river Euphrates is dried up (bowl #6) to provide access for the kings of the east to join the War of Armageddon.
7. The 7 bowl judgments are poured out consecutively.
8. The 7th bowl judgment includes hail that weighs a talent (~75#).
9. This is the final hour of judgments on the earth and still the world refuses to repent and turn to God.

What can we make of all of this?

Beginning with Adam and Eve, after 6000 years of the patience and long-suffering of God towards His rebellious creation, grace and mercy are now replaced with wrath and judgment which are in fact His mercy and grace.

e.g. How long does a godly parent endure his rebellious child whom he loves until he takes the rod of discipline into his hand?

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On: Great Tribulation Events (2nd half of Daniel's 70th Week)



Satanic wars in heaven and on earth
Antichrist breaks treaty with Israel.
"Abomination of desolation"
Antichrist is assassinated and resurrected.
The two witnesses begin their ministry on earth.

* Note: All of this in addition to the 7 seal judgments of the first half of the tribulation .

Chapter 15: The Fall of Babylon, The War of Armageddon, The Second Coming of Christ

Outline of this Session:

- I. The Fall of Babylon
- II. Armageddon
- III. The 2nd Coming

Read Psalms 46:4-9

I. The Fall of Babylon

Rev. 16:17 concluded the bowl judgments with the opening of the 7th bowl judgment and the pronouncement “It is done!” This indicates that the action of this bowl will complete the judgments of God upon the earth.

However, in Rev 16:19, the city of Babylon was brought to God’s remembrance that she too was to experience the fierceness of His wrath.

So, before the text takes us to the battle of Armageddon and the 2nd coming of Christ, there is another item of business to attend to: the false religions of the world must be judged and removed.

Background:

Apart from Jerusalem, Babylon is the most-mentioned city in the Bible. It is found more than 300 times in the Bible and approximately 1 out of 10 verses in Revelation mention it.

The first mention of Babylon in the Bible is early in the Scriptures, in Gen. 10:8-10, as the beginnings of Nimrod’s kingdom.

In the next chapter, in Gen. 11:4 we see the account of Babel’s beginnings with the people building a tower “to the heavenlies,” man’s first recorded act of worship directed towards himself.

Note the words used:

- Gen. 11:4 build ourselves a city
top in the heavens – astrological purposes
a name for ourselves

After God confused the languages and scattered the people (v.9), this place was known as Babel, which means “confusion.”

Zech. 5:5-11

Another important Scripture with reference to Babylon is found in Zech. 5:5-11

God revealed to Zechariah the prophet a future time when evil would return to its original place in Babylon.

Chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation deal with the final fall of Babylon.

This must be significant because God devotes 2 full chapters in the Scriptures to it just before He will proceed with the climactic event of the End Times.

There has been a lot of speculation about who or what Babylon is.

By looking at these 2 chapters in Revelation, we can gain some confidence in who or what it might be:

1. There is a connection between Babylon and the beast. (Rev. 17:3-7)
2. It is a center of false religions (Rev. 17:4-5) and a literal city (Rev. 18:1-3)
3. It is a center for world commerce and trading. (Rev. 18:9-18)
4. Babylon will persecute God's people. (Rev. 17:6, 18:20, 24)
5. It will be suddenly and completely destroyed. (Rev. 18:8, 21-23)

A quick look at Jeremiah 50-51 shows a description of a city on the Euphrates that closely resembles the city described in Rev. 17-18.

Note also that Rev. 17 focuses on the religious character of Babylon. She is a "mother" which represents the source from which the world's prostitution flows.

And Rev. 18 focuses on commercial Babylon. Note vv. 9-19 the laments of the kings of the earth because their merchandise will no longer be purchased.

Strategic location:

Babylon, the End Times city, will have a strategic location for economic and political operations, just as it was in earlier times.

Henry Morris (Creation Research Center) has stated that computer studies show that Babylon, on the Euphrates, is very near the geographical center of all of the earth's land masses.

And we know that it is at the crossroads of 3 continents: Africa, Asia and Europe.

1. What is Babylon?

What is this Babylon and why does she have to drink the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath?

From Revelation 17 and 18 we can collect some information about Babylon:

A. Revelation 17: "A false religious system"

17:1-2, we see that she sat on many waters (nations) who were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. This is to say that many nations embraced her false religions.

17:3 She is sitting on the beast which indicates that, at least for a period of time, they have an alliance and are working together.

Note the differences between her and the woman of Rev. 12 – clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and a garland of 12 stars on her head. This woman was Israel.

17:5 She is identified with a name written on her forehead:

Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.

She is "great" in the sense of worldly recognition and influence.

Babylon is identified as "the mother" which means that she is the source of the harlotries being embraced.

The prophetic writings use such terms as harlot, prostitution, fornication and abominations as terms that are symbolic of idolatry.

"abomination" – filthy, despised, repulsive, unclean

Harlotry is idolatry. She leads people away from God into false worship.

This information shows us that she is a false religious system.

In ch-12, the woman was a "people group," Israel.

Is she also a people group?

17:9 She sits on 7 mountains. Could this be the church of Rome?

Many think that it is.

Does it seem strange to you that the Antichrist carries her along for a spell when ultimately, he wants worship for himself? Why would he do this?

Recall that the Antichrist is of Roman origin. (from Dan. 9:26)
He very likely will grow up in the Roman church.

And, being an astute business person, he will recognize the advantages of the church for his own agendas.

But he will only use her as long as there are advantages to himself and then she will be “toast.”

B. Revelation 18: A literal city

But, as we move forward into chapter 18, something very different emerges.

A Biblical Interpretation Principle:

In Revelation, when John wants to identify a named city as symbolic, he does so in the text. (see Rev. 11:8 – “spiritually is Sodom and Egypt” where our Lord was crucified.”)

Otherwise, named cities are real cities and not symbolic, e.g. Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis. Since he does not indicate any symbolism here, it is appropriate to identify Babylon as a literal city which will be the reconstructed city of Babylon on the Euphrates.

In this chapter, we see:

1. all nations are involved
2. merchants of the earth getting rich
3. her plagues – death, mourning, famine
4. Rev. 18:3, 11 identifies Babylon as a center of world merchandising.

Note in Rev. 18:19 that all of the merchants are mourning but not for her, but for their loss in goods.

2. What does she do?

A. We know that she seduces the nations with her harlotries. She draws them into materialism, wealth, the things rich and splendid. (Rev. 18:14)

B. From Rev. 17:6, Rev. 18:24, we see that she will persecute God’s people.

And for this and past transgressions, God will deal severely with her (See also Jeremiah 50-51).

3. What is her end?

Babylon, religious and commercial, will be suddenly and completely destroyed.
(Rev. 18:8, 21-23)

4. How will her end come? The Antichrist and his 10 federation leaders will kill her.
(Rev. 17:16; 18:8)

Summary:

For the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, the woman will ride the beast which indicates she will have some control or influence with the Antichrist. He will only use her until she has no value to him. But (see Rev. 17:16), at the end of the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, the beast (Antichrist) along with his ten cohorts from the Federation of 10 will kill her and destroy the religious systems she mothered. Antichrist will replace the false, world religious systems with his own religious system that deifies and worships himself.

Babylon, itself, will continue for the remainder of the Tribulation with its commercial and political influence but will finally be destroyed in the 7th bowl judgment near the end of the Tribulation. See Rev. 18:21-24, 19:1-3 how the passage flows into the 2nd coming account.

Babylon, as the Scriptures says, will fall and never rise again. (Rev. 18:21-24)

II. Armageddon (see map at the end of this chapter)

Armageddon, though only mentioned once in the Bible (Rev. 16:16), is one of the most well-known words of Biblical prophecy.

The word itself is made up of two words, har, which means mountain and Megiddo, a city. The ancient city of Megiddo, located to the west of the Sea of Galilee, was built on a hill and is therefore, called Armageddon. The top of this hill looks out over the plain of Esdraelon which is where the armies of the earth will assemble and be totally annihilated by the returning King Jesus.

The war:

Satan and Antichrist come against Israel in an attempt to finally eradicate Israel and thwart the purposes and promises of God thereby enabling Satan to maintain control of the earth.

Armageddon is often thought of as a single battle, but, in fact, it is a war with many battles in which the armies of the earth join together to attack Israel and attempt to annihilate God's people.

There are many passages in the Scriptures that talk about Armageddon. Some of the key ones are Ps. 2:1-3, Isa. 34 and 63, Joel 3:19, Zech 12 and 14, Mal 4 and Rev. 14, 16 and 19.

There are a number of titles used for this final war:

- the great and awesome day of the Lord Joel 2:31
- the great and terrible (dreadful) day of the Lord Mal. 4:5
- the day of the Lord's vengeance Isa. 34:8
- the winepress of God Isa. 63:2
- that great day of God Almighty Rev. 16:14

The campaign of Armageddon will cover an area of approximately 200 X 100 miles. (See map at the end of this chapter.)

The main battles will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Kidron valley east of Jerusalem) (Joel 3:2, 12), the plain of Esdraelon (valley of Jezreel, also known as the plains of Megiddo in the north) and Bozrah/Edom about 25 miles south of the Dead Sea. (Isa. 34:1-5, 63:1)

The severity of the warfare is well-described in Rev. 14:20 "...and the winepress was trampled outside the city, blood came out of the winepress, **up to** the horses' bridles for one thousand six hundred furlongs". (~ 180 miles)

This is comparing the spurting of grape juice from the feet of the wine treader with the spurting of blood. It likely "splashed" on their bridles but was not a "flowing river." (Note the phrase "up to" and not "flows.") This is likely a symbolic description of the severity of the campaign.

This warfare will proceed in several key phases:

7 Stages of the war:

1. The Euphrates will dry up (6th bowl judgment) providing access for the kings of the east (Rev. 16:12)
2. The allies of the Antichrist (from the kings of the earth and the whole world) will assemble. (Rev. 16:12-16)
v.14 "kings of the earth and the whole world to gather them..."
3. The armies from all the nations attack Jerusalem. The city is taken. Half of the city will go into captivity. Houses will be ransacked. (Zech. 14:1-2)

4. Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives. The mountain will be split in two making a very large valley (Zech. 14:3-5) which will be a way of escape for God's people (v.5)
5. Christ and his armies destroy the armies assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat. (Kidron valley which runs east of the city) (Joel 3:9-17; Zech. 14:3)
See Joel 3:16 "the voice of the Lord" also Ps. 29:3-9
6. Jesus takes his army to Bozrah/Edom (modern Jordan in the south) to destroy its inhabitants and deliver the remnant of the Jews. (Rev. 12:6,14, Isa. 34:1-8; 63:1-6)
7. The armies of Antichrist at Armageddon will be destroyed. (Rev. 19:19-21)
In this engagement, the beast and the False Prophet are captured and cast alive into the lake of fire. (Rev. 19:19-20) The rest of the armies of Satan were killed with the sword that came from Jesus' mouth. (Rev. 19:21)

Additionally, all the birds come and have a great feast. (Rev. 19:17-18)

This is the end of the war of Armageddon. 1000 years of peace on the earth now begins.

III. The 2nd Coming of Christ

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God." Rev. 19:11-13

There are seven main events in history: creation, the fall, the flood, the first coming of Christ (including His death and resurrection), the Rapture of the church, the 2nd Coming of Christ and the New Jerusalem.

Everything in history up until this time points to the Second Coming of Christ. It is the climactic event of God's redemptive acts in time when Jesus comes as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to judge His enemies and set up His kingdom on earth. (This is what the Jews thought the Messiah would do when Jesus first came.)

There are over 300 prophetic passages which make references to Jesus' 2nd coming in the New Testament.

Further, Jesus, during his earthly ministry, gave warnings to be ready for His coming numerous times (approximately 50 times, e.g. Mt. 25:13).

Where will this occur?

It seems to be a well-known fact among Christians that, when He returns, He will come to the very place from which He left...the Mount of Olives.

Two passages provide us the needed information:

- Zech. 14:4 "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..."
- Acts 1:9-12 When Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples stood gazing up into heaven. An angel standing nearby said to them: "...this same Jesus, who was taken up into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." Verse 12 indicates that they had been with Jesus on the Mount called Olivet.

Note: His coming will be a literal, physical coming.

When He comes, who will be with Him?

A number of passages indicate that, when He comes, He will be accompanied by His holy people and His mighty angels. See Zech. 14:5; Mt. 25:31; I Thes. 3:13; II Thes. 1:7 and Jude 14. See esp. Rev. 19:14 the armies of heaven in fine linen, white and clean (the clothing of the bride)

Why is Jesus coming?

There are a number of reasons for Jesus' return to the earth:

- to rescue the Jews from annihilation and defeat the armies of the Antichrist. (Zech 14:1-5, Rev. 19:19-21)
- to keep His word/promise to return. (Zech. 14:4; Mt. 25:31)
- to restore the nation of Israel. (Isa. 43:5-6; Jer. 30:10; Ezk. 36:24 ff)

Note: There are 2 prophetic occasions for bringing Israel back to their land:

- a present, now occurring, physical return which began in the 19th century and was heightened in 1948 when the nation of Israel was reborn. But this is a physical return and not one of belief in the Messiah. The Jews are still unrepentant and unbelieving.

It will still be a number of years before Israel is restored as God's people.

- The second return will occur at the 2nd Coming when Jesus will gather believing Jews who have come through the Tribulation. At this time, they will be restored as His people.

After His return and defeat of the armies of the Antichrist, Jesus will:

- judge those still living ("the judgment of the living nations")
Mt. 25:31-46 This is also called the judgment of the sheep and goats. This is a judgment for eternal destiny to determine who will enter His kingdom (v.34) and who will go the everlasting fire (Mt. 25:41,46)
- resurrect the Tribulation martyrs (Rev. 20:4)
At this event, those who were martyred during the Tribulation will be brought back to life. They will live and reign with Christ for 1000 years.
- establish His reign (Rev. 19:1)

In this whole process, He displays the salvation, glory, honor and power of God (Rev. 19:1) who is then worshipped by the 24 elders and a great multitude. (Rev. 19:3-7)

How can we describe His return?

Jesus will personally and physically return. He will not send others, but He, Himself will come.

It is a literal coming. As He was leaving (Acts 1:9-11), the angel said to the disciples that He would return in the same manner in which He left. And, just as they saw Him physically leave, He will be physically seen when He comes again.

His return will be suddenly like lightning. (Mt. 24:27)

It's important to note that after His discourse on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24, He continued his conversation with the disciples and gave them 2 parables that stressed the importance of being alert and being ready...certainly good words for us today since we are so near to His return for His people (the Rapture).

It will be timely, not a moment too early or too late.

It will be with signs in the heavens. (Mt. 24 and Lk. 21 tell us that there will be signs and wonders in the heavens...sun darkened, stars falling from the sky, strange tides, etc.)

It will be a glorious return. (Mt. 24:30) Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His angels in flaming fire. The people on the earth in all nations will see Him and will go into deep mourning when they see the one whom they have rejected. (II Thes. 1:7-8)

It will be mind-boggling to the inhabitants of the earth. I suspect that the sight of Jesus coming in the clouds with His armies will be THE “all-time-great” picture in the sky.

It will be an “all-stops-out” return (a word picture from the grand climax of a musical composition, especially of a pipe organ). Jesus will not hold anything back to accomplish His mission.

His return will be a victorious return. (Rev. 19:19-21) The armies of the earth led by the Antichrist will gather at Jerusalem, Bozrah and Megiddo. At the final battle of Armageddon, there will be no battle or resistance of any kind. Jesus will slay all but two of them with the sword that comes from His mouth. The Antichrist and False Prophet will be saved alive but will be cast alive into the lake of fire forever.

Following this great victory, Satan will be seized by a nameless angel (not a prominent angel like Michael or Gabriel), bound and cast into the bottomless pit to be held captive for 1000 years.

And finally, it’s a given, a guarantee. We know it’s going to happen. Jesus will come just as the Scripture foretells and he will accomplish His mission just as it is described in the pages of God’s Word.

Note: A map of the War of Armageddon is provided at the end of this chapter.

Review Questions:

A. The Fall of Babylon:

1. What is Babylon?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
2. What does she do? _____

3. What is her end? _____
4. How will her end occur? _____

B. Armageddon:

1. Why will there be an Armageddon? _____

We have here what is called a “theatre of war” which indicates that battles are being fought on many areas, not just one battle.

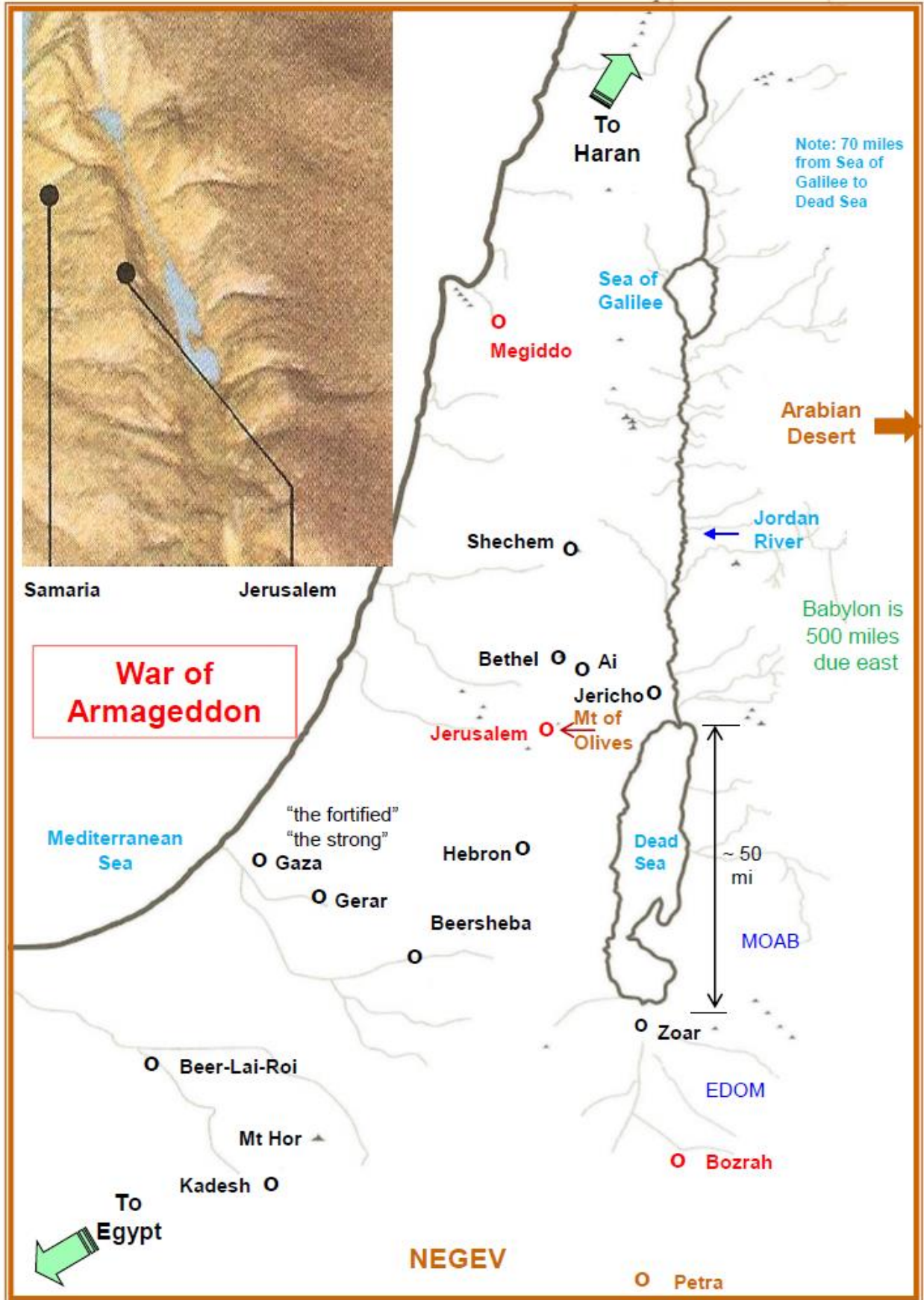
2. What are the 3 principle locations of the theatre of the war of Armageddon? _____
3. What is the result of the “war of Armageddon?” _____

C. The 2nd Coming of Christ

1. Where will His return occur? _____
2. Who will be with Him? _____
3. Why is He coming? _____

4. Name five words that will characterize His coming?

Map of the War of Armageddon



Chapter 16: The 75 Days Between the Second Coming of Christ And the Beginning of the Millennial Kingdom

Studies about the End Times often overlook the time between the Second Coming of Christ and the beginning of the millennium.

