

Series: **The End of Time**
Today's Title: **"End Times Q & A"**
November 26, 2023 – *Selected Passages*

Objective: To answer questions about the End Times and focus on God's love and justice.

Thank you to all who submitted questions about the book of Revelation and events in the end times.

Over the past 10 weeks (?) I've received questions – some of which were the same question – and I've condensed them into the 12 questions you have in your notes.

We have a lot of ground to cover – so let's jump right in.

#1: What about the saints in the faith from before the church age?

What happens to Old Testament saints at the rapture?

For example, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets.

Answer: There are a handful of resurrections referred to in Scripture.

Also, not every situation is detailed in Scripture – e.g. The righteous / believers in the Millennium – their resurrection is not given.

Here are some of the resurrections listed in the Bible.

1. Graves opened at the crucifixion – **Matt. 27:50-53**
2. O.T. Righteous / believers (see #1?) – Resurrection will take place after the Tribulation – **Daniel 12:1, 13**
3. O.T. Wicked – Resurrection – **Daniel 12:2b**

4. Church Age believers who died before the Rapture – They are raptured / caught up – **1 Thess. 4:13-18**
5. Church Age believers alive at the rapture – no resurrection – they are caught up – **1 Thess. 4:13-18**
6. Church Age Wicked / Unbelievers – Raised at the end of the Millennium - **Revelation 20:5**
7. Church Age Wicked / Unbelievers alive at the Rapture – will enter the Tribulation.
8. Those who come to faith during the Tribulation – Will be raised at the end of the Tribulation – **Rev. 7:9-19; 20:4-6?** (“rest of the dead”?)
9. Tribulation believers who survive the Tribulation – will enter the Millennium in non-glorified bodies.
10. Tribulation wicked / unbelievers who die during the Tribulation – resurrected to judgment and the end of the Millennium – **Rev. 20:5, 11-15.**
11. Tribulation wicked / unbelievers alive at the end of the Tribulation – alive at the 2nd coming of Christ – will be confined until the end of the Millennium – **Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15.**
12. Millennium Righteous / believers – no details mentioned in the Bible
13. Millennium Wicked / unbelievers – will be judged at the GWT – **Rev. 20:11-15.**

#2: What happened to the churches in Revelation 2-3?

When God announces a judgment, the judgment is carried out in public so all can verify God is true to His word.

What historical evidence do we have that the 5 churches in Rev 2-3 either changed their way or received the judgment pronounced on them? E.g. how do we know the Ephesus church returned to their original ways or if their lampstand was removed?

Answer:

Over the past 2,000 years, each of these cities no longer exists – but the city / town has been renamed – and some ruins still can still be found of the ancient cities listed in **Revelation 2-3**.

Ephesus – now the small town of *Selcuk* – about a 5-minute drive from the ruins of Ephesus.

The town is Muslim – but there is a small Protestant church of former-Muslims that gathers for worship and fellowship.

Smyrna – now called *Izmir* – home to more than 4 million people.

There are about 500 Christians who gather in at least 12 churches in this city.

Pergamum – modern-day city is named *Bergama*.

Very few Christians are known to live in Bergama – and there are no churches.

Thyatira – modern-day name is *Akhisar*.

There is no church in this city – and no known Christians.

Sardis – modern-day city is named *Sart*.

The ruins in Sart are extensive. When John wrote Revelation, this was the wealthiest Roman city.

There are ruins from a small, 4th century church – built on what was the grounds of the Temple of Artemis.

Perhaps a sign that Jesus' warning to the church in Sardis were heeded. Evidence of their repentance is this church was built a few hundred years after John wrote Revelation.

Sart is only 1 mile from the ruins of Sardis and the city has only 5,000 residents.

Today, there are no known Christians in Sart.

Philadelphia – modern-day city is *Ataşehir*.

The modern city was built on top of the ruins of Philadelphia.

History records that in 156 A.D., 11 Christians from Philadelphia were martyred alongside Polycarp, who was the Bishop of Smyrna.

Laodicea – modern city of *Denizli*.

Lukewarm water – not hot or cold – but lukewarm was the analogy Jesus used in His warning to the Laodicean church.

The church of Colossae was close by – and in his letter to the Colossians, Paul instructed the believers to read his letter to those in Laodicea as well.

There was a strong earthquake in 600 A.D., and this caused the residents of Laodicea to abandon the city and start what is now the modern city of Denizli.

The Turks invasion in the 11th century wiped out any remaining residents of the ancient city of Laodicea.

Today, about 500,000 people live in Denizli – with only 3 or 4 professing Christians.

The lessons of the 7 churches are clear: *Be faithful and don't compromise your faith.*

Commit yourself – fully – to Christ.

Jesus doesn't promise you earthly success and wealth, but He does promise eternal success – eternal wealth that surpasses our greatest imagination.

#3: What is the Biblical support for the rapture occurring Pre-trib?

