

Calvary Chapel El Monte

Essentials of the Faith

Session 7 – “Essential Prophecy”

I. The Return of Jesus Christ

A. The Rapture

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Most likely, the next event on the “prophetic calendar” is the rapture of the church. This is the event when Jesus Christ descends to the clouds in order to bless believers with their glorified bodies; in the process He will gather up His church from planet earth, that they might be with Him forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 tells us that we will be “caught up” - the Greek word “harpazo” is translated “rapturo” in the Latin translation of the Bible and literally means “to seize or snatch away.”

The Greek word is also used in Acts 8:39 and 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 of Phillip and Paul being caught up in similar ways.

Acts 8:39 (NKJV) “Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:52, the rapture will take place in the “twinkling” (blinking) of an eye (1/11 of a second). We will not all die, but those who are raptured will experience the instant transformation of our bodies in order to fit us to live in the presence of God, in heaven forever.

Enoch is an Old Testament picture (typology) of the rapture of the church.

Genesis 5:24 (NKJV) “And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.”

Hebrews 11:5 (NKJV) “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

Many will be left behind (Luke 17:34-36)

B. The Invasion of Israel led by a Russian and Iranian/Arab Coalition; God will defeat Israel’s invaders (Ezekiel 38).

Bible students are not certain on the **when**, and even all the **whos** of Ezekiel 38. This invasion of Israel from the north may happen before or after the commencement of the Tribulation Period.

More details on these nations are suggested by K-House, *"The shifting geopolitical winds have once again raised the specter of Ezekiel's "Magog" invasion of Israel. Ezekiel describes this ill-fated "band of brothers" as coming from the lands of: Magog—the Southern Steppes of Russia (former Soviet- Bloc countries); Meshech and Tubal—Turkey; Persia—Iran; Ethiopia—Southern Egypt, Sudan, Somalia; Libya—Libya (may also include Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia); Gomer—North-Central Turkey; Togarmah—Eastern Turkey."*

We see significant signs in our day-and-age, especially with the recent alliance of Russia and Iran (Persia), amplified by the latter's desire to push Israel into the sea (annihilate the Jews).

But God will utterly defeat these invading armies and show the whole wide world who He is. This all takes place in the "latter years" (Ezekiel 38:8).

I'm amazed at the many military victories Israel has wrought since 1948, truly God has blessed this nation with wisdom and military might, but on THIS day, it appears the victory won't be attributed to the fighter jets of Israel, it will be an earthquake of the Almighty, pestilence, hailstones, fire and brimstone, God's intervention will be the only explanation.

Ezekiel 38:23 (NKJV) "Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the LORD."

Some people wonder how an Arab/Muslim led coalition could possibly invade Israel today without the assistance of Israeli allies? There are a couple of possible answers to that question. One is that nations such as the United States will be too weak to put up a fight...and we do see our nation weakening, don't we? We're no longer the super-power we once were. The other possibility is that the nations will not support Israel, shifting even to an ANTI-IsraeI stance. Tragically we see this taking place today, even our own nation's support for Israel has waned. Anti-semitism is on the rise.

Some Bible students see the United States as the "young lion" spoken of here in Ezekiel 38:13. Comparatively speaking, we are relatively "young." Protesting a bit verbally, but not willing to help, practically.

But that's when God shows up. It's been said that, *"We don't realize that God is all we need, until He's all we have."*

C. The 7-Year Tribulation Period (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:21; Revelation 2:22; 6-19)

Matthew 24:21 (NKJV) 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.

Revelation 2:22 (NKJV) Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

The Tribulation Period serves 2 purposes:

1. God deals with the Jews - many will be saved.

In the book of Daniel chapter 9, God appointed 70-7-year periods for Israel. The first 69 of those 7-year periods has been completed, but there remains 1 final "week" for Israel.

It begins with the antichrist making a 7-year covenant with Israel (he will bring some sort of peace in the Middle East). Midway through this week (Revelation 13:5; Daniel 7:25) the antichrist will show his true colors, and he enter the temple, proclaiming he's God and demanding to be worshipped (this is the abomination of desolation; Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-22)

The Apostle Paul spoke of this in:

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (NKJV) "Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

2. God judges the world (Revelation 6:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9)

The judgments described in Revelation chapters 6 through 19 describe the cataclysmic events that will take place on planet earth during this time.