The Millennial Kingdom does not begin immediately at Christ's return but 75 days later.

This is similar to our presidential elections. We elect a president to office in November, but the official beginning of his new term in office doesn't occur until January in the next year.

The interval of 75 days is provided to us in the 12th chapter of Daniel.

In the beginning verses of this chapter, Daniel's prophecy talks about the time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation. (Dan 12:1) This verse indicates that the prophecy is about Israel ("your people").

Daniel is then told to shut up the words and seal the book. At this point in the conversation, Daniel looks up and sees two "others," one standing on each side of the river bank. One of them asks the question: "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" The reply: a time, times and half a time which is 3 ½ years, 1260 days.

This will be the duration of the Tribulation for Israel, the second half of the 7 years of Tribulation. (Recall that during the first half of the Tribulation, Israel will have a covenant with the Antichrist.)

Then, in Dan 12:11-12, the text says: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days (1290). Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the end of the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. (1335)"

Since these numbers are so close, it would seem to indicate that the right interpretation approach is to consider them literal days and not symbolic.

The first number, 1260, is the final half of the 7 years of the Great Tribulation.

Then there is a period of 30 days and then another 45 days.

Since these two extra periods are specifically designated, it indicates there are specific things to accomplish during each of these short periods of 30 and 45 days.

The activities for each of these two specific periods are not identified specifically in Scripture. However, we do know that, after Christ comes, there are a number of events that will occur:

1. The abomination of desolation will be removed from the temple. Dan 12:11 indicates that the abomination will be allowed to remain in the temple an extra 30 days. But, since God does not sanction this temple, there will be no real urgency other than to “get it out of there.”

This temple, built during the Tribulation, will not be sanctioned by God as were the other temples. The fourth temple, the Millennial temple, will be sanctioned by God because Jesus Himself will be responsible for building it.

The Tribulation temple will be destroyed and never become the “Temple of the Kingdom.”

2. The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire. (Rev. 19:20)

Note that, in II Thes. 2:8-9, we are told that, when Jesus comes, He will consume and destroy the lawless one with the breath of his mouth. The Antichrist will be one of the first casualties of the Jesus’ Second Coming.

However, he will be resurrected at the time of Rev. 19:20 and then cast into the fire.

3. Satan will be bound and thrown into the bottomless pit for 1000 years. (Rev. 20:1-3) This is known as the abyss, the section of Sheol or Hades which is a temporary confinement place for fallen angels.

Satan will be humbled.

In the order of celestial beings, cherubs or cherubim are of the highest order. In fact, Satan, at one time, was the anointed cherub so he was over even those of the highest order.

The second order of celestial beings consists of seraphs or seraphim.

The third, and lowest order, are the angels, Michael being the chief angel.

The humbling consists that an angel of the lowest order, even unnamed, is able to bind the one who was chief over all of the celestial beings.

Satan is confined so he can no longer be free to deceive the nations.

4. The judgment of the living (surviving Gentile) nations (sheep and goats) will occur. (Mt. 25:31-46 also Joel 3:1-3) This is to determine eternal destiny.

An interpretation of this judgment is:

- A. Nations is also the common word for gentiles. So this is a judgment of all of the Gentiles still living after Armageddon. It's referred to as the sheep and goats judgment.
- B. It will be a pro-Semitic vs. anti-Semitic judgment based upon individual responses to the Jews during the 2nd half of the Tribulation. Did they help the Jews, give them food and water, help them to escape...during a time when it was very dangerous for them to do so.

During the Tribulation, the Jews will become a dividing line for those who are believers and those who are not. Only believers will dare to violate the rules of the Antichrist and aid the Jews. Their pro-Semitic acts will be the result of their saved status. They will show their faith by their works. (see Ja. 2:14-26)

5. The Old Testament (Dan. 12:1-3) and Tribulation (Rev. 20:4) saints will be resurrected and rewarded.

This is the 1st resurrection and consists of:

- A. Christ, the first fruits
- B. Church saints at the Rapture (I Thes. 4:16)
- C. OT saints during the 75 day interval (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2)
- D. Tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4)

See also Paul in I Cor. 15:20-23: "in his own order"- a phrase indicating the sequence of troops of soldiers.

The next resurrection that occurs will be that of unbelievers and occurs 1000 years later at the Great White throne Judgment.

6. Since the millennial reign is about to begin and the saints will rule with Christ, it makes sense that Jesus will assign and instruct the saints in their responsibilities during the time of the millennium.
7. It is likely that construction of the Millennial Temple of Ezk.40-48 will begin during this time.

Some other things that may occur during these two periods:

1. The land will need to be cleansed and the dead buried.
2. Such administrative issues as the true borders of Israel will have to be identified.
3. Although the final battle has been completed, there may be areas outside of the theatre of war that will need attention – mopping up activities.

The issue to keep in mind with regard to the extra 75 days is that those who do succeed in waiting are declared “blessed.”

Blessed is given to us in the Hebrew plural form. This indicates abundant blessing, abundant provision for the faithful.

Solomon gave us a prophetic psalm in Ps. 72:7-8,11

“In his days the righteous shall flourish,
and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more.
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
and from the river to the ends of the earth.
Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;
and nations shall serve Him.”

This is a picture of the End Times and not of some intermediate fulfillment between now and then. Note the activities dependent upon Christ being king – dominion from sea to sea, all kings shall fall down before Him (worship), all nations shall serve Him.

Note; A chart of the 75-day Interval is provided at the end of this chapter.

Review Questions:

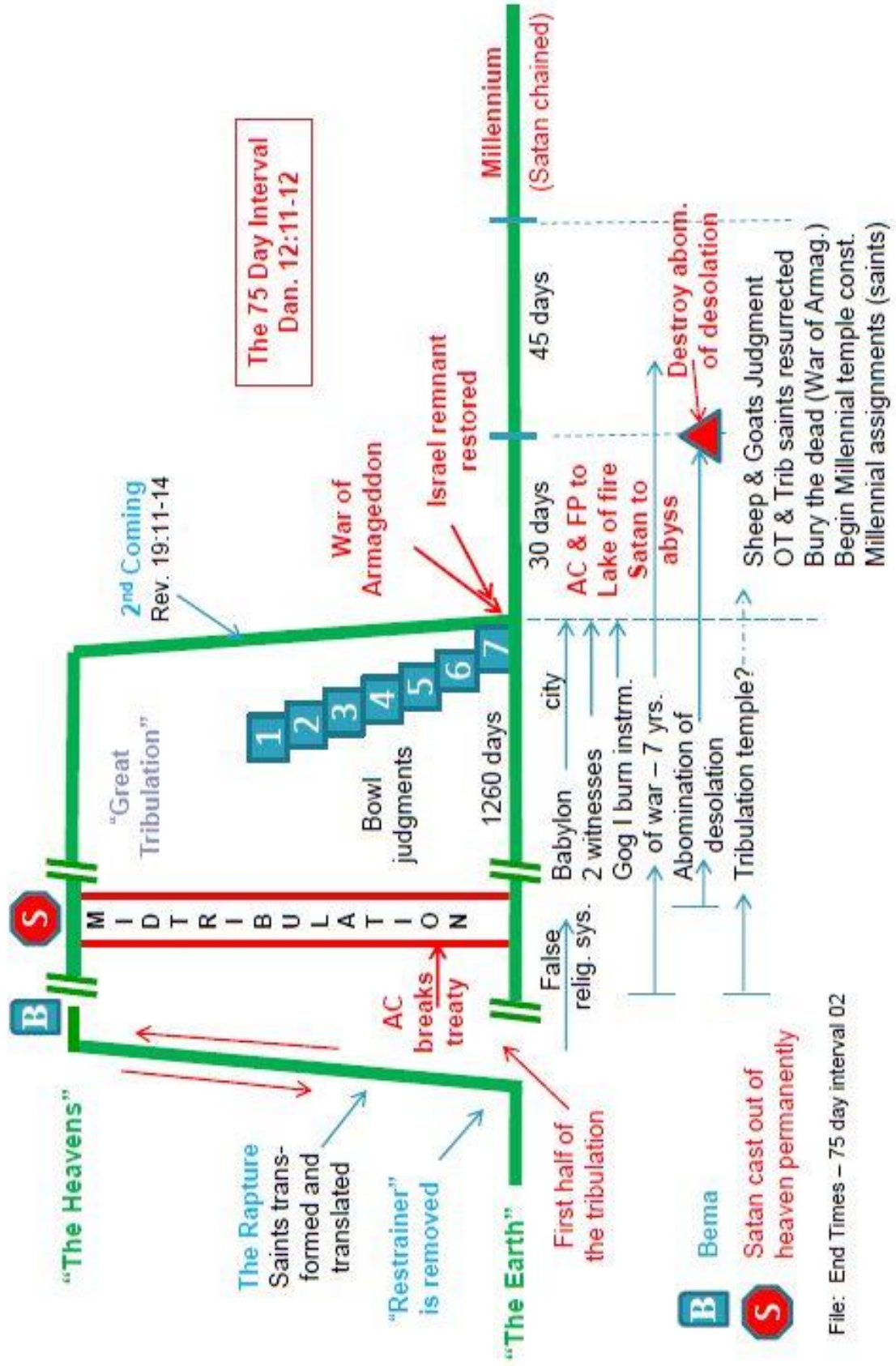
1. From Daniel 12, explain the 75 days of time between Christ’s Second Coming and the beginning of the Millennium.

2. What will occur during this 75 day period?

3. What will be the rewards of those who wait until the end of the 1335 days?

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On:

The 75-Day Interval



File: End Times - 75 day interval 02

Chapter 17: The Millennium

Outline of this Lesson:

Introduction

- I. Explanation of 1000 years
- II. Millennial Views
- III. Titles Used for the Millennium
- IV. Two Key Issues
- V. 2 things about the Messianic kingdom not revealed in the OT
- VI. Characteristics described in the Old Testament
- VII. The Government of the Millennium
- VIII. What will it be like during the millennium?

Introduction:

I can't tell you how many times I've heard someone (a Christian) say: "I've turned ahead to the end of the book to see how this (the life we are living on earth) turns out...and "Jesus Wins!""

This is an absolute. It is a given. It is not negotiable.

In view of the difficult times that we've just studied (the 7-year Tribulation, the Antichrist's rule, the abomination of desolation, the mark of the beast, etc.), this has to be our "high mark" of encouragement, a source of unending confidence and hope in our great God.

He has spoken and His Word will come to pass exactly as He has declared it.

As the sons of Korah said in Martin Luther's favorite Psalm (46)

"God is our refuge and strength.
A very present help in trouble,
Therefore, we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though its waters roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with its swelling."

This psalm certainly seems to be describing some of the judgments that will come upon the earth during the Tribulation.

Our world dreams and looks for “a paradise” something similar to the pre-sin conditions in the Garden of Eden.

After the earth’s existence of nearly 3 millennia, the wisest of men on the earth, Solomon, could only say: “Under the sun, it’s all vanity.” (under the sun meaning: on the earth)

This is to say that man can never achieve this modern utopia. Why? Because he doesn’t have the credentials to make it happen.

But, the God-man Jesus can do it, and He will. It’s called the Millennium or Millennial Kingdom.

God’s Word provides us with numerous passages regarding the Kingdom Jesus will establish after he returns and defeats Satan in the Armageddon Theatre of War.

But first, let’s look at the issue of 1000 years and also two key issues related to the millennium.

I. Explanation of 1000 years

One of the concerns regarding the Millennium is that the “one thousand years” only occurs in one passage (Rev. 20:2-7). Some would say that since Revelation is highly symbolic, it seems unwise to take one thousand as literal.

It’s true, that Revelation uses many symbols. But when it does, the symbols are either explained in the Revelation or in other places in the Bible.

But the term one thousand is never used in a symbolic way. Nor is a symbolic interpretation ever given.

1260 days, times, times and half a time and 3 ½ years are all interpreted literally.

To me, it seems consistent to use a literal interpretation of this number.

It’s true that the number one thousand only occurs in one passage, but it does occur 6 times in this passage of only 6 verses and most often, the repetition of a phrase or term serves to make a point.

However, the fact or need for a millennium doesn’t depend on this passage alone.

II. Millennial Views

There are disagreements as to what this Millennium will be and when it will occur.

First, though, let's identify the areas in which many in the Christian arena agree:

I believe there are 2 such areas of agreement:

1. Jesus, the Messiah, will one day literally and visibly return to the earth and reign as the Judge of the earth.
2. Jesus is the King of Kings and He will rule over a glorious kingdom unparalleled since the time of Eden.

Two of the major areas of concern have to do with the timing (present or still to come) and method (How will Jesus reign?)

There are three "timing" viewpoints: (See chart at the end of this chapter for a presentation of these viewpoints.)

Amillennial Viewpoint:

People holding to this view maintain that amillennial means "no millennium" but does mean a long period of time. They also teach that Satan was bound by Christ at his first coming. Christ now reigns spiritually over those in his kingdom and in heaven over those who have been redeemed.

They also believe that, at some future time, Jesus will return to judge everyone and bring an end to time. They deny a literal 7-year Tribulation.

Premillennial Viewpoint:

This position believes that Jesus will return before ("pre") the millennium.

The Millennium is an actual 1000 year period of time in which Jesus will set up His kingdom on the earth. His saints will rule with Him during this period. His 2nd Coming, which is after the 7-year Tribulation, and His subsequent defeat of Satan and his hoards, is the precursor to the establishment of His earthly kingdom.

Postmillennial Viewpoint:

This view maintains that Jesus will return (2nd coming) after the Millennium. Therefore, the millennium represents the period of time between Jesus' first and 2nd comings.

In this view, the millennium is not a literal thousand years but is an Eden-like age that the church will bring about by the preaching of the gospel. It will come more and more as believers preach the gospel and reach the “lost.” Ultimately, the gospel will prevail ushering in the fullness of “the golden age.”

Some Evidence for the premillennial viewpoint:

1. This viewpoint best fulfills the promises God made to Abraham and David.

This is the only view that maintains a literal fulfillment of God’s covenants with Abraham and David of a land, nations and a throne.

2. It provides the clearest interpretation and the most natural reading of Rev. 20:1-6. Verse 4 of this passage points to believers being resurrected in a physical body. And clearly, from other usages in the Scriptures, the Greek word for resurrection (*anastasis*) refers to a bodily resurrection.

Also, the passage about the resurrection occurs right after John’s account of the 2nd coming of Christ.

3. It was the viewpoint of the early church. (*chiliasm*)

4. It explains Satan’s current role and his future enchainment.

The Scriptures often refer to Satan as the ruler of this present evil age, the god of this world, an angel of light, looking for someone to devour. He is actively opposing the work of God. And he is still doing that very thing today, 2000 years after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Rev. 20:3 says that when he is bound, he will no longer deceive the nations.

5. This viewpoint maintains a consistent literal interpretation of the prophetic passages of the Scriptures.

III. Titles used of the Millennium:

1. the kingdom of heaven – Mt. 3:2
2. the kingdom of God Mk. – 1:15
3. times of refreshing – Ac. 3:19
4. the period of the restoration of all things – Ac.3:21
5. the world to come – Heb. 2:5
6. a kingdom that cannot be shaken – Heb. 12:28

Just from the above titles, the Millennium appears to be something that is greatly desirable – from and of God, heaven (a word we often use for paradise), refreshing, unshakeable, things being restored.

IV. Two Key Issues

The primary bases for a millennium rests on two key issues:

1. The promises of the Jewish covenants

There are four unfulfilled, unconditional covenants that God made with Israel:

A. The Abrahamic covenant promised an eternal seed that would develop into a nation that would possess a land with definite borders. This promise was given to Abraham but he died without receiving the fulfillment of the promise. See Heb. 11:8-10, 13. For this covenant to be fulfilled, there must be a future kingdom.

B. The land Covenant (Palestinian covenant) concerns a world-wide regathering of the people of Israel. The dispersion has occurred and a first regathering is in progress, but still awaits a future fulfillment.

C. The Davidic Covenant guaranteed an eternal house, an eternal throne, an eternal kingdom and an eternal person. But Jesus, the Messiah has never sat on the throne of David ruling over a kingdom of Israel. See Ps 2:4-9

D. The New Covenant addresses the national regeneration and salvation of Israel. This has yet to occur. Ezk. 36:24-28

This too requires a kingdom and is yet to be fulfilled.

2. the prophecies of the Jewish prophets

There are many prophecies in the OT that speak of the coming of the Messiah who will reign on David's throne and rule over a peaceful kingdom. This belief in a Messianic kingdom rests on the basis of a literal interpretation of this large amount of material.

This large amount of material provides much information about the general characteristics of the kingdom without providing an orderly sequence.