Answer:

First, I would refer you to the sermon on October 1 – “The Rapture of the Church”.

Second, I would point you to the Biblical passages I believe speak to the rapture taking place before the Tribulation.

1 Thess. 4:15b-18

“...we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

This passage gives a description of the rapture – along with the order of who is raptured / caught up / snatched up first.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.”

John 14:1-3

“Let not your hearts be troubled... In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.”

These passages describe the rapture event, but they don't tell us when the rapture will take place.

So, what are some proofs the rapture takes the Church away before the Tribulation begins on the earth?

1. The Church is not mentioned in **Revelation 6-18**.
2. The comfort / encouragement promised

1 Thessalonians 1:10

“...Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

1 Thessalonians 4:18

“Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

5:9, 11

“For God has not destined us for wrath...”

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

Revelation 3:10

“I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.”

3. The return of the Church with Jesus at His return.

1 Thess. 3:13

“...so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus ***with all His saints.***”

3b. - In 1 Thess. 4:17, it says alive Christians will meet Christ in the clouds. But it doesn't say that we will stay in the clouds. It only says that we will remain with Christ. Could this mean that we meet Christ in the clouds on his way down at His second coming? I don't think this passage rules out this possibility.

Answer: True – it doesn't rule out that possibility.

3c. - How do we reconcile passages that say, “Pay attention to the signs” (e.g., Matt 24) and passages that suggest it will be a surprise (like a thief in the night...)?

These are not contradictions. One is talking about the signs of the times – having a general sense that the end is near.

The other makes it clear that nobody will know the exact time.

It will surprise those who aren’t looking at the times – those who live without God – without caring about God.

#4: What is the Biblical support for mid or post tribulation rapture of the Church?

Those who hold to a mid-trib view look to many of the same passages as those who hold a pre-trib view – they just interpret them differently.

Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.”

They interpret the ‘*appearance*’ of the “loud voices in heaven” as the Church being raptured into heaven as the 7th trumpet is blown.

This also ties in with the trumpet call of God – in **1 Cor. 15 & 1 Thess. 4.**

Mid-Trib proponents believe God promises to save the Church from the Great Tribulation – which is the 2nd half of the Tribulation.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

“Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to Him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed...

For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction...”

They use this passage to show the Anti-Christ will be revealed – which will happen at the mid-point of the Tribulation when he breaks his peace treaty with Israel – and then the rapture of the Church will take place.

Good, solid Christians hold various end-time views. Pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib.

Various views on the Bema Seat – when the Marriage Supper of the Lamb happens, along with the various resurrections.

Most of these different views are not primary doctrinal beliefs. They are secondary at best – maybe even less than that.

Don't let some of these differences between believers cause you to have a negative view – or cease fellowship.

Romans 14 applies here when it says not to “quarrel over disputable matters” (NIV) or not to “pass judgment on his opinions.” (NASB).

#5: How can/could Satan be in God’s presence?

I’ve always heard that sinners can’t be in God’s presence, but maybe this is an oversimplification.

Regarding the fall of Satan and the 1/3 of angels/stars, you proposed two possible times for this. I had always assumed that this was before Adam, which explains the presence of demons in the OT and NT.

Answer:

I believe the original fall of Satan – from his perfect angelic state – happened before Adam – likely before the creation of the world. This is detailed in **Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:13-16.**

It’s clear in the O.T. that God allowed Satan access to heaven – as we see in **Job 1:6-12**, and Satan accused Joshua the High Priest in **Zechariah 3.**

But, after the cross and resurrection, Satan was defeated and some believe after this, he was banished out of heaven – which we read about in **Revelation 12** – as Satan was cast down to earth.

In the N.T., we don’t have any passages that speak of Satan entering heaven.

But we do have numerous passages that speak of him attacking and deceiving Christians / people on earth. Peter warns us that the Devil is like a lion – looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)!!

Paul helps us understand the true nature of our spiritual battle here on earth – is not against flesh and blood – but it's against "...but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12 – "heavenly places" refer to atmosphere – sky – not a technical term for heaven.)

Should Christians fight the rise of globalism? Or should we go along with it, knowing that the return of Christ will be sooner? [This is reminiscent of a similar "prepper" mentality among some

Christians, who on one hand have a secure final destination, but on the other hand want to hold onto earthly life as hard as possible.]

The Bible is not clear on this question, because it's not the primary message of Scripture.

However, I think we can see an answer to this question in the Bible.

1. The Bible never criticizes the concept of nations.
2. The Bible warns of great power, corruption, and evil of those who hold power.
3. Knowing the nature of mankind, I would be very cautious and concerned about globalism and omnipotent world power. Just look at history.

4. I don't think we ever encourage or cheer on something evil – in order to usher in Christ's return.
5. We see pictures of heaven in which many people, nations, and languages are present. This is celebrated in the Bible – the unity in Christ among people who are very different in almost every other way!