Got Questions, "*Throughout Scripture, the tribulation is referred to by other names such as the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6-9; Joel 1:15; 2:1-31; 3:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:2); trouble or tribulation (Deuteronomy 4:30; Zephaniah 1:1); the great tribulation, which refers to the more intense second half of the seven-year period (Matthew 24:21).*"

D. The Bema-Seat Judgment (Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 4:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

Romans 14:10b (NKJV) "...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. "

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV) "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 good or bad."

At the Bema-Seat Judgment the works of all believers will be scrutinized by the Lord Jesus, and we will be rewarded according to our motives and faithfulness. We will be judged for not only what we did for Him, and how we did for Him and His church, but **WHY** we did what we did (our motives).

Faithfulness and proper motives will be the basis of our reward, which includes more responsibility and opportunity to serve our Savior forever (Luke 19:11-27).

Luke 19:17 (NKJV) And he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

2 John 1:8 (NKJV) "Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward."

Jesus said in, **Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)** "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

E. Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16; 19:11-21)

At the end of the Tribulation Period Satan will muster up the kingdoms of the world to oppose Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will return and utterly defeat the nations of the world. Christ will then cast the antichrist and false prophet into the Lake of Fire "alive" (Revelation 19:20)

F. The Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-6; Isaiah 35)

All who survived the Tribulation Period will stand before Christ who will then separate the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:32-46), this is often referred to as the Judgment of the Nations, when Jesus returns to planet earth (the Second Coming). The goats will be immediately judged, but the sheep will be allowed to experience the literal, actual, rule of Jesus Christ as King on planet earth for 1,000 years. The church (those who were raptured and/or died as Christians during the Tribulation Period) will also rule and reign with Christ during this time (Revelation 20:6; Luke 19:17; Matthew 19:28).

Matthew 19:28 (NKJV) "So Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

"The Millennium is the future thousand-year reign of Christ, a wonderful time of peace, joy, and blessing. Isaiah 35:1-2, 7 declares that desert and wilderness areas will flourish with plant life. This will occur because "water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert" (Isaiah 35:6). Evidently the underground supply of water will be changed to allow abundant surface water and springs. Rain will also increase in areas that used to be very dry, this may make the world more like it was at the time of the Garden of Eden.

It will be a time of bountiful harvests, both from trees and from fields (Ezekiel 34:27).

Jerusalem will be the capital of the world (Jer. 3:17), where the Lord will dwell.

This region will experience a special weather protection, according to Isaiah 4:5-6. Perhaps a supernatural canopy will cover the city, providing shade from the sun and shelter from the rain.

Jesus Christ will be the king of the world (Zech. 14:9)

Satan will be locked up for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3)

Dangerous animals such as lions, leopards and wolves will become so peaceful that "a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6)

Meat-eating animals will become vegetarians lions will eat grass (Isa. 11:7).

Wolves will live in peace with lambs; leopards and baby goats, lions and calves, bears and cows will be peaceful together (Isa. 11:6-7)

Snakes will no longer be dangerous, even poisonous snakes; babies will safely play near them (Isa. 11:8) animals will no longer hurt or destroy (Isa. 11:9). There will be no bloodshed in nature.

The whole Earth will be "full of the knowledge of the LORD" (Isa. 11:9)

Christ's followers will reign with Him over the Earth (Rev. 20:4-9; 5:10)

After the Millennium, there will be oen final rebellion when Satan is let loose to test the hearts of men. God will destroy the universe with fire in order to make way for a new heavens and a new earth."¹

II. Eternity

A. Heaven (Revelation 14:11; 20:15; 21:1-6)

The word heaven or heavens is found 661 times in the Bible. The word must be interpreted in its context. The *first* heaven is earth's atmosphere. The *second* heaven is space – all the galaxies and stars. The *third* heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2) is sometimes described as the place where God "lives" – and one day all believers who have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ, will be.

Although God is omnipresent, Heaven is described as God's residence (Revelation 21:3-4)

God will create a new first and second heaven and essentially combine all three heavens, where believers will be with Him – home in heaven forever.

B. The Lake of Fire (Revelation 21:7-8)

Jesus spoke more about hell (which ultimately leads to the Lake of Fire) than He did about heaven. God's heart is that none would perish but that all would come to repentance (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9; Matthew 25:41). We decide where we will spend eternity, either in the eternal blessed presence of God, or in eternal torment where the "worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44, 46, 48; Matthew 3:12). (even the worm doesn't cease to exist)

Matthew 25:41 (NKJV) "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

2 Thessalonians 1:9 (NKJV) "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,"

¹ <https://christiananswers.net/q-eden/ednk-millenniumweather.html>