With this amount of material already available in the OT, it was not necessary to spend a lot of time on the characteristics of the Messianic kingdom in the Revelation.

V. 2 things about the Messianic kingdom not revealed in the OT:

1. the duration of the Messianic kingdom – 1000 years
2. the circumstances by which the Messianic kingdom would come to an end and lead into the eternal order.

This is why we say that Revelation 21-22 is all new material. These two chapters provide the transition into eternity, information not previously revealed.

These two things are all that revelation has added to the knowledge of the Messianic kingdom. Therefore, belief in a Messianic kingdom is not dependent on Revelation 20 but on the unfulfilled, unconditional covenants and unfulfilled prophecies of the OT.

In an earlier session, I commented that Revelation is like the train station where all of the trains, especially the OT prophecies, come in to their final destination. This is consistent with the view that most of the Messianic kingdom information is already provided in the OT but neither the duration nor the order of the kingdom was defined.

Let's look at some OT passages that illustrate this point:

VI. Characteristics Described in the Old Testament

1. Ps. 15:1-5
This passage describes the righteousness that will characterize a kingdom citizen.
2. Ps 24:3-6
This passage describes a person who will be in a right relationship with God.
3. Isa. 2:2-4
This passage describes the characteristic of peace throughout the world. War will not be learned in the kingdom.
4. Isa. 11:6-9
World-wide peace will be extended to the animals.
Animals will become vegetarians which indicates a return to the Edenic state.

5. Isa. 65:17-25

joy, no more weeping nor crying, no infant living but a few days,
build and inhabit houses, plant vineyards and eat the fruit
days of the people like the days of a tree
enjoy the work of their hands (not labor in vain)
quick answers to prayer
peace among animals
animals will be vegetarians
What does this tell you about nature? _____

Note: In this passage, new heavens and new earth are not a reference to the eternal order but to the Messianic kingdom (not Rev. 21-22 – a brand New Order). The Messianic kingdom is a remaking, renovation of the present order.

This indicates a continuation of many things.

Note also that all natural men, both Jews and Gentiles will be believers when the Millennium begins. (Judgment of sheep and goats (living nations/Gentiles) will eliminate non-believers.

All remaining Jews will be saved just before the Second Coming.

But, natural children born during the Millennium will still have the old nature and the potential to sin.

However, Satan will not be around to tempt a person.

But, the sin nature is still capable of rebelling against God apart from Satan's activity.

So, will people rebel against God during the Millennium? _____

See Rev. 20:7-9, Gog and Magog Part II (in this book) for the disturbing answer.

Where will the hoards (as sand of the sea) come from?

6. Mic. 4:1-5 Justice will be a prominent feature during the Millennium.

Why will there be a need for judging between people during the Millennium? _____

VII. The Government of the Millennium:

1. The King –

Ps. 2:6-8 Jesus will be the absolute monarch of the kingdom.
See also Isa. 9:6-7; Isa. 16:5 – the house of David

Jer. 23:5-6; 33:14-17 – Jehovah, our righteousness;
Zech. 14:9 – His throne will extend over the whole earth.

Lk. 1:30-33 – Son of the Highest, reign forever

2. Jews

David – Jer. 30:9 “...and David their king whom I will raise up
for them.”

Ezk. 34:23-24 – shepherd, prince

Ezk. 37:24-25 one king over them indicates that the northern and
southern kingdoms have been reunited.

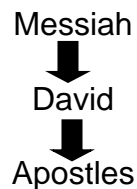
“David shall be their prince forever.”

David will be directly under the Messiah, having authority over all
Israel.

These passages refer to David (not symbolic of the Messiah.)
Some symbolic phrases used for the Messiah are Root of Jesse,
Branch of David, Seed of David, Son of David

Apostles – Mt. 19:28 “...You also shall sit upon twelve thrones,
judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Lk. 22:28-30 – I bestow upon you a Kingdom, judging the twelve
tribes of Israel



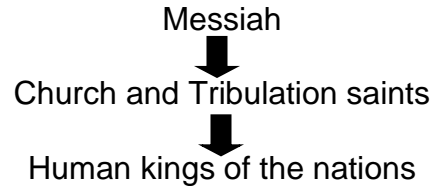
3. Gentiles

Rev. 20:4-6 2 groups: (1) those on thrones
(2) Tribulation martyrs (those who didn't
worship the beast)

Martyrs – co-reign with Jesus for 1000 years

These will be Jesus' representative authorities and will carry
out His decrees to the nations.

The different Gentile nations will have kings reigning over
them (Dan 7:18,22,27). These kings will have their natural bodies.



This is the conclusion of the 1st resurrection.

VIII. What will it be like during the millennium?

It will literally be heaven on earth, Eden revisited.

Following are a few of the passages that describe the time of the Millennium:

1. Peace – There will be no war. Isa. 2:4
2. Joy – Isa. 9:3-4
3. Justice – Isa. 9:7; 11:3-5
4. Full knowledge of the Lord's ways – Isa. 11:1, 2
5. No sickness, disease or deformity – Isa. 29:18
6. Prosperity – Isa. 35:1-2
7. Holy – Isa. 35:2,8
8. Glory – Isa. 35:2; 40:5
9. All nations will worship God – Isa. 45:23
10. The presence of God – Ezk. 37:27-28

Obviously, there are a multitude of additional Scriptures that could be applied to the time of the Millennium. These few are provided to whet your appetite for more.

A review of the passages above reveals that this will be an incredible time to be alive on the face of the earth.

No wars means no fighting or killing, nations at peace with one another. No need to spend billions of dollars on armies and armaments. No nuclear warheads with the capability of circling the globe. "Weapons will be beaten into plowshares." (Isa. 2:4)

No sicknesses means there will be no need for medical facilities. People will not get sick. No bugs, no flu, no shots, no AIDs, no allergies, no acid reflux, no measles or chickenpox, none of the diseases that afflict man during the present days.

People will live long, long lives (hundreds of years). Those who die and only reach the age of 100 will have been said to have died prematurely.

Worship of God by all inhabitants of the earth will center in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. (see Ezk. 40-48 for a description of this temple.)

Sacrifices will be offered in the temple. But these are not for the forgiveness of sins, nor a re-institution of the Law of Moses. They will remind people of the terribleness of sin and the horrible death our Savior died for us. They will likely be for ritual purification.

During the Millennium, our holy God will be dwelling in the midst of His people who have glorified bodies. However, God's people will also be dwelling with sinful people living in natural, un-glorified bodies. These sacrifices will prevent these worshipers from defiling God's temple when they come to worship Him.

This new "golden age" seems like the perfect ending for God's story of redemption. However, there is one last surprising twist to the final chapters in God's story of redemption. We'll see it in chapter 18 of this workbook.

Note: A chart is provided at the end of this chapter to provide a "snapshot" of the Millennium (Messianic) Kingdom.

Review Questions:

1. Describe the 3 prominent Millennium viewpoints:

- A. Amillennium - _____

- B. Post-millennium - _____

- C. Pre-millennium - _____

2. Describe 7 of the conditions on earth during the Millennium:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

- E. _____
- F. _____
- G. _____

MILLENNIAL VIEWS

Premillennialism

PrT – Pre-tribulation
 MT – Mid-tribulation
 PT – Post Tribulation



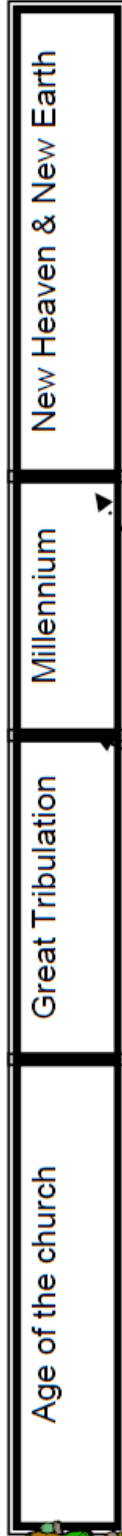
Rapture
PrT!

MT!

2nd Coming
PT!



Great white
throne judgment



Christ returns to the earth
before a literal millennium.

Armageddon /
Gog and
Magog

Amillennialism



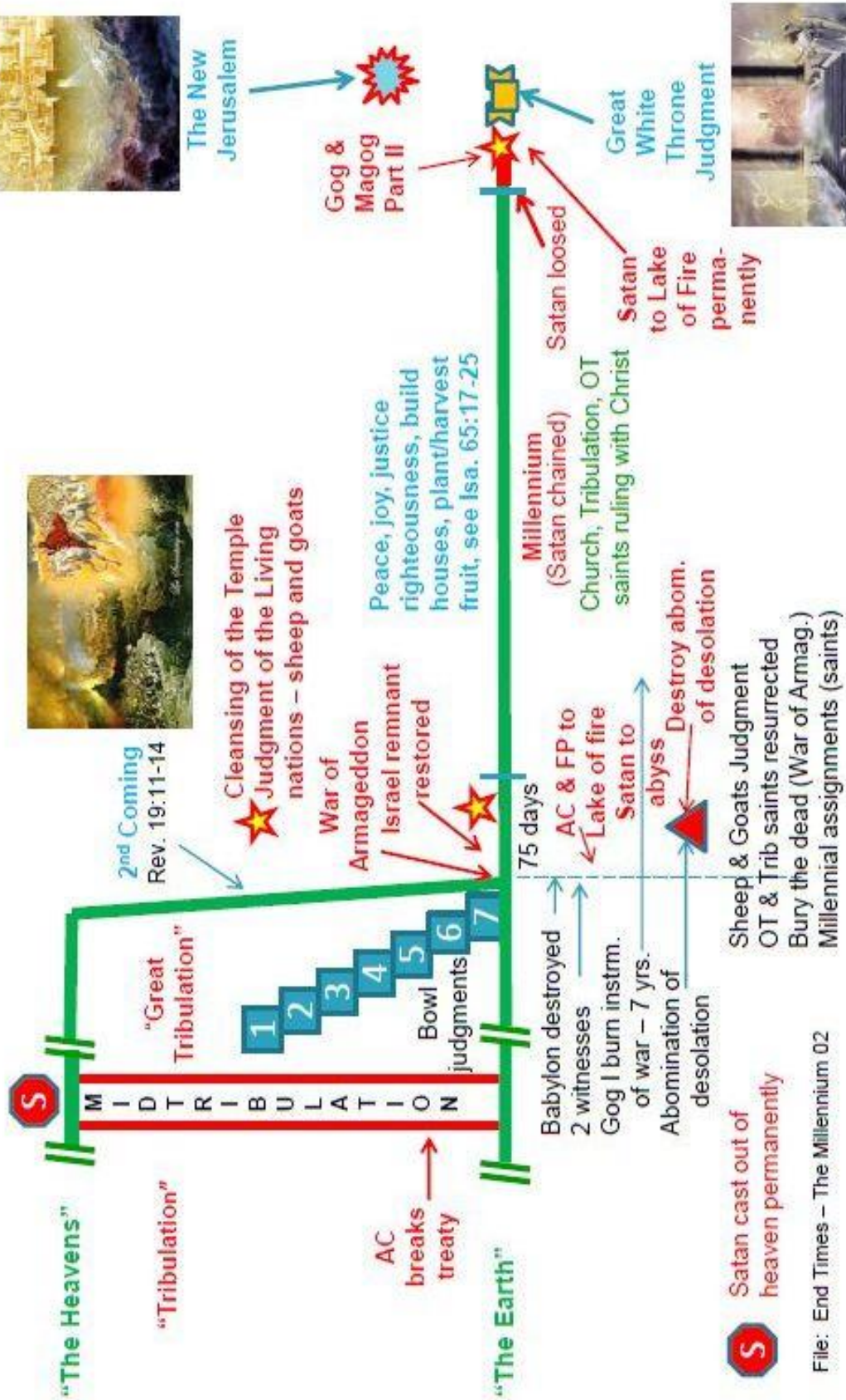
There will be no literal millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Postmillennialism



2nd Coming – Christ comes to
take His people into eternity.

Snapshot in Time With a Focus On: The Millennium (Messianic Kingdom)



Chapter 18: The Brief Return of Satan / Gog and Magog – Part II

One of the most stunning gaps in the history of time is the gap between Rev. 20:6 and Rev. 20:7.

Rev. 20:6 closes an epoch of time with blessing to those who share in the first resurrection. They will be priests of God and reign with Christ for 1000 years. This is certainly a time of peace and blessing.

And suddenly the thousand years of Satan's imprisonment are ended and he will be released.

Satan immediately goes out to gather the nations to attack the holy city. He has just suffered the longest prison sentence in history and he wants revenge.

In his rage, he goes throughout the earth gathering the hordes from Gog and Magog, symbolic of the hordes of evil from the four corners of the earth and that band together to fight against Christ. He hasn't changed one iota.

And even though he has gathered a numberless army for the battle, the battle is over in an instant. Fire comes down from heaven and devours them. (Rev. 20:9) No soldiers of the Lord even pull a sword or place an arrow on their bow. The defeat is decisive. Only Satan is left alive.

The devil is now cast into the lake of fire where he, the Antichrist and the False Prophet (unholy trinity) are to be tormented forever.

The big question is: "Why?"

Why will God allow this to happen? Why will God release Satan from the bottomless pit only to cast him into the fire? Why doesn't He just send him to the fire in the first place?

Part of the answer is found in reviewing what has just happened. It is this:

Satan has been in prison for 1000 years. And his character has not been reformed by this lengthy prison sentence.

On the earth, the ideal kingdom is ruled by Christ himself.

Here are ideal conditions on the earth for 1000 years, and still, at the end of this time, a numberless horde of persons are found in which their hearts have not been changed. And, even though Christ has been ruling on the earth with his saints for 1000 years, they have not embraced His rule. These people are willing to subject themselves to the rule of Satan.

Satan, who is the personification of evil, has no difficulty in drawing a numberless army to himself.

This confirms the Scriptural assessment of the human heart, that it is desperately wicked and this incurably so. We find once again that man is sinful both by nature and by practice. Man, apart from God's grace and mercy, will always fall away.

During the 1000 years of Christ's millennial reign, people will be born who haven't yet been glorified in Christ. They will still have sinful natures. Satan and his minions will not be around to tempt them.

But, in spite of the ideal conditions of the Millennium, numerous people (judging from the size of Satan's gathered army) will still reject the Lord.

There will be people born during the millennium that will not repent and turn to Jesus for salvation.

The actions of these "unbelievers" in joining with Satan to fight against Christ and His kingdom, prove without a shadow of a doubt, that people are sinful by nature and lost without the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

The Millennial kingdom, without the temptations of Satan and his hordes, is God's final test of fallen humanity under the most ideal of conditions. Mankind fails in this final test.

This test shows decisively and conclusively that the heart of man is totally depraved, that Christ had to pay the ultimate penalty for us to be forgiven and redeemed, and that man needs a righteousness outside of himself to live in a relationship with a holy God.

A side note: The army of Satan gathered is referred to as Gog and Magog. This is not to be confused with the army of Gog and Magog in Ezk. 38 and 39.

To explain:

Note the differences in how the 2 armies of Gog and Magog are defeated. In Ezk. 38 and 39, God sends a great earthquake, He calls for a sword such that those in the army fight against each other, He sends pestilence and bloodshed and He rains down on them fire, brimstone and hail weighing as much as 75 pounds.

In Rev. 20:9, fire simply comes down from heaven and devours them.

These are two separate battles.

A further explanation is that, although Gog and Magog are thoroughly defeated in Ezk. 38 and 39, the 1000 year (millennium) gives time for Gog and Magog to regenerate.

Also, it was shown in chapter 12 of this workbook, that the Ezk. 38 and 39 battle of Gog and Magog occurred during the Tribulation before the Millennium. This “non-battle” occurs at the end of the millennium.

A final comment on this Gog and Magog: Here we see a stunning use of those that are totally wicked to glorify the one, true God. God can and does use those He chooses for His purposes. Even those who are desperately wicked can be used of God for His purposes. (see the account of Pharaoh in Egypt)

Review Questions:

1. Why will God put Satan in prison for 1000 years instead of sending him directly to the lake of fire? _____

2. Will his lengthy prison sentence do a work of repentance within him? _____
3. What will Satan do immediately upon being released from his prison?

4. What is God showing us by allowing Satan one last opportunity on the earth?

5. Explain the difference between the Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39 and the Gog and Magog in Rev. 20. _____

Chapter 19: The Judgment and Restoration of the Jews

We have been reviewing the judgments that occur during the End Times:

First: There is the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ which we discussed in chapter #6. This is the judgment of the Raptured saints for rewards. It is not for salvation since this issue was settled with the Rapture. This is the church, the bride of Christ.

Second: The Judgment of the Living Nations: also known as the “Sheep and Goats” or “Surviving Gentile” nations since the Hebrew word goyim is used (Joel 3:1-3) and Greek ethnos. (Mt. 25:31-46)

We talked about this in chapter # 16. In this judgment, the Gentiles that survive the Tribulation are judged during the 75-day period after the War of Armageddon. This is a destiny judgment with the sheep, the ones being sympathetic towards the Jews during the Tribulation, being awarded a place in the kingdom and the goats who did not help the Jews during the Tribulation (also known as “The Time of Jacob’s Trouble” – Jer. 30:7). The “goats” are immediately consigned to the lake of fire.

Now we come to the Third Judgment:

The Judgment and Restoration of the Jews

In I Cor. 10:32, Paul refers to 3 different groups of people in the world: Jews, Greeks (Gentiles) and the church of God.

The **Church** of God will have been judged at the Rapture. (At the Rapture, we will have been judged to receive the kingdom and will be transported there.) This will be followed immediately by the Bema.

The **Gentiles**, those who have survived the Tribulation, are judged during the 75-day period Judgment of the Living Nations.

The judging and punishment of the **Jews** will occur during the closing stages of the Great Tribulation. In this judgment, God will use the Gentiles as His arm of justice. When this judgment is complete, God will intervene directly in bringing judgment and punishment upon the Gentiles.

Jer. 30:3-9

From this passage we see four events that are prophesied by Jeremiah:

1. Israel will return to their land. (v.3)
2. There will be a time of great distress for Israel, unlike anything they’ve ever experienced (the time of Jacob’s trouble – the Great Tribulation). (vv. 5-7)
3. God, Himself, shall intervene on Israel’s behalf. (v. 8)

4. the kingdom of Israel will be restored to David. (v.9)

This period of the restored kingdom will be the Millennium.

Zechariah describes the final attempt of the Gentile nations to destroy Israel:

Zech. 12:3

“And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples: all who would heave it away shall surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.”

This is what all nations will want to do with Israel, but it won't happen.