Who are the saints in Rev 13?

Answer:

vs. 7 – “Also it (The beast / Anti-Christ) was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.”

These are believers during the Tribulation period – and they are persecuted – often to the point of death – by the Anti-Christ and those who serve him.

#6: Tribulation saints... what happens to them?

If someone comes to faith after the Rapture has happened do those people get to go to Heaven at Jesus' 2nd coming?
Or if they die during the Tribulation, do they get to go to Heaven?

Answer:

Anybody who puts their faith in Christ during the Tribulation will be eternally saved.

Will they go to heaven at Jesus' 2nd coming?

No. If they are alive – they will enter the Millennium Kingdom with mortal / non-glorified bodies.

If believers in Christ die during the Tribulation – their soul will immediately be in the presence of Christ – and they will be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-17; 20:4-6).

Can someone repent after taking the mark of the beast?

Answer:

Great question!

We don't have any direct passage in the Bible that speaks to this.

However, we do know that there is no sin which is beyond the grace and forgiveness of God.

So, theologically, yes – this can be forgiven if someone repents.

But the Bible states those who take the mark of the Beast will be eternally judged (Rev. 14:9-10).

I think the question is this: If someone takes the mark of the beast, will they ever want to repent?

Will they ever have any interest in Christ?

Or will they get more and more angry at God as they experience the judgments throughout the Tribulation?

#7: Will some Christians feel loss / regret / shame / disappointment at the Bema Seat?

Answer:

Feelings of regret...

The Bible doesn't speak to this directly, but this is how I view / answer this question.

In his book, Heaven, Randy Alcorn refers to the current heaven as the 'Temporary Heaven'.

'Temporary heaven' compared to the eternal state.

This is how he distinguishes between what exists now, and the "New Heaven" which is promised in **Rev. 21:1**.

The question is, at the Bema Seat of Christ – those who are judged to have been irresponsible with the gifts God gave them in this life – irresponsible with the blessings God gave them in life – their life work is burned up – nothing of eternal value survives the fire of His judgment.

They enter heaven – they are forgiven – a co-heir with Christ – BUT their life on earth is judged in a negative light.

Does that person feel bad – sorrowful?

Are they full of regret – realizing they wasted much of their life and missed out on hearing Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

I believe the answer is 'yes'.

But this is not an eternal emotion / sadness.

In **Revelation 21** – when the New Heaven and New Earth are described and the eternal state is being inaugurated, it says:

Revelation 21:4

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

So, I believe there will be regret and/or sadness at the Bema for unfaithful Christians, but this will not be eternal – and you will still have great joy as you are in heaven – in the presence of Christ.

#10: If we came to Christ late, is there any way to make up for lost time during our judgement at the Bema seat of Christ?

No – and you don't have to.

All your sins prior to faith in Christ are covered by the cross – forgiven by God's grace – through our faith in Christ.

At the Bema – Christians will be judged for how they lived their Christian life – in light of Christ and His Word – His mission to us.

#11: In Ezekiel 1:10, does Ezekiel visions of the cherubim or living creatures have anything to do with Revelation?

Ezekiel 1:10

“As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle.”

Answer:

Other than these being the same kind of angelic beings we read about in Revelation; this passage doesn't speak to end time events.

This passage is introducing the reader to Ezekiel, his vision, and his mission.

#12: Why does every generation since the resurrection think the end is imminent?

Matthew 24:32-33

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.

So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.”

Jesus seems to say we will know the approximate time of the end based on world events described in revelation.

If this is so obvious, why does every generation since the resurrection think the end is imminent?

Answer:

Jesus – and other N.T. writers – taught the imminence of His coming.

I discussed what seems to be a contradiction on this point earlier...

But here I want to give us all a caution about how we interpret these things and especially how we – and every

generation – tends to connect these events with our current time in history.

I suppose the reason for this is our time in history is what we know – what we experience each day.

It's the primary lens through which we look at the world!

However, we need to remind ourselves that we are a small part – a momentary blip on the historical clock.

God's ways are far above and beyond our own.

We must not interpret everything we read through the lens of our own time or experience.

I mentioned in the 1st sermon in this series – 1 of my application points was: *"Not everything necessarily means something."*

When you read something in Revelation, it doesn't always point to something in our world today.

Don't try to connect everything you read in

Revelation to some current event, nation, or leader.

But every generation does this.

Probably due to the pride or selfishness that is so inherent in each of us.

We see everything through ourselves!

So, be careful - must be wise – discern the times – but don't be foolish in your interpretation of the text – or of the culture.

Don't be dogmatic!

Stay away from dogmatic identifications and/or predictions.

Apply it...

Be encouraged by revealed truth about the end of time.

Ask questions – there are answers available – most of the time.

Share the gospel!!! Judgment is coming!!!

Post-it notes listing those you will invite to a Christmas service!

Close in prayer