An important lesson: It's not wise to mess with God's people.

Zech. 14:2-4 The prophetic vision is continued:

“For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken. The houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the mountain shall be split in two...”

Here again we see the beginning of the war of Armageddon with the Gentile nations gathered against Israel but God intervening on their behalf which culminates in Jesus' 2nd coming to the very place where He left.

As a result of this final period of distress, the rebellious elements in the nation will be purged. Those who survive will be ready and eager to be reconciled to God through repentance and humility. They will cry out to God in their distress...much like we see in many of the “crying out” Psalms.

Ezk. 20:37-38 describes the final purging process:

“I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me. I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel.”

“pass under the rod” is a shepherd's term when sheep are returning to the fold

As a result of this cleansing/purging action, those who are left will be brought into a covenant relationship in Jesus Christ.

Zech. 13:8-9 also describes this purging:

“And it shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord, that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them (*NOTE: the purging process removes the undesirable elements*) as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, this is My people; and each one will say, the Lord is my God.”

Zech. 12:9-10 “It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on **Me whom they pierced**. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”

Israel, finally, will acknowledge their great error and, through their repentance and mourning, will be reconciled to their God whom they had rejected.

This is a key event in the End Times plan of God: The restoration of the Jews.

This then is the key basis for Jesus’ return.

Mt. 23:39 “for I say to you, you shall see me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (This is the Hebrew statement of affirmation regarding the Messiah.) Recall the shouts of the people at Jesus’ triumphal entry.

Rom. 11:26-27 “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”

After Israel has passed through the judgment fires of the Great Tribulation and been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, there will be no need for God to judge them further.

As a result, when Christ sets up His throne, He will only need to judge the Gentiles remaining alive on the earth after the Great Tribulation (sheep and goats).

Chapter 20: The Great White Throne Judgment (for destiny) “You Don’t Want to be There”

We now come to the Fourth and final Judgment:

The Great White Throne Judgment

Rev. 20:11-15

At the close of the Millennium, Satan will be released and will mount one last attempt to destroy the Jews. (Rev 20:7-9).

His attempt will fail completely.

He will be cast into the lake of fire. (v.10)

Finally, God will judge the dead of all previous ages who have not yet been resurrected. These are all unbelievers. This final judgment is described in Rev. 20:11-15.

The court room itself is the throne of God. It’s called great (Greek – megas) because it is absolutely the highest throne of judgment in the universe.

It is totally awesome. Rev. 20:11 says that both the earth and the heaven fled away from the throne because there was no place for them (see Rev. 21:1 “had passed away”).

It is called white because it is absolutely pure and holy and righteous. Every judgment handed down will be in perfect justice, absolutely right and absolutely true. This is truly the “Supreme Court of heaven.” Jesus is the judge. Jn. 5:22 reminds us that the Father has given all judgment to the Son. See also II Tim. 4:1 which tells us that it will be Jesus who will judge the living and the dead. Those who have rejected Him will be judged by Him. And, at this point in time, there will be no opportunity to alter the impending judgment that will be handed down.

The defendants are the dead, both small and great. (Rev. 20:12) The context makes it clear that these are those who died without saving faith in Christ because they are being judged by their works. No one will escape. All will be judged.

There are 2 criteria:

1. “books” recording their works; and
2. the Book of Life.

The “books” contain an accurate account of the works of every unsaved person. All will be judged according to their deeds.

If a person’s name is not found in the Book of Life, they will be thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:15)

Note: The purpose of this judgment is not for rewards but for eternal destiny.

Jesus will pronounce the verdict and the sentence will be handed down and carried out immediately. There is no place in heaven for those who have rejected Christ's saving works. This is absolutely, without any comparison, the worst sentence that can ever be given to a person. The sentence is irrevocable and there is no possibility of a reprieve, a pardon or that the sentence will be revoked. There will be no "time off for good behavior." The judgment pronounced will stand for eternity.

We may think this unjust, but, the penalty for sin, rebellion against a holy, great, infinite, all-wise, loving God who is the Creator of all that is, must be paid.

Each person must either accept the pardon provided by Christ or pay the debt themselves. But, accepting the pardon provided by Jesus can only be done before one dies and leaves this life. Once a person physically dies on the earth, at that point, their eternal destiny will have been decided. There are no more opportunities to receive Christ's free offer of salvation.

The prison:

1. Hell (Abaddon, the pit, the unrighteous compartment of Sheol) is a real place. Ps. 55:15 indicates that David had some knowledge of there being a hell.
2. The rich man and Lazarus Lk. 16:19-31

In this historical account (not an allegory), the rich man knew (physical awareness) where he was. He had physical senses that burned with thirst. (He had great pain.) He had memory of his family and desire that they should not experience the same fate. He had cognitive abilities. (He remembered Lazarus.) He had emotional feelings. (He experienced regret.)

Let me pull these descriptors out of the text so you can see them more clearly:

- physical awareness
- experienced great pain
- memory
- desire
- cognitive abilities
- emotional feelings

Additionally, it is a place where its inhabitants do not want others to come. The rich man did not want his brothers to come where he was.

Strangely enough, he showed compassion. He was willing to never see his brothers again if it meant sparing them from the same agony of consignment he had received.

3. Jesus spoke about hell during his ministry on earth. He always referred to it as a very real place that real people could be cast into. Mt. 5:22, 18:8-9; Lk. 12:5

Hell is a place of torment, a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth, a place where the worm (maggots) never die and the fire is not quenched. (Mt. 13:41-42; Mk 9:43-48).

“...but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” (Lk. 3:17b)

In this figure of speech used in the gospels, wheat represented the righteous and chaff the ungodly, those who had rejected Christ.

4. Hell is the place God has prepared for Satan and his angels. Those in hell will find themselves in the company of demons.

All prisons on earth pale in comparison with the eternal prison described in God’s Word.

Note: There are no alternatives...it is either heaven or hell.

5. It is sometimes referred to as “outer darkness.” Mt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30

I believe this darkness will be something like the judgment darkness on Egypt (9th plague - Ex. 10:21-23).

This account tells us that:

- It was a thick darkness that could be felt.
- They could not see one another.
- It was so dark that no one rose from their place for 3 days.

II Pet. 2:4 refers to the angels that sinned and were cast into hell and delivered them into chains of darkness.

Jude 6 says “everlasting chains, under darkness”

Rev. 16:10 says: “Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast and his kingdom became full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.” Though this is an event that will happen on earth, it suggests that the darkness is not just the absence of light but that there may be pain associated with it. But the pain could also be due to the 1st & 4th bowl judgments (see v.11).

6. And...we have to say that hell is just. Jesus did all that could be done to provide a way of escape from hell. He was the only One who could do it. No other faiths work because no one else has or ever could pay the penalty for the sins of mankind.

The world had sinned against God and so any redemption that could be achieved had to include the sins of the entire world for all time. And only an infinite God (Jesus) could atone for the sins of all mankind.

It is not up to man to choose which way he will get to heaven because there is only one way to take away sins against a holy God. And that is by the death and resurrection of Jesus. He suffered immensely so that we would not have to go to a devil's hell.

7. We earn what we get Rom. 6:23 says that "the wages of sin is death."

Wages are what we get for the work that we do. Therefore, if a person doesn't avail themselves of the redeeming work of Christ, their works earn them eternal punishment.

Note: In our society, there are some that joke about hell and describe it as a place where they will get together with their buddies, drink beer and reminisce about the good times they had on earth. This lie of the devil has been fabricated to persuade people that they don't need to be concerned about this crucial issue of eternal life.

This is so far from the truth.

In fact, it is a lie that the devil has generated so people will not grasp the seriousness of their sin and the utter terror of spending an eternity in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels.

The Good News:

Hell does not have to be your destiny.

Jesus has paid the price for our sin and redeemed us to God by his sacrificial death on the cross.

It remains for us to choose. And that choice is to repent of our sin (which created our demise in the first place), turn to God in faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus, our Redeemer, and live for Him.

Faith in the blood of Jesus excuses us from the terror and agony of the "Great White Throne Judgment." His blood delivers us from the wrath of God.

As a recap, we have discussed the judgments that occur during the End Times:

First: the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ which we discussed in chapter # 6. This is the judgment of the Raptured saints for rewards. It is not for salvation since this issue was settled with the Rapture. This is the church, the bride of Christ.

Second: The Judgment of the Living Nations which we discussed in chapter # 16. This is also known as the “Sheep and Goats” or “Surviving Gentile” nations.

Third: The Judgment and Restoration of the Jews which we discussed in chapter # 19. The judging, punishment and restoration of the **Jews** will have occurred during the closing stages of the Great Tribulation.

Fourth: The Great White Throne Judgment which we discussed in this chapter. This will be to judge the dead of all previous ages who have not yet been resurrected. These are all unbelievers. This final judgment is described in Rev. 20:11-15.

Review Questions:

1. What is the Great White Throne Judgment? _____

2. Who is the judge? _____
3. What are the judgment criteria? _____
4. Why is “hell” necessary? _____
5. Name 5 characteristics of hell: _____

6. Why did Jesus have to die? _____
7. Are there any other ways to atone for man’s sin? _____

Chapter 21: The New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem “Our Permanent, Heavenly Home”

At times, becoming more frequently as of late, I feel a longing for my true and permanent home, heaven. As the old song goes: “This world is not my home. I’m just a passing through. If heaven’s not my home, then Lord, What will I do?”

I look forward to the Rapture because it is then that I will get to see my Savior and be transported to my true home. It is during the Rapture that I will be changed and made new and receive my glorified body.

Why do I look forward to heaven? This final chapter has been prepared to answer this question.

We look to Revelation, chapters 21 and 22 for our answer.

After the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20, and death and hades are cast into the lake of fire, we read: “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth.” (Rev 21:1a)

The old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. The sea was gone. Next we see the holy city, the New Jerusalem coming down from God like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. (Rev 21:1-2)

And now comes the best part: “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.” (Rev 21:3)

A pretty good start, wouldn’t you say?

Next, God says that He is making all things new. All the old stuff will be gone. (Rev. 21:5)

Further, all who are victorious will inherit these things. This tells me that I need to persevere to the end.

From these chapters, we discover several key things about our new eternal state:

1. The present earth and heaven that we know will be done away. (cremated)

See Ps. 102:25-26; Isa. 34:4, 51:6; Mt. 24:35; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 21:1

This means that there will be a destruction of the old and a creation of the new.

The first heaven and earth will be replaced with the new.

2. There will be a New Jerusalem.
3. God Himself will be in the middle of His people. (What He has been working towards all this time – God with His people in His place.)
4. There will be no more:
 - sea
 - death
 - tears, mourning and crying
 - pain
 - thirst
 - wickedness or anything that defiles (because all evil will be banished) see Rev. 21:8, 27
 - temple – because God will be in our midst
 - night – because the glory of God will shine upon and around us Rev. 21:23-25
 - The gates will never be closed. Rev. 21: 25
 - There will be no more curse because Christ's death has removed it. Rev. 22:3
5. From Rev. 21:8: no more cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, liars (They will all have their place in the lake of fire.)

Now, based upon this information, let's expand our "no more" list:

No more abortions, sickness, funeral homes, wars, doctors, nurses, shots, diseases, AIDs, operations,

No more pornography, teen suicides, cancer, rape, missing children, drug problems, no drive-by shootings,

No jails, no lethal injections, no murders, no crimes,

No race issues, no national prejudices, no political maneuverings,

No financial problems, no lack of jobs, no poverty

No false doctrines, false teachers, cults, preferential treatment based on race, creed or color,

No temptations (remember, the devil is locked up for eternity), no spiritual warfare

No state and government taxes, mortgage payments, home taxes, home repair bills,

No political parties

No rust, termites, weeds, thorns or thistles,

No TVs, TV commercials, sitcoms, reality shows, violence, seductive advertising,

No weapons of warfare, ICBMs, guns, killings, threats of nuclear warfare.

I think each of us could develop our own “no more” lists based upon our own earthly experiences.

In the words of our society, “It will be a new ball game.”

The New Jerusalem:

As John is completing his “no more” list, an angel comes to him and offers to show him the Lamb’s bride. How could he refuse such an offer, the most beautiful bride of all time?

He is taken to a high mountain where he sees the New Jerusalem descending from heaven. The city is a cube, 1500 miles in each direction. It rises 1500 miles in addition to its 1500 X 1500 mile cross-sectional area.

This will be the dwelling place of God on earth.

The main feature of the city is that God and the Lamb are its temple, its light, its glory. (There is no longer a need for the sun or moon to shine.)

The wall surrounding the city is 144 cubits thick. Assuming a cubit is 18 inches, the wall is therefore, 216 feet thick. (more than 2/3 the length of a football field)

The wall is made of jasper, the city of pure gold like clear glass. (Rev 21:18)

Each of the 12 gates consists of a single pearl. The gates remain open all the time. (Rev 21:25) The street is transparent, pure gold.

A river runs down the street from the throne of God. Rev 22:1 (see also Ps. 46:4)

The tree of life will now be available to all.

This is our future home. What an amazing thought. All that is good and perfect, flowing from the throne of God, will be ours.

Heb. 12:22-24 takes us past the veil of the temporary world into the future:

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church

of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks of better things than that of Abel.”

What a glorious future awaits those who walk by faith and persevere to the end.

It will be worth whatever price you may pay.

Final instructions:

When Jesus gave his Olivet discourse in Matthew 24 and 25, toward the end of chapter 24 and bridging into chapter 25, he gave his disciples 2 parables. The main teachings from these parables were that they should be prepared and be watchful.

As the Revelation is closing (Rev 22), 3 times the proclamation comes: “Behold I am coming quickly.”

Today, as we are now in the last days of the Times of the Gentiles, Jesus is coming soon for His bride, very soon.

Our responsibility: Be prepared, be ready, be watchful.

Review Questions:

1. Identify 3 key issues regarding our “new eternal state.”

2. List 10 “no mores” of things that will not be seen nor exist in the New Jerusalem.

3. How big is the New Jerusalem? _____

4. Where does the light for the city come from? _____

5. What will be the predominant “precious metal” in the New Jerusalem? _____

6. Who are the ones who will inherit the amazing, glorious, unparalleled, blessing of living in the New Jerusalem? _____

7. What should we do to be ready for “His coming”? _____

Chapter 22: An Introduction to Parables

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief introduction to the subject of parables.

- Outline:
1. Introduction
 2. Parables: What are they?
 3. Guidelines for interpreting parables
 4. A chart comparing parables and allegories

I. Introduction:

God's amazing book, the Bible, is unlike any other book you will ever read. A corollary: You can't approach or read the Bible in the same way that you would read any other book.

It is a history lesson of the ages, a book of wisdom, a collection of songs for praise and worship.

It contains numerous passages (more than 25%) which accurately foretell historical events before they occur. It contains narratives which include hero stories, adventure stories, origin accounts, love stories, stories of treachery and deceit.

And these are only a few of the many varieties of literary styles (genres) that are included within the Bible's more than 2000 pages.

Some have categorized these literary styles into 10-12 major styles (e.g. narrative, poetry, wisdom) with sub-categories numbering in the hundreds.

It is, therefore, no mystery when I say that some beginning instruction into these literary styles will help us to understand the author's meaning and thereby be enabled to accurately apply its teaching to our own lives.

One of these literary styles, the parable, which was used by Jesus but certainly no mystery to the people of His time, is the subject of this brief introductory chapter.

II. Parables – What are they?

There are two principle words in scripture for the parable:

Old Testament – *mashal*

New Testament - *parabole*

These two words encompass a large range of literary types.

They can refer to a proverb, a satire, a riddle, a figure of speech and a story (e.g. Good Samaritan) or example parable (kingdom of God is like).

There are several kinds of parables:

A parable can be:

- (1) a true-to-life story designed to teach a truth or answer a question.

It contains elements which make it life-like but have no particular application in the teaching. The details are there to make the story e.g. the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37): 2 denarii are paid to the inn-keeper but there is no special significance to the number 2. It is there to make the story more life-like (a denarii was a day's wage in that culture). Note that other details of this story, e.g. 2 robbers, the inn, etc. are not pertinent to the story's teaching but provide a life-like quality.

- (2) A parable can be a comparison between two things that are different.

Something is likened to something that it is not.

“the kingdom of heaven **is like...**” (simile) see examples in Matthew 13

Note: The kingdom of heaven is not literally a treasure buried in the field (Mt 13:44). However, it is a spiritual reality.

- (3) A third parable form is a fictional literary form.

The picture does not describe a real event. It is a fictional creation which came from the mind of its author, in our case, Jesus.

It is not to be confused with a historical narrative which is a real life event. This confusion occurs upon occasion due to the real-life quality of the parable.

In parables we sometimes find unusual exaggerations. (hyperbole – exaggeration for effect)

e.g. “the servant who owed 10,000 talents” (Mt. 18:24)

(Herod's annual income was 900 talents). In this case, the 10,000 talents represents a huge amount.

From this parable, we also see that some parables have details that are not designed to be technically precise.

Another feature about parables:

A parable is designed to obscure the truth from the unresponsive, while making it plain to the responsive.

Why would Jesus want to hide his truth from certain persons?

Mt.13:10ff provides an answer to this question:

- Their hearts have grown dull;
- Their ears can barely hear;
- They have closed their eyes.

These comments by Jesus refer to their capacity to receive spiritual truth.

These people are like the ones described by Paul in the 2nd half of Romans 1 who say no to God. Each time they say no they harden their hearts making it increasingly difficult to perceive the truth. (Note that this passage also tells us that God Himself hardens their hearts 3 times. He gave them up to their choices). In essence, they are receiving in themselves the natural consequences of rejecting God – no light in the darkness of their souls.

III. Guidelines for Interpreting Parables:

1. Determine the kind of parable (see above)
2. Begin with the immediate context. (Use prodigal son story)

Two crucial elements can be discovered in the context:

- a. Look for the explanation of its meaning (Lk. 18:1-8)
- b. Look for the occasion for telling the story (a clear historical occasion)

Prodigal son: (Lk. 15:1-3, 11-32) Jesus speaking to religious people who clearly objected to his ready acceptance of sinful people. This man receives and eats with sinners (v.2).

Note the difference between the reason for teaching the parable and the teachings within the parable.

Lk. 15:11-32: Trace the conversation: “so...or...and...”

This is a continuing conversation with the same audience. (Lk. 15:1-3)

Jesus is speaking to them in parables.

The point of the story is the contrast between the older brother and the loving, forgiving father as represented by Jesus Himself.

The point of the story is not the loving father receiving back his lost son, (although this is an important truth contained within the story). If this were the point, the story would have ended after the father received him back. But it has not yet reached its climax and the purpose for the story.

Clue: The older brother grumbled and complained. Who were the ones with Jesus who grumbled and complained? (v.2)

See also “The Good Samaritan” (Lk. 10: 25-37). The context is the question posed to Jesus: “Who is my neighbor?” (v.29) This is the purpose of the story. Note: Jesus’ final response to the inquirer: “Go and do likewise.”

Did Jesus answer his question? _____

What was the answer? _____

3. Look for the one basic point of comparison between the picture and the reality to which it corresponds.

The danger of a parable is to read too much into the specific details of the parable searching for hidden meanings.

e.g. “the prodigal son” – the point is, the Pharisees and Scribes **were complaining** because Jesus was eating with sinners. This point is reflected in the older brother who **was complaining** because his father celebrated over his younger brother’s return.

e.g. the treasure hidden in the field (Mt.13:44)

The point of comparison is the kingdom of God to the treasure in the field:
the great value of the kingdom of God.

4. Identify the relevant details

Those details that are intended to teach some truth and therefore, may legitimately be interpreted and applied.

The prodigal son:

That the father ran to meet the son is a relevant detail and has spiritual significance.

How do we know? It reinforces the key theme which is to reveal the heart of the father.

5. Identify irrelevant details

Parables contain details that are not intended to teach truth at all. They are usually inserted to make the story realistic.

Lk. 11: 5-13 The persistent friend at midnight

Context: a lesson on persistent prayer

Irrelevant details: midnight, 3 loaves, for a friend on a journey

Jesus' point: Be persistent in asking.

Lk. 17:7-9 The servant plowing or keeping sheep

Jesus constructed a story that was true to the life of their times.

Irrelevant details: plowing, keeping sheep, preparing supper

Jesus' point: We should not expect credit for doing the right thing.

The irrelevant details of the parable should be set aside. They could have been doing any number of things...digging a well, herding cattle, etc.

6. In a parable, we must limit ourselves to the information provided in the parable. Idle speculation is only idle speculation.

e.g. with the prodigal son, we can't ask: "How did the older son respond to his father's appeal? Or did he then join the celebration?"

or: "How was it that the father saw the son while he was at a distance?"

The father saw the son because Jesus wanted him to.

7. Don't try to allegorize (ascribe hidden meanings) to the various points of the parable.

Let's use the parable of the good Samaritan as an example (Lk. 10:25-37).

An early church father came up with this interpretation: Every detail was ascribed a literal meaning: Paul was the good Samaritan, the thieves were demons, the inn was the church, the 2 denarii represented the two sacraments, etc.

However, the context clearly calls for an understanding of human nature. ("Who is my neighbor?") Ascribing hidden meanings is not sound Biblical interpretation.

8. Arriving at the main point:

This is based upon what is called "the rule of end stress."

A good story teller starts slowly, builds up and draws peoples' attention to the conclusion of the story.

- A. Focus on the main characters.
- B. Identify what happens at the end of the story.

Mt. 20:1-16 "The workers in the vineyard"

Jesus ended the story with the grumbling of the first hour workers. (This would be representative of the Jews who were the first to be invited into God's kingdom. The Master of the house is God.)

The point of this parable: the unwillingness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law to accept God's gracious offer of salvation to those who came later, i.e. the Gentiles.

- C. What occurs in conversations.

Prodigal son: At the end, there is an extensive conversation between the father and the older son.

Note that even though the younger son had given his rehearsed speech, the text provides no response of the father to the son's speech.

The focus of attention shifts quickly to the older son and provides the climax and reason for the story.

D. Who gets the most space?

Once you have evaluated the story, ask the question:

What are the implications of the story that are most relevant to us?

This should provide you with the application for the present-day reader.

e.g. The prodigal son: The emphasis (climax of the story) is not on the demonstration of God's love for the outcast (though that is an important truth within the narrative), but on the reaction of the older brother to such love.

The "prodigal son" story in Luke 15 must be interpreted in the light of his audience who had said: "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

9. Identify the catalyst for the decisive action of the story.

e.g. with the Prodigal son, his father's joyous celebration over the returning son was the catalyst for the **older brother's** complaining.

This connects him with the **Pharisees and Scribes** who were grumbling and complaining.

IV. A Comparison of Parables and Allegories

Parable	Allegory
1. Has one central point	1. can have more than one central point
2. teaches one truth	2. can teach a number of truths
3. every relevant detail reinforces the central theme or point of emphasis	3. The details may be varied or many, relating to more than one theme.
4. can have irrelevant details; all features of the parable don't have to be identified	4. can have irrelevant details; all features of the parable don't have to be identified
5. usually the story is separate from its interpretation and application	5. intertwines the story and its meaning
6. interpretation usually follows the parable	6. interpretation is found within the allegory

Chapter 23: Matthew 13

The Parables of the Kingdom – Part I

Background:

In Matthew 12, we see the 4th of Matthew's narrative passages. This chapter focused on conflicts Jesus encountered while ministering in public.

- the Sabbath controversy...Jesus' disciples were plucking and eating grain on the Sabbath.
- a demon possessed man is healed. The Pharisees take advantage of the opportunity to accuse him of being in league with Satan.
- Jesus wouldn't satisfy the Pharisees and Scribes' request for a sign even though He had just given them a sign of his power by healing the demon possessed man.
- his family came for him while he was in a house teaching. His response: "My family are those who do the will of my Father."

Chapter 13 begins: That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Great crowds came to him and he began to teach them, but with a wrinkle – he taught in parables. So we see continuous action from Ch-12 to 13.

Outline of Matthew 13:

This chapter consists of 2 sets of discourses, one to the crowds that had gathered about him by the sea. And, later, he leaves the crowds and went into a house where he spoke privately with his disciples. These teachings/parables are a continuous set of teachings given by Jesus, not a collection of isolated parables taught at different times. The combination of these 8 parables provides an important instruction from Jesus to his disciples (see Mt. 13:51-52). As such, we will need, after reviewing each of the parables, to evaluate the overall meaning of the 8 parables in this chapter.

An outline of the chapter is as follows:

A. Teaching the crowds:

1-2 The setting

3-9 the parable of the sower

10-17 Jesus explains why he was speaking in parables.

18-23 The parable of the sower is explained.

24-33 Three parables – wheat and tares, the mustard seed, leaven

34-35 a summary teaching about Jesus speaking only in parables (fulfilling Ps. 78:2)

B. Teaching his disciples:

36-43 Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and tares.

44-52 Four parables: the treasure hidden in the field, the pearl of great value
the net thrown into the sea, the master of the house

53-58 Jesus teaches in his home town; the people are astonished and then
offended.

Note from the chapter that the first four parables were spoken to the crowds with no explanations. In these four parables, Jesus spoke to them regarding human, earthly things that related to the present age.

The final four parables were spoken to his disciples. He explained two of the parables to them, the parables of the sower and the wheat and tares. These explanations become key for us as we seek to understand the teachings of the parables. These four parables spoke of Divine, spiritual things and discuss the kingdom of God which the unregenerated crowds were not prepared to receive or understand. The disciples were prepared to receive the deeper teachings because they had received Jesus as king. Note from v.10-11 that those who received him were given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.

Guidelines for Interpreting the Parables:

1. Simplicity of interpretation – The simplest interpretation is the most likely to be the true interpretation. Don't look for the hidden meanings. Don't assign meanings to details that are only provided to make the story more realistic. (Don't allegorize the parables.) Keep in mind the multitudes to whom they are addressed – mostly uneducated, common people.
2. Restrict the application of the verbal pictures Jesus provides to the limits that are clearly marked. (Don't add 21st century information or interpretation).
3. Maintain a consistent use of the figurative terms that are utilized. This will be especially important to us because Jesus explains 2 of the parables and specifically tells us what some of the symbols mean:

The sower – the Son of Man

An enemy – the devil

Seed (parable of the sower) – the Word (see the parallel accounts in Mk. 4:14
and Lk. 8:11B)

Parable of the wheat and tares:

- Good seeds (wheat) - the sons of the kingdom
- The tares/weeds (darnel) – the sons of the evil one
- The field – the world
- Reapers or servants – angels at the end of the age
- The harvest – the end of the age

Observation and Interpretation:

In this series of teachings, Jesus is giving his disciples some key instructions that will be helpful when they are carrying on His work after His ascension. He needed to know if they understood the things he had been doing and teaching. In vv. 51 he asks them: “Have you understood all these things?”

vv.1-2 These verses set the context of his initial teachings – great crowds, by the sea, the crowds standing on the beach.

vv.3-9, 18-23 the sower – one of two parables that Jesus would explain (18-23)

vv.3-9 focal points – the sower, the seed, the soil quality and the action following

The main focus of this parable is that Jesus spoke of the seed (the Word sown) and the effect of the soil on the seed. A main lesson of this parable has to do with the condition of the soil.

Now looking ahead to verses 18-23, explain the following (who or what are they)

1. a sower _____
2. the seed _____
3. the birds _____
4. the stony ground _____
5. the thorns _____
6. good ground _____

At this point, it is helpful to look at parallel accounts of this parable in Mk. 4:14 and Lk. 8:11B. In both of these accounts, the authors specifically tell us that the seed is the “word of God.”

What results from the seed being sown into the following conditions?

1. along the path _____

2. rocky ground _____
3. among thorns _____
4. good soil _____

So...we have the sower, the seed, the soil and the response of those who hear the Word of God. The focus of this parable is on the response of "those who hear the Word."

Note also that, in Mk. 4:13, Jesus says that understanding other parables is dependent upon understanding this one.

What is the meaning of this parable? _____

Why did Jesus tell this parable? _____

vv. 10-17 In this segment, Jesus explains why he was teaching in parables.

Why did he? (see the previous chapter in this workbook, "An Introduction to Parables".)

vv. 24-30, 36-43 The parable of the wheat and tares and it's explanation

What are the explanations for the symbols of 24-30 as provided in 36-43?

1. the sower _____
2. the field _____
3. the good seed _____
4. the tares (darnel) _____

(from theological dict. of the NT – darnel or false grain – tares, weeds)

Darnel (degenerate wheat, worthless to the one who sows it) is so much like wheat in the first stages of its growth that it is almost impossible, even for the local farmers, to distinguish it from wheat. The differences between the two will become clear as each grows towards maturity.

5. the enemy sowing the tares _____

Note the premeditated, destructive work of the enemy who creeps in by stealth at night. He is a trespasser having no rights or responsibilities for the field. It was his determination to do harm to the field.

6. the harvest _____

7. the reapers _____

Who is the owner of the field (symbolic)? _____

What is the picture presented here? _____

What instruction did the owner give to his servants regarding the darnel?

Why did he give this instruction? _____

What does this mean for the disciples? _____

for us _____

vv.31-32 Parable of the mustard seed

The mustard seed is a small seed that eventually grows to be larger than all other “plants” in the garden. The mustard seed is an herb and not a tree. It is not natural for it to grow so large that birds come and make their nests in its branches.

It is generally accepted that Jesus taught a “natural” growth of his kingdom by the Spirit. But, to date, we have yet to see the kingdom of God set up in its true perfection and zenith of its growth.

Growth of the church in this age is generally met with difficulty, opposition and a mixture. Separation of the foreign components is postponed until the end of the age.

If we maintain a consistency between the symbols utilized in previous parables, we would have to say that the birds represent those who do harm and not good.

This parable, therefore, presents a picture of unnatural growth.

Teachings of this parable:

1. In this age, there will be periods of unnatural growth and development of the kingdom. The most obvious example was the work of Constantine to forcefully make his subjects submit to the cross...he literally “Christianized” the nation. This was not a work of repentance and faith towards God but a political decree by a world ruler.

As a result of this action, we see the ecclesiastical order becoming ruled by unprincipled persons and not Spirit-led. Positions of importance in the church became “perks” in the natural political arena. This led to the period known as the “dark ages.”

The true, scriptural development of the church is by faith and repentance in lowliness and meekness of heart with all humility in the face of persecutions. Positions of authority in the church are positions of sober responsibility and are assigned by the Holy Spirit.

2. An alternate interpretation held by some:

The kingdom of God begins small. It grows slowly, sometimes unnoticed. It continues its growth and becomes larger than all of the other kingdoms.

vv.33 Parable of the leaven

Most Scriptures regard the use of leaven to be a symbol of evil, something undesirable.

Paul used the figure of leaven in a negative sense: "Your glorying is not good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven...wherefore, let us keep the feast not with the old leaven neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I Cor. 5:8

In Mt. 16:6 Jesus, in speaking to his disciples, warned them to "beware the leaven of the Pharisees."

In Lk. 12:1, Jesus tells his disciples to beware the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy.

However, there are some occasions where leaven is used in a positive sense:

- Lev. 7:13 The peace offering employed leavened bread.
- Lev. 23:17 The offering of the first fruits of the grain harvest consisted of two loaves baked with leaven (This was an occasion for rejoicing in God's provision.

So, what do we do?

Let's consider the context of the previous verses:

- In the first parable, 3 out of 4 of the seeds sown were non-productive.
- In the second parable, we saw the deliberate sowing of darnel, an unproductive seed.
- The third parable of the mustard seed showed an unnatural growth.

These three parables teach that the present age is not characterized by perfect and complete victory but by a mixture of good and evil. The mixture of the principles of good and evil are seen in communities and administrations throughout the present age.

A. a positive symbol:

Using the 1st guideline of simplicity (presented earlier in this chapter), we consider the simple, natural view of the physical properties of leaven.

If leaven is a positive symbol, then we have the image of the kingdom message and its effects that will start out small and gradually, unnoticed, will grow and spread until it permeates and is found in the entire world.

B. a negative symbol: In many biblical cases, leaven is considered something undesirable.

If this is true, then we have a picture of the mixture, and leaven is a symbol of that which the people of faith are to guard against. The things it stands for, hypocrisy, materialism and tolerating evil in the church, are the things which break up the church.

The church is weakened by hypocrisy which is profession without possession, rationalism which is the denial of the supernatural, materialism which adopts the world's materialistic views.

What we have here is a picture of the present evil age and not the final picture of the "kingdom age" which Jesus will bring at his Second Coming.

What then, is your interpretation of this parable?

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this section:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Chapter 24: Matthew 13

The Parables of the Kingdom – Part II

We now come to the second section of Jesus' parable teachings in Matthew 13, that which he gave to his disciples and not to the crowds. These teachings were for those who had received the king and their hearts were prepared to receive teachings about the kingdom of God. Those he had spoken to in the first 4 parables were likely interested or curious observers but not yet disciples.

vv. 34-35 A summary teaching as to why Jesus only spoke in parables at this time

According to these two verses, why did Jesus speak in parables?

vv. 44-46 The treasure hidden in the field and the merchant searching for fine pearls

These 2 parables are addressed together because of similarities in the parables.

One of the things to keep in mind as we continue this study is that Jesus often used the teaching technique of "repetition." And so it is also with these 2 parables. There is much in the way of repetition that Jesus wants us to learn.

In these 2 parables, the principle persons and the objects of value identified are different, but from that point on, there are several similarities in their responses:

1. They recognized the value of what they had found.
2. They determined to acquire the treasure apparently without concern over the cost.
3. They sold everything they possessed.
4. They purchased the object of great value. In one case, the field containing the object was purchased giving the new owner the rights to that which might be found in the field.

In the second case, the object of great value itself was purchased.

Referring back to the parable of the wheat and tares (weeds/darnel), we saw in Jesus' interpretation of this parable that the field was the world.

Then, using our basic guidelines of consistency in interpreting parables, in this parable, we know that the field is the world.

We need to be careful in assigning meanings to the treasure and the pearl and the implications that might be implied.

For example, if I say that the treasure found in the field is the gospel of salvation, does that mean then that the man finding it purchased his salvation? But we

know that God's salvation is without price, it is the gift of God. We have nothing of our own with which to make so great a purchase.

What does "selling all that he had" mean to us? _____

One thing we can say is that each person was determined to have that which was of great value. The price is that we forsake all else and follow Jesus on His terms. We have no righteousness nor great wealth to offer God.

The rich young ruler of Mt. 19:16 who inquired about having eternal life was told by Jesus to sell all he had, give it to the poor and then come and follow him. This was the price he would need to pay. (not his riches, per se, but his undivided devotion to Jesus)

In the case of these two parables, the man and the merchant willingly sold all they had to secure the treasure and the pearl. They held nothing back.

Note in the first parable that the treasure was "in the field." If the field is the world, then what was it that was "in the world" that was of such great value?

If we use the simplest of approaches to interpreting these parables, since the parables are comparing the kingdom of God to something, can we not say that the kingdom of God, like the pearl, like the treasure, is of great value, so great that it is worth all that we are or possess in order to obtain it?

Is there anything of greater value for us to secure in this world than the kingdom of God?

Remember Jesus' words to his disciples regarding losing the hand that offends or the eye that causes transgression in order to obtain the kingdom of God. It is better that you enter life maimed than to miss the kingdom of God.

Note: Some believe that "the man" is Jesus and that he sold (gave up) all that he had in order to purchase the world. His life therefore, became the purchase price for the world and the treasure was the kingdom of God, the reign of God, that could be achieved in the hearts of his people in the present world.

How do you interpret this parable? What is its meaning?

vv. 47-50 The net thrown into the sea

Again, we see elements of repetition in conjunction with the parable this time of the wheat and tares...a period of time when both are dwelling together and a time to come when the good and the bad will be separated. Both parables talk about a burning, the tares “to be burned,” the bad fish to be thrown into the “fiery furnace.”

There are 3 important facts about the separation to come:

1. It is absolute. In the “day of judgment” there will no longer be a mixture of any kind. For the present, there is a mixture (the bad dwelling with the good), but, on the day of judgment, the separation will be total and complete.
2. The destiny of the good and bad at the day of judgment will have already been determined. When “that day” arrives, there will no longer be any opportunity for the lost to repent and be saved.
3. The separation, at this time, will be permanent. Recall the story of the rich man and Lazarus. (Lk. 16:19-31) There was an inseparable gulf between the two which could not be bridged. From this story, we get every indication that the rich man in his suffering was given no hope that his suffering could be averted or dismissed.

Question: How should knowing these things affect us? _____

vv.51-52 The illustration of the scribe

When Jesus asked the disciples if they understood these things, their response was “Yes.”

Did they really understand the parables? _____

Did they fully understand what Jesus was teaching? _____

“Hardly anyone today would dare to say that he or she understands “all these things.” (from “The Parables of Jesus” by J.M. Boice)

What then were they saying? Were they saying that, at least, they believed what they did understand and were prepared to act upon it?

Who were the “scribes?” _____

What are the things “new and old” that the trained scribes were to bring out of their treasures? _____

In reviewing the parables we have just studied in Matthew 13, identify something that we have learned from each of the parables:

1. the sower _____
2. the wheat and tares _____
3. the mustard seed _____
4. the leaven _____
5. the treasure hidden in the field _____

6. the merchant searching for fine pearls _____

7. the net thrown into the sea _____
8. the scribe of the kingdom _____

vv.53-58 Jesus' reception in his home town

What was the first reaction of the people in Jesus' home town to his teachings?

Why did they react this way? _____

What was their second reaction? _____

Why did they react this way? _____

If you returned to your home town and began "preaching in the houses of worship," what would the response be to you from your friends and relatives that knew you when you were growing up? _____

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this section:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Now, fill in the blank boxes in the chart on the following page.

MATTHEW Chapter 13: PARABLES of the KINGDOM

Parable	Location	Type (see below)	Context	Point of Comparison	The Main Point
1. Sower	13:3-23	True to life story	Jesus is teaching a great crowd		The condition of the soil of the heart determines the response of a person to the Word of the kingdom.
2. Wheat and weeds	13:24-30	True to life story	Jesus is teaching a great crowd	The seeds represent good and evil persons	In this present age, believers and non-believers will dwell together.
3. Mustard seed	13:31-32	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching a great crowd		
4. Leaven	13:33	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching a great crowd		
5. Treasure hidden in a field	13:44	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		
6. Merchant searching for fine pearls	13:45-46	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		
7. Net thrown into the sea	13:47-50	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		
8. scribe of the kingdom	13:51-52	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		

Parable types: 1. True-to-life story 2. A comparison between 2 things that are different 3. Fictional literary form
4. Other

Chapter 25: Matthew 24 The Olivet Discourse – Part I

Background:

Matthew 23 completed the narrative section of Jesus' final public ministries, (chapters 19-23).

In Matthew 23, Jesus:

- warned the multitudes and his disciples about the religious leaders,
- pronounced numerous woes against the religious leaders,
- promised to send prophets, wise men and scribes, and
- sorrowed over Jerusalem.

We come now to Jesus' Olivet discourse, called as such because it was given on the Mount of Olives. This discourse on the End Times and Jesus' Second Coming includes Matthew 24 and 25. This is the 5th and final discourse of Jesus recorded in the book of Matthew.

This discourse by Jesus is a "mini" instruction on End Times events.

One of its goals is to teach the disciples about the future, both near and far.

Note that Mk. 13:1-36 and Lk. 21:5-36 have also recorded the words of Jesus' discourse of Mt. 24:1-42. Matthew alone contains the teachings recorded in Mt. 24:45-51. Mark and Luke do not include the teachings of Matthew 25.

The book of John does not include any of the Olivet discourse.

Context:

Preceding the Olivet Discourse, in Mt. 23:1-39 we have:

1. Jesus denunciation of the Jewish leadership, especially their guilt for leading Israel to reject Jesus' claims to be the Messiah.
2. Jesus prediction of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. (Mt. 24:2)

Note that the temple construction (funded by Herod) began in 20 B.C. and would not be completed until 64 A.D., some 34 years later.

Following the Olivet Discourse: the Passover and Jesus' upper room discourse.

His ministry now transitions from prophet to priest when He will offer Himself for the sins of the world.

Purpose of the Olivet Discourse: The primary purpose of the Olivet Discourse is to answer the questions as to when and how the Messianic kingdom would be established.

Since Israel has rejected the king, it would be impossible to set up the Messianic kingdom at this time.

Note also the criteria for His return in Mt. 23:39: “You will not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (KJV)
(In other words, the Jews must ask Him to return.)

Date of the Discourse: Approximately 30 A.D.

Outline of the Discourse:

1. Historical Setting (Mt. 23:37-39; 24:1-2, Mk. 13:1-2, Lk. 21:5-6)
2. The 2 Questions* and Jesus’ Response (Mt. 24:3-35)
3. Exhortation to Remain Watchful (Mt. 24:36-44)
4. Four Parables: Watch, Ready, Faithful (Mt. 24:45-25:30)

* There has been some debate as to whether there are 2 or 3 questions being asked by the disciples.

A review of the Greek text shows that Jesus’ coming (*parousias*) and end (*sunteleias*) of the age are joined by one article and the conjunction and (*kai*.) According to Greek grammar, this indicates that they are two parts of one question. This shows that the disciples understood the correlation between His coming and the end of the age.

Outline of Chapter 24:

- | | | |
|-------|---|---|
| 1-2 | The destruction of the temple foretold | |
| 3 | The disciples’ two questions | |
| 4-14 | Signs of the end of the age | |
| 4-8 | “the beginning of sorrows” (see v.8) | |
| 9-14 | more signs...then the end will come (v.9: beginning of the first half of the Tribulation) | |
| 15-22 | The “abomination of desolation” | } 2 nd half of the Tribulation
Satan’s final attempt to
destroy the Jews |
| 23-28 | “Look! Here is the Christ!” | |
| 29-31 | The coming of the “Son of Man” | |
| 32-35 | The parable of the fig tree | |
| 36-51 | No one knows that day or hour (practical exhortations) | |

Flow of Jesus' Responses:

v.3 The disciples ask Jesus 2 questions (v. 3):

1. When will "these things" be (referring to the destruction of the temple)?
2. What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?

Note that only Luke (21:20-24) records Jesus' response to the first question regarding the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew and Mark only record the answer to the second question.

vv.4-13 In response to the disciples request for signs, he gives them many calamitous, earth-shaking events that might be interpreted as signs, but are not.

These are general characteristics of the church age; e.g. false Messiahs, local wars, famines, pestilence, etc.

v.14 After the gospel is preached to all nations, then the end will come.

vv. 15-22

In these verses, Jesus tells them of one particular, dreadful event, called "the abomination of desolation" coupled with a Great Tribulation.

The Jews are warned to flee the city.

But even this event will not be a sign of his return.

} 2nd half
of the
Tribulation

vv.23-28

Jesus returns to his warning of false messiahs. (v.5)

vv.29-35

This segment addresses Jesus' 2nd coming. However, he does not give them signs but events that will coincide with his return. (Jesus does mention one sign: the sign of the Son of Man (v.30) but He doesn't disclose what that is).

vv.36-51

In these remaining verses, Jesus gives some practical instructions to those who will witness these events. He uses the historical example of Noah and the images of people working together.

His coming will be like:

- Noah's flood
- a thief
- a master who suddenly returns from a trip without notice – be faithful and wise.

Observation and Interpretation:

1-2 The destruction of the temple foretold

These verses coupled with the Mt. 23:37-39 provide the historical setting for the Olivet discourse.

Jesus has just denounced (pronounced woes upon) the Pharisees. As they leave the temple area, the disciples come up to him to show him the buildings of the temple.

Historical note: Herod, in an effort to gain the support of the Jews, had financed the rebuilding/remodeling of the temple. At that time, the rebuilding project was not yet complete and would take another 34 years until it was finished. (64 A.D.)

What was Jesus' startling statement to the disciples about the "stones of the temple?"

The temple was destroyed and the stones overturned by the Roman army in 70 A.D., approximately 40 years from the time of Jesus prophecy.

This statement, coupled with Jesus' statement in 23:39 ("...you shall see me no more until...") must have stirred the interest of the disciples in signs related to events in the near and distant future.

3 The disciples' questions

Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the place that the prophet Zechariah had foretold (Zech. 14:4) that the Messiah would stand when he came to establish his kingdom.

The disciples took the opportunity of privacy with Jesus to ask the questions that were on their minds.

What were their questions?

1st Question: When will these things be?

Note that “these things” refers to the destruction of the temple which He had just foretold in the previous verses.

So, incorporating the statements of Mk 13:4 and Lk. 21:7, the first question is: “When will the temple be destroyed and what sign will indicate that this is about to take place?”

Also note that Mark and Luke only record the request for info regarding “these things” as follows:

A. When will it occur?

B. What will be the sign that it is about to occur?

Note also that only Luke records an answer to the first question. (See Lk. 21:20-24)

2nd Question(2 parts)

Part A. The sign: What will be the sign of Your coming?

The sign of His coming does not refer to the Rapture since it is imminent and has no signs preceding it.

“His coming” is a reference to His 2nd coming which will be preceded by a sign.

Part B. ...and of the end of the age?

This part refers to the sign which would indicate the end of the “**age**” was at hand.

NOTE: In Mt 24:3, the word translated “world” in the KJV is the Greek word, *aion* (SN **165**) which refers to an “age” in contrast with *kosmos* “world.”

Note that rabbinic teachings addressed two ages, the current age in which they were then living and the age to come which was a reference to the Messianic kingdom.

As we proceed, note that Jesus answered the two questions but not in the order they were asked.

Matthew and Mark record the answer to the second question.

But only Luke provides an answer for the sign of the destruction of the temple.

4-14 Signs of the close of the age

4-8 “the beginning of sorrows”

The disciples had asked Jesus for signs. But his first response was: “Don’t be deceived.” (Watch out for the deception.)

Why would he give them this as a first instruction?

Note that Jesus gives his disciples “signs” that will occur but these are not actually signs of the End Times...but they are events which will occur. (see end of v.6) e.g. “You will see ... but the end is not yet.”

So, instead of immediately answering their questions, He provides some general characteristics of the church age, none of these however, indicating that the end of the current age had begun.

List the various signs that Jesus identified:

v.5 _____

Note that many false messiahs have come but none of these are an indicator that the end has begun.

v.6 _____

So, false Messiahs and wars and rumors of war will continue and can be expected, but these are not signs that the end of the current age has begun.

Note: The present, continual wars and fightings in Israel are not indicators that the close of the age has begun.

Jesus is giving examples of things that we will always have.

Does this sound like the kind of “age” in which we would want to live?

Jesus now answers the second part of the 2nd question regarding the sign that the end of the existing age has begun. What is that sign?

v.7 _____

The sign of the beginning of the end of the age is identified by all 3 gospel writers to be when nation rises against nation.

What occurs simultaneously with the wars between nations?

v.8 And...these are only the “beginning of sorrows (travail).”

What does he mean by this statement? _____

Sorrows: *odin* (SN **5604**) grief, sorrow, usually in the plural and meaning pains of labor, distress, woes compared to the pain a woman experiences in childbirth

Note that “nation against nation” is a Hebrew idiom for a world war. (see Jewish writings of this period)

From Jewish sources we know that the rabbis clearly taught that a world-wide conflict would be the sign of the coming of the Messiah. Jesus actually corrected this teaching by indicating it would be the sign that the end of the age has begun. (not the coming of the Messiah)

So, has this sign occurred? If yes, when? _____

See Lk. 21:12-19 (But before these things...)

Having provided an answer to the 2nd part of the second question, Jesus now returns to His own time and describes the personal experiences that His disciples will encounter. (9 items)

Identify 5 things the disciples will suffer. _____

Note that Jesus clearly identifies that these things (from Luke 21) will occur before the end of the age has begun. See Lk. 21:12

The experiences of the “these things” of the apostles as forecasted by Jesus are well-recorded in the book of Acts and other historical records.

Next, Jesus returns to answer the 1st question regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. This is recorded in Lk. 21:20-24.

What is the sign that the destruction of Jerusalem is imminent?

Now, to answer the first part of the 2nd question, the sign of His coming, Jesus addresses the Tribulation. Mt. 24:9-14 concerns the first half of the Tribulation.

Note the word “then,” which shows that He is now dealing with events after “nation rises up against nation.”

9-14 more signs...then the end will come (the beginning of the Tribulation)

List the various signs that Jesus identified in this segment:

v.9-10 _____

v.11 _____

v.12 _____

v.14 _____

Jesus has provided some of the events that will occur during the first half of the Tribulation. He now turns to the 2nd half of the Tribulation.

Mark’s account is found in Mk. 13:14-23 and is very similar to Matthew’s.

15-28 Events of the 2nd half of the Tribulation

15-22 1st: The “abomination of desolation”

v.15 Note that this verse marks the beginning of the 2nd half of the Tribulation.

Matthew’s account says several things about the 2nd half of the Tribulation.

First: the abomination (See chart of Mid-Tribulation events)

There are two stages to the “abomination:”

1. The Antichrist takes over the temple and declares himself to be God. II Thes. 2:3-10
2. An image of the Antichrist is erected in the Holy of Holies Rev. 13:11-15; Dan. 12:11

Abomination Definition:

- *something that elicits great dislike or abhorrence.*
(The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language)

Following are some differing views about what the abomination is:

Some think that Daniel’s prediction (Dan. 9:27) came true in 168 B.C., when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the sacred temple altar.

However, Dan. 9:26 indicates that the Messiah must first be cut off.

And, Jesus was not referring to a past event when he spoke of the abomination that causes desolation. It was still something to come.

Some have seen the destruction of Jerusalem as it was surrounded by the Roman armies as “an abomination that causes desolation.” Titus, in 70 A.D. placed an idol on the site of the burned temple after destroying Jerusalem. This would certainly mesh with the description of people fleeing quickly given in vv.16-20.

And, the “abomination” could also be something yet to come. It could be an image or idol that desecrates the temple at Mid-Tribulation. The context of Dan. 12:11 indicates that this is an event that is yet to come. (see Chapter 13 of this workbook)

Now, continuing with the events of the 2nd half of the Tribulation:

2nd: The Signal for the Jews to flee Mt. 24:16-20

See also Rev. 12:13-17

Problems on the Jews flight out of the land:

- pregnancy/ new births
- rainy season – Oct. - Apr, heavy, flooding, washing out of highways
- the Sabbath (businesses closed, no public transportation, 2/3 of Israeli’s without cars

3rd: Great Tribulation v.21

Satan will pull out all of the stops in trying to annihilate the Jews. (He is kicked out of heaven for good at the Mid-Tribulation point and descends to the earth in great wrath.)

4th: Population greatly reduced v.22 (estimates of the fatalities due to the 21 judgments (seal, trumpet, bowl) are 2/3 of the population of the earth.

23-28 “Look! Here is the Christ!”

Additional signs given by Jesus are people declaring that Christ has come. But these will not be the true fulfillment of his coming.

Note: False Christs, false prophets, great signs and wonders – All are designed to deceive the elect.

How does v. 27 answer this question of the false Christs? _____

In the previous verses up to v.28, Jesus has warned the disciples of difficult and disruptive events in the world and he has foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.

v.28 “Wherever the carcass is...”

Petra/Bozrah Isa. 34:1-8 “He has given them over to slaughter...”

63:1-6 “...the day of vengeance...”

29-31 The coming of the “Son of Man”

The answer to the first part of the 2nd question for the disciples is provided in this next segment.

v.29 What occurs in v.29 _____

These are common Old Testament imagery for any cataclysmic event. (Isa. 13:9-10; Ezk. 32:7-8; Joel 2:30-31)

However, this type of imagery also occurs in New Testament passages that are associated with Christ’s coming at the end of the age. (II Thes. 1:6-10; 2:1- 8; II Pet. 3:10-12)

This also occurs in the parallel passage in Lk. 21:25-26.

Here, Jerusalem will have been trampled upon by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled (Lk 21:24b). It is only after this that Jesus says he will appear the 2nd time.

This will be characterized as a total blackout of the earth.

Note that, from Mt. 24:29, we know that this “darkening of the earth” will occur *immediately* after the Great Tribulation.

v.30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven with power and great glory.

Why will there be mourning? _____

Note the use of words immediately and then. This indicates that these signs coincide with Christ’s coming.

So...now Jesus has answered the 2 questions. See if you can provide the answers:

1. What will be the sign of the destruction of the temple?

2. What will be the sign of your coming? _____
What will be the sign that the end of the age has begun?

However, He still has some practical exhortations regarding the last days that He would like to give them.

- v.31 What happens in this verse? _____
Who does it include? _____

Exhortations:

Pentecost says, “the chronology of the events of the End of the Age is briefly interrupted in order to give practical exhortation to those who will be witnessing these events. These instructions are contained in Mt. 24:32-51 (Things to Come pg. 280).

- 32-35 The parable of the fig tree
What is the teaching of this parable? _____

When the fig tree begins to blossom, it is a sign that summer is about to begin.

In a similar way, when you see the things spoken by Jesus, know that His coming is near.

Who is “this generation?” _____

Note that “generation can be used in a number of ways...20, 40, 70 100 (see Gen. 15:13-16)

In this passage, it likely refers to the generation seeing “these things” occur.

So, what is it that signals the Lord’s soon return?

The event of which he was talking was the abomination of desolation. (not the restoration of Israel as a nation) 24:15

Therefore, His return will be exactly 1260 days from the event known as the “abomination of desolation.” See Dan. 9:27 (Daniel’s 70 weeks)

36-42

No one knows the day or hour

Since Jesus has been speaking about the 2nd coming, and this passage follows that discussion, then logically and chronologically, He would be speaking about the same thing.

The “taking away” of vv.40-41 is then interpreted to be the same as in v. 39 which is a taking away to the judgment of the “sheep and goats.”

What are the points that Matthew makes regarding this event?

1. v.36 _____
2. vv.37-39 _____

3. vv.40-42 _____

How does Jesus characterize “that day and hour?” clue – Noah

43-44

Illustration of the master of the house and the thief

What two words describe the lesson of this segment? be _____ and _____.(v.43, 44)

45-51

The faithful and wise servant

What two servants are identified in this paragraph? _____ and _____

Note that there are two servants (Greek word “*doulos*” meaning *slave*) in this paragraph. (Each are preceded by the article “ho” which provides “the” before each servant.)

v.45 Who then is a faithful and wise servants ...”

v. 48 could be translated: “But if the wicked servants says in his heart...”

Literally the arrangement of the Greek words in v. 48 provides the following:

“If but says the wicked slave...”

What rewards/punishments do they receive for their service?

What is the teaching of this illustration? _____

Applications:

Some important lessons for us from this chapter:

1. We need to be watchful that no one deceives us. v.4, 26
2. Don't be troubled by the events occurring around you. v.6
3. We need to endure to the end. v.13
4. The last sign that precedes the end of the age is that the gospel will be preached to every nation v. 14 (see Rev. 14:6-7)

Our assignment is this very task as well.

5. We (all persons on the earth) need to be ready which means to be saved in order to qualify to be Raptured and not be on the earth during the horrific, cataclysmic events of the Great Tribulation.
6. From the above: be watchful, be ready, endure to the end.
7. _____

Chapter 26: Matthew 25

The Olivet Discourse – Part II

Background:

Matthew 23 completed the narrative section of Jesus' final public ministries, (chapters 19-23).

In Matthew 23, Jesus:

- warned the multitudes and his disciples about the religious leaders,
- pronounced 8 woes against the religious leaders,
- promised to send prophets, wise men and scribes, and
- sorrowed over Jerusalem.

In Matthew 24, we came to Jesus' Olivet discourse, so-called because it was given on the Mount of Olives. This discourse on the End Times and Jesus' Second Coming includes Matthew 24 and 25. This is the 5th and final discourse of Jesus that is recorded in the book of Matthew.

In chapter 25, Jesus continues his teaching (still on the Mount of Olives) and gives the disciples two more parables and a discussion of the Judgment of the Nations. He repeats the message to be watchful and ready.

Outline of Chapter 25:

- 1-13 Parable of the 10 virgins – Everyone is responsible for their own spiritual condition.
- 14-30 Parable of the talents – We are responsible to use our gifts and abilities well in serving our king.
- 31-46 The Judgment of the Nations (also called the “sheep and goats” judgment)
This discourse stresses the importance of serving those in need (particularly Israel).
It is useful at this point to note that these three discourses are parallel accounts that have some commonality.
 1. In each case, the key authority figure (the bridegroom, the lord of the servants and the Son of Man) returns suddenly and unexpectedly.
 2. In each discourse, the return of the key authority results in unchangeable divisions between two groups of people - the wise and foolish virgins, the three servants (2 profitable, the other judged) and the sheep and the goats.

3. In each case, those who are lost or judged are completely surprised at their rejection (why won't the bridegroom let us into the banquet, the lazy servant who buried the talent expects to be praised, and the goats don't grasp why the Lord's disapproval has been pronounced against them.)
- The people of these parables (the lost and judged) think they are prepared (in our culture, saved) ready for the coming one (on their way to heaven).
- But they are not. Their actual destiny is separation (the 5 virgins), weeping and gnashing of teeth (wicked and lazy servant) and everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, everlasting punishment (goats).
- This powerfully demonstrates the appropriateness of Jesus' strong and repeated exhortations to be watchful and ready.

Observation and Interpretation:

1-13 Parable of the 10 virgins

Background Information:

The background for this parable is the Jewish wedding system.

On the evening of the marriage, the bridegroom would go to the home of his bride to bring her to his home.

As he returned to his home, amidst a procession of rejoicing, he would be met by virgins who would escort him and his bride to the marriage ceremony. Their responsibility was to light the lamps for the marriage ceremony.

The prophetic sequence of events is that the Rapture will have already occurred a minimum of 7 years earlier, prior to Jesus' Second Coming.

Jesus will bring His bride (in fine linen – Rev. 19:7-8) with Him at His Second Coming which will be followed by the marriage feast. (The marriage feast is a common symbol of the Messianic kingdom, also referred to as the Millennium.)

Note that the virgins, those who have oil, are neither the bride (church) nor Israel.

Since oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the wise virgins are therefore, those who have been saved (became believers) during the time of the Tribulation on the earth. The foolish virgins have no oil because they were not saved.

The main focus of this parable is watching and being ready. These are secured by faith in the Messiah. The wise virgins were prepared to enter the marriage feast.

How can we know that we are prepared for the coming of our Lord?

1. By their _____ you shall know them. (Mt. 7:16)
2. If we keep his _____, we show that we love Him and God, and Jesus will make Himself known to us. (Jn. 14:21)
3. By this we know that we know him _____.
(I Jn. 2:3)
4. By this we know that we are in him...we _____ just as he _____. (I Jn 2:6)
5. The witness of the _____ with our spirit. (Rom 8:16; Gal. 4:6-7)

Some important lessons we can learn from this parable:

1. Jesus' coming with respect to our expectations may be delayed. But it may also be sooner than we think.
2. The Lord will come without warning.
3. Preparations are not transferable. You can't get by on someone else's faith.
4. Some opportunities that we have, once lost, cannot be regained.
When Jesus comes for his bride, those who are ready will be taken to be with him. Those who are not ready at his 2nd coming will be shut out of the kingdom with no further opportunity to repent.
5. This parable reinforces Jesus' previous teachings on being ready and watchful.

14-30 Parable of the talents

Cultural note:

In this society, a talent was a measure of weight. It could be in gold, silver or copper. Jesus doesn't specify the particular kind of coin in this story. We do know, however, that it was a large sum of money. By weight, a talent was 75 pounds.

One commentator says that a talent of silver was worth \$1200. And a denarius, a day's wage was valued at \$.20. Therefore, a silver talent would be the equivalent of 6000 days' wages.

Others believe that the value would have been in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

What we do know is that a talent was a large sum of money, much more than a servant could make in a few years of faithful service.

That having been said, we acknowledge that the amount is not important except to say that it was of extremely high value.

Money is only one of many things that God entrusts to us. J. Ryle says that anything that we have by which we may glorify God is a talent. This would include our knowledge, our health, our gifts and abilities, our time, our intellectual abilities.

Can you think of some other things that, with the above definition, we could use to glorify God? _____

v.14 "The kingdom of heaven is like..." – this is a formula for a simile that Jesus often uses when explaining some aspect of the kingdom of God. (See Mt. chapter 13.)

v.15 What was the criteria that the man used in deciding who should get how much? _____

vv.16-18 What did each of the servants do with the money given them?

1st servant _____

2nd servant _____

3rd servant _____

v.19 How long was the lord of the servants gone? _____

Read vv. 20-23 How do you perceive the character of their lord as he talks with the first 2 servants? _____

Would you say that they were eager to see their lord and show him what they had accomplished? _____

vv. 24-25 How does the 3rd servant characterize his lord?

Is his "accusation" justified? _____

Note the intuitiveness of their lord in entrusting to each servant large sums of money but also in keeping with their abilities. He knew his servants and did not demand from them beyond their ability, which indicates he was a wise and fair man.

My personal opinion is that the 3rd servant did not know or did not like his lord. He perceived him as a hard man, one to be feared. I don't think the first 2 servants saw their lord with the same eyes.

What does the lord do with the money originally given to the 3rd servant?
v.28 _____

Does this give an indication of the magnanimous nature of their lord?

Some lessons from this parable:

The focus of this parable is to keep on laboring while we are watching and waiting. We can glean lessons from this parable, but we need to keep in mind that this is a Second Advent parable, not a Bema parable.

1. There will be a day in the future when all people will be judged and give a "reckoning" for their life on earth. In the case of each servant, they were required to give a reckoning for their service during their lord's absence.
2. In the first parable, the readiness of the 5 virgins corresponds with their new birth. In this parable, the servants will be rewarded according to their works. (This is not initial salvation which is always by grace through faith.) This is about faithful service in the kingdom.
3. All excuses for unfaithful service will fail before the Lord.
4. All servants "owe it to their Lord" to improve upon what He has given them.

Note the punishment given to the wicked and lazy, unprofitable servant - cast into outer darkness where he will experience wailing and gnashing of teeth, indicating that he did not know his lord.

31-46 The Judgment of the Nations (also see Joel 3:1-3)

Note that this is the last recorded teaching of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew. It is not a parable as are the first two segments. It is a description of the Judgment of the Nations that we discussed briefly in the previous parable.

v.31 What does this verse describe? _____
Where will Jesus be? _____

v.32 Who will be brought before him? _____

v.33 Who are the sheep and the goats? _____

v.34-36 What will be the basis of Jesus' judgment?

What will he say to the sheep? _____

vv.37-40 What will Jesus and the sheep say to each other? _____

Note how the sheep helped Jesus (through helping His brethren, Israel):

- stranger
- naked
- hungry
- thirsty
- sick
- in prison

v.40 Who are "my brethren?" _____

vv.41-45 What will Jesus and the goats say to one another?

v.46 What will be their punishment for the things they did not do?

In this setting (sheep & goats), this applies to those in the Tribulation and how they treated Israel. Those who are saved will have a heart to help Israel. This last "test" for knowing Christ is the assessment of how they loved and cared for God's people.

The reality of hell:

We have seen the judgments in these three segments:

- the 5 foolish virgins – shut out
- the wicked, lazy servant – cast into outer darkness with the wailing and gnashing of teeth
- everlasting punishment for the goats

We may not like what we see here but the reality is that these words were spoken by Jesus and we know that he can only speak that which is true.

The description:

1. Hell is separation from God

Jesus says this when he tells the cursed goats to depart from him.

There will be no goats in the kingdom of God.

2. Hell is bad company.

In v.41, Jesus tells us that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. These angels are the wicked angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and are now known as demons. One day they will be in hell. Here Jesus pictures a place where fallen angels and those who have denied Jesus are dwelling together, i.e. keeping company with demons.

3. Hell is suffering.

The imagery of these passages...everlasting fire, weeping and gnashing of teeth, convey a horror beyond what literal language can describe. Demons are spirits and therefore, not subject to fire in the literal sense. But, the reality of the suffering in hell will be immeasurably worse than we can imagine.

4. Hell is darkness. v.30

Without light, those in hell will not be able to see.

John Ryle, in his "Expository Notes on the Gospels" wrote about hell:

"Who shall describe the misery of eternal punishment? It is something utterly indescribable and inconceivable. The eternal pain of body; the eternal sting of an accusing conscience; the eternal society of none but remembrance of opportunities neglected and Christ despised; the eternal prospect of a weary, hopeless

future – all this misery indeed: it is enough to make our ears tingle and our blood run cold.”

Why does Jesus, in one of his final parting teachings tell us these things?
_____ see II Pet. 1:10

Why is this instruction necessary? _____

Application:

From each of the three segments we have just studied, identify 2 applications for our own personal lives.

1. Parable of the 10 virgins
 - A. _____

 - B. _____

2. Parable of the 3 servants
 - A. _____

 - B. _____

3. The Judgment of the Nations
 - A. _____

 - B. _____

We are:

1. to be prepared and ready
2. to be watchful
3. to labor and serve

Frequently Asked Questions

The purpose of this chapter is to provide initial, concise answers to questions that are often asked about the New Jerusalem. (It goes without saying...there is much more that could be added to each of these responses.)

1. Why should we be thinking about heaven?

Heaven will be our eternal home.

The reality: Our life here on earth is an investment in our eternal future.

How we live and the decisions we make on earth will affect many things about our future life, e.g. destiny, work assignment in heaven, rewards for faithful service, etc.

God's Word exhorts us to set our minds on things above (heaven). Col. 3:2

Knowing the hope that is set before us will provide encouragement during difficult times. Rom. 8:18

Keeping a focus on the "eternal tomorrow" and the glory which will be revealed in us, is the only sensible thing to do. Should we "squander" this golden opportunity?

Ignoring that which is imminent and of great importance would be like getting ready for the championship game without making any preparations, i.e. strategy, plan, preparations, practice, etc.

-
2. What happens to people when they die?

A. Believers:

Old Testament

Body – asleep in the grave, resurrected at Jesus' coming during the 75-day interval between Armageddon and the Millennium

Spirit – went to paradise (Abraham's bosom) in Sheol and will be joined with their glorified, transformed, heavenly body during the 75-day interval between the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium.

New Testament

Body – asleep in the grave, will be resurrected at the Rapture

Spirit – goes to Paradise in heaven and will be joined to the new, glorified, heavenly body at the Rapture

Death cannot touch the believer who, at physical death, is escorted to heaven (Paradise) by angels.

B. Unbelievers (OT & NT):

Body – asleep in the grave until the final resurrection at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:12)

Spirit – Upon physical death, goes to Sheol, to the unrighteous compartment referred to as Hell, Abaddon and “the pit.”

Note that “Death” separates the body from the spirit and then Hades escorts the spirit to the pit.

At the final resurrection in Rev. 20:12, the unrighteous dead will have been reunited with their bodies and will have been transformed such that their bodies will endure throughout eternity.

3. Are there levels or degrees of punishment in Hell (i.e. Lake of Fire)?

Yes. See Mt. 11:20-24 and Lk. 12:47-48

Mt. 11:24 “...it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom...”

Lk. 12:48: “But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few.”

Note: Hell generally refers to the unrighteous compartment in Sheol. The degrees of punishment come into operation at the Great White Throne Judgment in which Death and Hades give up their occupants to stand before the throne of judgment. (Rev. 20:13) These, after the books are reviewed, will be sent to the Lake of Fire where the punishment deserved will be given.

Those who have greater knowledge will be held more accountable for their response to the truth that they have.

4. What is the difference between hell, Hades, Gehenna and the Lake of Fire?

There is no Hebrew or Greek word for hell. But the English translators use “hell” when the word in the original language is Sheol, Hades or Gehenna.

Hell refers to the unrighteous side of Sheol (Hades) which is also called the pit.

Gehenna and the Lake of Fire are two terms that are used for the same place.

The Lake of Fire is the final, permanent dwelling of the resurrected, unrighteous dead. The spirit and body of these have been reunited.

Sheol (Hades) is a temporary dwelling for the unrighteous spirits of unbelievers.

5. What will heaven be like? See also chapter 20 of this workbook.

Scripture (Rev. 20:11) tells us that the existing earth and heaven will not find a place at the Great White Throne. This means they will pass away. Rev. 21:1 God will create a new heaven and a new earth.

The New Jerusalem will be a cube 1500 miles in each direction. It will come down from heaven and rest on the face of the earth. The streets will be made of gold, the gates each of a single pearl.

God will make all things new.

He will dwell in the midst of His people.

There will be no more sorrow, pain, crying or death

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it.

It will be glorious beyond anything we can imagine.

6. Will we know each other?

A. When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, they recognized Him. Mt. 28:9, 17; Mk. 16:9

B. Lk. 16:19-31 In the account of Lazarus and the rich man in Sheol, the rich man recognized Lazarus. Note also that he recognized Abraham or at least "he knew who he was." (He had never seen nor met him.)

Also, when the apostles were on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter knew who Moses and Elijah were. (Mt. 17:1-4)

These accounts seem to indicate that we will have a "knowing" in heaven such that we will know who people are that we've never met. (e.g. David, Paul, Peter)

7. What will we do in heaven?

Worship: It would seem obvious that one of our primary activities will be to worship God. When we see where we are, what he has done for us and who He is, our hearts will not be able to contain the worship that will flow from us. I believe that our hearts will be singing His praises such that heaven will be a place of unending worship. Rev. 14:3 (sang a new song) Rev. 15:2-3 "...harps of God singing the song of Moses"

Rev. 1:6 indicates that he will make us kings and priests. This means there will be ruling and priestly activities.

Rev. 7:15 discusses the Tribulation saints and tells that they will be servicing God at His throne day and night. See also Rev. 22:3.

I also think there will be studying in heaven. Our God is an infinite God and it is not unlikely that we will spend significant time learning more about our great God.

In heaven, Raptured Christians will become the bride of Christ. On earth, in marriage (the earthly representation of a spiritual reality), the husband serves the wife, his bride. Therefore, I will not be surprised to see Jesus servicing His bride, the church, that's us. Recall how He gave us examples as He served His disciples. (e.g. washing their feet)

8. Will there be rewards in heaven?

Yes. Crowns. An example: See lesson #6 on the Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema) where Raptured believers will be rewarded for their faithful service.

9. What kind of bodies will we have?*

From I Cor. 15:35-38, we see that there will be some continuity between the buried and resurrected body. But, in I Cor. 15:39-54, Paul says that our new bodies will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, a life-giving spirit and will bear the image of the heavenly man (Jesus).

Also, at the Rapture (see Lesson #5), we will be changed. Our mortal bodies will put on incorruption and immortality (I Cor. 15:53). They will be heavenly bodies that will allow us to live and dwell in heaven.

*(Also see "What Will My New Body Be Like?" toward the end of this workbook).

10. What about the bodies that were cremated or lost at sea?

My personal belief is that God will have no trouble resurrecting bodies that have disintegrated through cremation or being lost in the seas.

The Scriptures tell us that He knows the number of the hairs on our head (Mt. 10:30) and that He was there when we were being created in the womb. (Ps 139)

The One who positioned all of the molecules of creation into space simply by His spoken word, certainly knows where all of our atoms are.

Paul makes a very clear statement of fact in I Cor. 15:52...“The dead shall be raised imperishable.” This declarative statement leaves no room for exceptions.

11. Will we see or have pets in heaven?

Although there isn't a Scripture that specifically says there will be pets, we can draw from the Scriptures for input.

A. When God created animals in Gen.1, they were declared to “be good.” In fact, the garden of Eden was filled with animals. Also, God took great pains to preserve the animals during the time of the flood.

From Revelation we see that many of the same things that were in the garden...trees, fruit, rivers, will also be in the New Jerusalem. All animals give eloquent testimony to the creative power and imagination of God, not to mention the joy and pleasure they give to His humanity. So...if inanimate trees and rivers are in the New Jerusalem, why not animals too?

B. The Scripture shows that, during the Millennium (Millennial Kingdom), there will be numerous animals. From Isa. 11:6-8, we can construct the following list: wolf, lamb, leopard, goat, calf, lion, cow and bear.

And, we also know that, at the end of time, Jesus will turn over the Kingdom to the Father. (I Cor. 15:24-28) If there are animals living during the Millennial Kingdom, it makes sense that this same kingdom, which is given over to the Father, would still contain numerous animals in the New Jerusalem.

C. The heart of God revealed in Scripture shows us that He understands the love that people have for their pets. What a wonderful surprise would it be to arrive in heaven and see our pets waiting for us. Our heavenly Father delights to give us good things and it would be like Him to do such a thing for us knowing the delight we had received from our pets on earth.

12. Will there be marriages in heaven?

No. Mt. 22:28-30 In response to the question of the Sadducees who didn't believe in a resurrection, Jesus replied: “You are mistaken, not knowing Scriptures or the power of God. For in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.”

13. Will there be sex in heaven?

Yes and no.

Yes...people will still maintain their human sexuality.

No...Sex is also an intimate act performed between husbands and wives.

But, since there will not be marriages in heaven (between a man and a woman) there will be no need for procreation or sex as a display of affection.

We will still enjoy the company of our close friends, but I personally suspect that there will be something in heaven far greater to enjoy than this.

14. Will people who commit suicide still be allowed into heaven?

Many think that a person who has committed suicide has either:

A. committed the unpardonable sin because the person has died with unconfessed sin, or

B. usurped the plan of God by determining the day of their own death instead of accepting and waiting for God's plan to be fulfilled.

In A above (unconfessed sin), this is the case for most people dying because, at the least, most have sin they are not aware of and therefore have not confessed. Nevertheless, we have no fear that we've "lost our salvation."

In case B, it is presumed that suicide is the unforgiveable sin. But this is not the case. Paul, in Rom. 8:38-39 makes it clear (for believers) that nothing can separate us from God's love, not even death.

The unforgiveable sin, as seen in the Matthew 12 account, was the Jews (via the Pharisees) national rejection of the person and work of the Messiah by directly attributing His work of casting a demon out of a man who was both blind and mute (a Messianic miracle) to Beelzebub. (Messianic miracles were those (3 of them) that the Jewish rabbis and scribes had identified which could only be performed by the Messiah. This was to give them a sure test of the real Messiah when He came.)

Suicide is not the unpardonable sin. Death cannot take a child of God out of His hand.

15. Will we see God?

Several Scriptures indicate this answer to be in the affirmative:

- A. Mt. 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”
- B. Gen. 3:8 In this account, after they had sinned, Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. Prior to this, they walked and talked with God. If Jesus’ death and resurrection restores us to God, then someday, when we have our glorified, transformed, heavenly bodies, we too will walk and talk with God.
- C. In Mt. 18:10, we see that the angels of the little ones see the face of God. And, in Mt. 22:30, Jesus tells the Pharisees that, in the resurrection, we will be like the angels in heaven. If we will be like the angels, then we too will see God.
- D. Rev. 22:3-4 “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads.”

The servants in this case are us, the redeemed of the lamb.

16. What will be my relationship in heaven to the spouse I had while on earth?

I have no special verses to quote in this case, so I offer my own opinion.

It seems to me that if I spend over 30 years of my life growing and learning about my wife in an intimate and serving relationship, that God will not completely discard this gained relationship in heaven. In heaven, I think I will continue to know my wife and to grow and appreciate her unique heart and gifts.

And...we, together, will be married to the Lord. This means we will be even more intimately connected and we will know God’s plan for relationships much more deeply than we could ever have known them while on the earth in these vessels of clay marred by sin.

And...it seems to me that our infinitely wise heavenly Father will recognize, and put to good use, a relationship already developed through the struggles of life on earth to set us to work together in His kingdom. After all, He designed us and gave us His permission and blessing to be married.

A Timetable of “End Time” Events

This chart is provided to assist you in getting a grasp of the overall sequence of events that will occur from the Rapture until the end of time. See the individual topical chapters for Scripture references. See also the chart at the end of chapter 1, page 15 for a pictorial presentation of the major events.

I. Events in Heaven:

1. The Rapture of the church
2. The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema)
3. The Marriage of the Lamb
4. The Lamb takes the scroll with 7 seals

II. Events on Earth:

1. The Tribulation begins
 - Antichrist signs a 7-year covenant with Israel.
 - The temple is rebuilt.
 - The Roman empire emerges as a 10-nation confederacy.
2. The first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation
 - 7 seal judgments are opened.
 - 144,000 Jewish believers begin their ministry.
 - Gog and Magog Part I (Ezk. 38,39) invade Israel.
3. Midpoint of the Tribulation
 - Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel.
 - Antichrist sets up the “abomination that desolates.”
 - Antichrist is assassinated.
 - Satan is cast down from heaven, he uses the 2 beasts of Rev 13 to persecute Israel.
 - The faithful Jewish remnant flee.
 - Antichrist is raised from the dead.
 - Antichrist gains political control over the confederacy of 10.
 - The 2 witnesses begin their ministry on earth.
 - Antichrist takes over Babylon.

4. 2nd half of the Tribulation
 - False worship of the beast is promoted.
 - the mark of the beast
 - Satan and the Antichrist dominate the world.
 - Trumpet judgments are released.
 - Satan intensifies his persecutions.

5. End of the Tribulation
 - The bowl judgments are poured out.
 - The war campaign of Armageddon begins.
 - The 2 witnesses are killed and shortly thereafter, are resurrected.
 - Christ's 2nd coming!
 - The Armageddon war is completed, Christ is victorious.

6. 75-day interval
 - Antichrist and False Prophet – are cast into the lake of fire.
 - The abomination of desolation is removed.
 - Israel returns to the land.
 - Judgment of Jews and Gentiles who survive the Tribulation
 - Satan is bound for 1000 years and cast into the bottomless pit.
 - Old Testament and Tribulation saints are resurrected and rewarded.
 - Construction of the Millennial temple begins.

7. 1000 year reign of Christ
 - Marriage Feast of the Lamb Rev. 19:9

8. Satan is released from his 1000 year imprisonment.

9. Satan's final rebellion and defeat/Gog and Magog – Part II

10. Satan is cast into the lake of fire for eternity.

11. The Great White Throne Judgment

12. Destruction of the existing heavens and earth

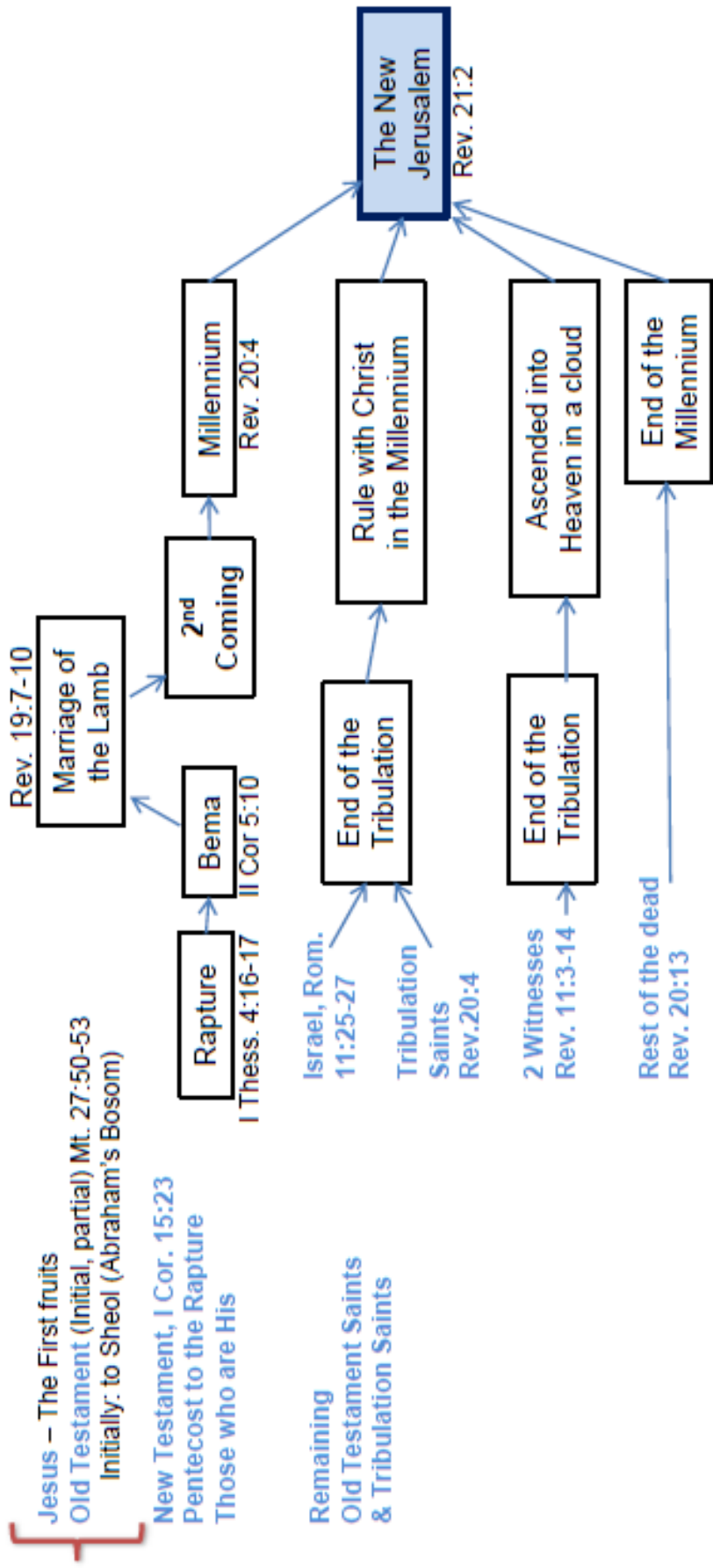
13. The New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven.

14. The End of Time, Eternity Begins

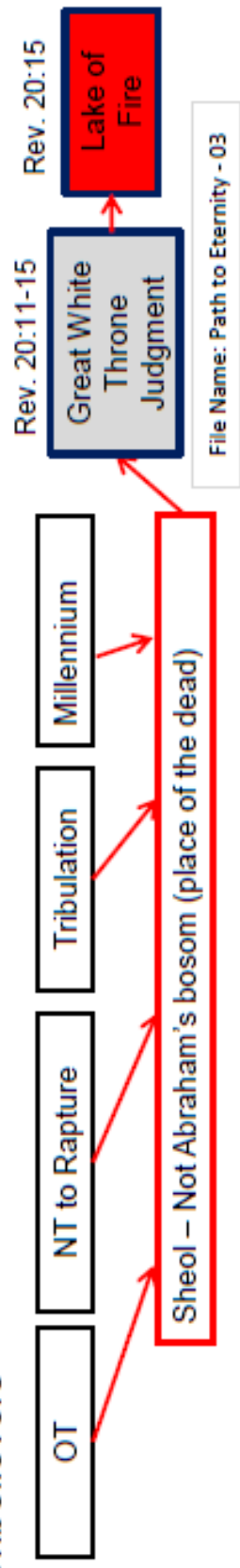
The Path to Eternity

For the Different People Groups

I. Believers:



II. Unbelievers



NAMES and DESCRIPTIONS of the PLACES of the DEAD

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief explanation and description of the places (13) of the dead as identified in Scripture.

The Place	Scriptures	Description
Sheol (Hebrew)	64 references, see Lk. 16:19-31	A place for both the righteous (Abraham's bosom) and unrighteous dead (Abaddon), but separate compartments.
Hades (Greek)	Mt. 11:23; Ac. 2:27; Rev. 1:18, 20:14	Same as Sheol (This is the Greek term for the Hebrew. Sheol.
Abaddon (Hebrew)	Job. 26:6; Ps. 88:11; Prov. 27:20; Rev. 9:11	Hebrew name for the unrighteous compartment of Sheol, often translated destruction.
The Pit (Hebrew)	23 references: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Ezekiel	Same as Abaddon. Pit is descriptive while Abaddon is the proper name.
The Abyss (Greek)	8 references: Lk. 8:31; Rev. 9:1, 2,11, 11:7, 20:1,3	Always relates to fallen angels (except the beast), the temporary place of confinement in Sheol for fallen angels, often translated bottomless pit.
Tartarus	II Pet. 2:4	It is called the pits of darkness; It is a place for fallen angels; somehow related to the time of Noah; <u>permanent</u> place of confinement for fallen angels of Gen. 6
Hell	No singular term for hell in Heb. or Grk.	The place of the dead, or the pit, the unrighteous side of Sheol or Hades, Gehenna
Gehenna (Greek)	12 ref.: Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28, 18:9, 23:15 Ja. 3:6	Gei Hinnom = "Valley of Hinnom" – a valley that circles a portion of Jerusalem. Here, wicked kings of the OT practiced human sacrifice. NT: Gehenna describes the unseen world and the eternal burning of humans. Often translated hell.
The Lake of Fire	4 passages in Rev.:19:20,20:10,14, 21:8	The eternal dwelling of all who are lost both angels and mankind; punishment includes the soul and body, death – material part, hades – the immaterial part; same as Gehenna, associated with fire and brimstone as the source of punishment

Abraham's Bosom	Lk. 16:22-23 (but very common in the non-biblical rabbinic writings)	For righteous only; located in the proximity of hell; separated from hell by an impassable gulf; reclining on Abraham's bosom is a fig. of speech of a guest at a feast; i.e. a symbol of blessedness after physical death
Paradise	3 ref., NT only; Lk. 23:43 II Cor. 12:1-4; Rev. 2:7	Equiv.: royal park or garden; describes the dwelling of the righteous; Today, it is in heaven (see II Cor. 12:1-4), prior to Jesus' death it was in Sheol. From Rev. 2:7, it will be in the New Jerusalem.
Heaven	39 passages re. 3 rd heaven	1st : atmosphere where birds fly. 2nd : Space- sun, moon, stars. 3rd : Where God, the elect angels and the departed saints live. It is real and always upward. This is where God rules and receives worship.
The New Jerusalem	Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 21:1-22:5	It now exists in the 3 rd heaven. It is the dwelling place of the Trinity. It is synonymous with heaven. When the new earth is created, (see Rev. 21:ff), heaven will come down upon the earth.

Summary:

- o Sheol = Hades = **down**, in the OT, a place where both the righteous and unrighteous souls went. There were 2 compartments that were separated and unbridgeable although each compartment was visible from the other. (See Abraham and Lazarus Lk. 16:19-31). This is still the location of the unrighteous.
- o Righteous compartment = Abraham's bosom = Paradise = place for the righteous.
Note: After Jesus ascended, Paradise was moved to the 3rd heaven. (see Paul in II Cor. 12:1-4.) Paradise will be in the New Jerusalem when it comes to the new earth. (Rev. 2:7)
- o Unrighteous compartment
 - Abaddon = the pit = Hell
 - abyss = temporary holding place for fallen angels
 - tartarus = permanent place for especially wicked angels (Gen. 6)
- o Lake of fire = gehenna = eternal dwelling of all who are "lost," both angels and mankind
- o Heaven – **up** 1st heaven - lower atmosphere, where the birds fly
2nd heaven - outer space
3rd heaven - where God dwells

What Will My New Body Be Like?

The human person consists of two primary parts, the material part (body) and the non-material part.

The Scriptures tell us that the material part of mankind came from the dust, from the material elements of the earth. (Gen 1)

We also know that this material part, in its unregenerated state, is temporary. (Rom. 7:13-25)

The non-material part consists of the soul and spirit and is eternal (see II Cor. 4:18).

Since the resurrection of Christ, the spirit of a righteous person goes immediately to be with God but the body goes to the grave (to dust) waiting to be resurrected. (See II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:22-23.)

I. Christ, Our Pattern:

What was Jesus' experience?

- A. He died physically.
- B. His body was laid in a tomb
- C. After three days, His body was resurrected
- D. After His Resurrection, He appeared to many of His disciples during which time they recognized Him, could touch Him, and He could eat. His body had been transformed but there were still natural functions that gave proof of the continuity of his physical body. He showed them His hands and feet and encouraged them to touch him confirming that it was indeed Him.
- E. Finally, He ascended into heaven in a cloud. (Ac. 1:9)

II. What body?

From what we saw above, we can deduce that there is a continuity between the body that has been buried and the resurrected body. Our resurrection is the raising up of the body that has been buried and not the construction of a completely new body.

However, the body that is resurrected will undergo some very significant changes and modifications.

Paul gives us insight into the new body in I Cor. 15:35-38 in his discussion on the sowing of grain. He makes three points:

- A. The basic material of the original seed is still contained in the plant that grows up.
- B. There are definite and obvious changes in the plant.
- C. The character of the original seed determines the plant that will grow up.

Then he draws conclusions from this figure of speech:

- A. There is a continuity between the body that is sown and the body that is raised.
- B. The body that is resurrected undergoes significant changes.
- C. There will be a direct correlation between the body that was sown and the new, transformed body.

In the verses following (I Cor. 15:39-54), Paul points out that the new body will be:

- 1. Sown in corruption but raised in incorruption
- 2. sown in dishonor but raised in glory,
- 3. sown in weakness but raised in power,
- 4. sown a natural body but raised a spiritual body,

We shall bear the image of the heavenly man. (v.49)

So...the natural body is sown, dies and is buried, is raised to a new life (resurrection) and is radically transformed.

I don't know about you, but this sure looks good to me.

Human weaknesses, such as physical illnesses, will no longer touch us.

The defectiveness of the human nature will be gone since we are raised in the likeness of Jesus.

Our once-corruptible bodies will no longer be subject to corruption, pain or death.

Mortality will be exchanged for immortality.

Our new bodies will be endowed with glory and power.

And, probably that greatest improvement of all is that we will now be able to dwell in God's presence. We will be with Him for all of eternity in His new heavenly city.

“What Must I Do to Be Saved?”

*“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
(Romans 3:23)*

*“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
(Romans 6:23)*

There is a single difference between the person who will be saved and the person who will not be saved. That difference is, how each person has responded to God’s offer of salvation through His Son, Jesus.

His gift is for anyone on earth who will choose the privilege to believe God and accept the gift He has offered to us.

It is when we humble ourselves before God, confessing our sins and recognizing our sinful nature and our need for the Savior, that our heart is well-positioned to receive salvation. A prideful heart is not positioned to receive salvation.

Our sin has already been punished (paid for). Jesus took our punishment – if we will choose to accept it.

To receive salvation:

- Confess to God that you have sinned against Him.
- Repent (turn away from your sin and turn to God)
- Believe and accept that Jesus came to earth and took the punishment for your sins in your place when He gave up His life for you on the cross.
- Believe that He rose from the grave.
- Believe in Jesus as your own, personal savior.



If the Rapture Has Already Happened

If you are reading this book, and the Rapture has already happened, take heart. You can still be saved for eternity. You can receive salvation in the same way as written above.

Since you are living on earth during the Tribulation, things are going to get extremely difficult. You will need to remain faithful to Jesus throughout your time on earth. Don’t take the mark of the beast no matter how difficult or painful life gets. You may even die for your faith. You will need to keep your heart focused on God and eternity. Seek God in prayer continually, serving Him the best you know how while you are here.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”
John 3:16*

My Testimony about God's Word

New Birth: I became a Christian at age 19 while a sophomore in college.

One of the very clear evidences that a change had occurred in my heart was that God had given me a love for His Word which wasn't there before my conversion. There was also a very clear, discernable change in my heart attitudes and motivations.

Over 58 years later:

I still have a love for God's Word.

I have continued to study the Scriptures since my beginnings in college.

As I have tested God's Word in my own life:

I have found it to be true, right and just.

His wisdom is without error.

He is merciful and forgiving.

His judgments are just.

He is faithful in all that He says and does.

His pronouncements are made with clear and right understanding of every situation.

As I have studied this subject of the End Times and began to learn what He will do in the "Last Days," I am absolutely convinced that, just as hundreds of prophecies of Christ's 1st Coming have been exactly fulfilled just as were predicted (see Mt. 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23 for 5 specific fulfillments of prophecies) so also the hundreds of End Times prophecies recorded in the Scriptures will be fulfilled exactly as He has said.

My hope is that, through studying the Scriptures and this workbook, many who have rejected Jesus will see the terrible judgments that await them in eternity and will turn to God for help so that they don't suffer in the way it is foretold.

Please see "What Must I Do To Be Saved" on the previous page of this workbook for a guide to assist those who will repent and turn to God to receive His gift of salvation – and be saved from an eternity in the place which God has prepared for Satan and his rebellious angels. Believe me: "You don't want to go there."

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