

## ESCHATOLOGY

### The Study Of The End Times

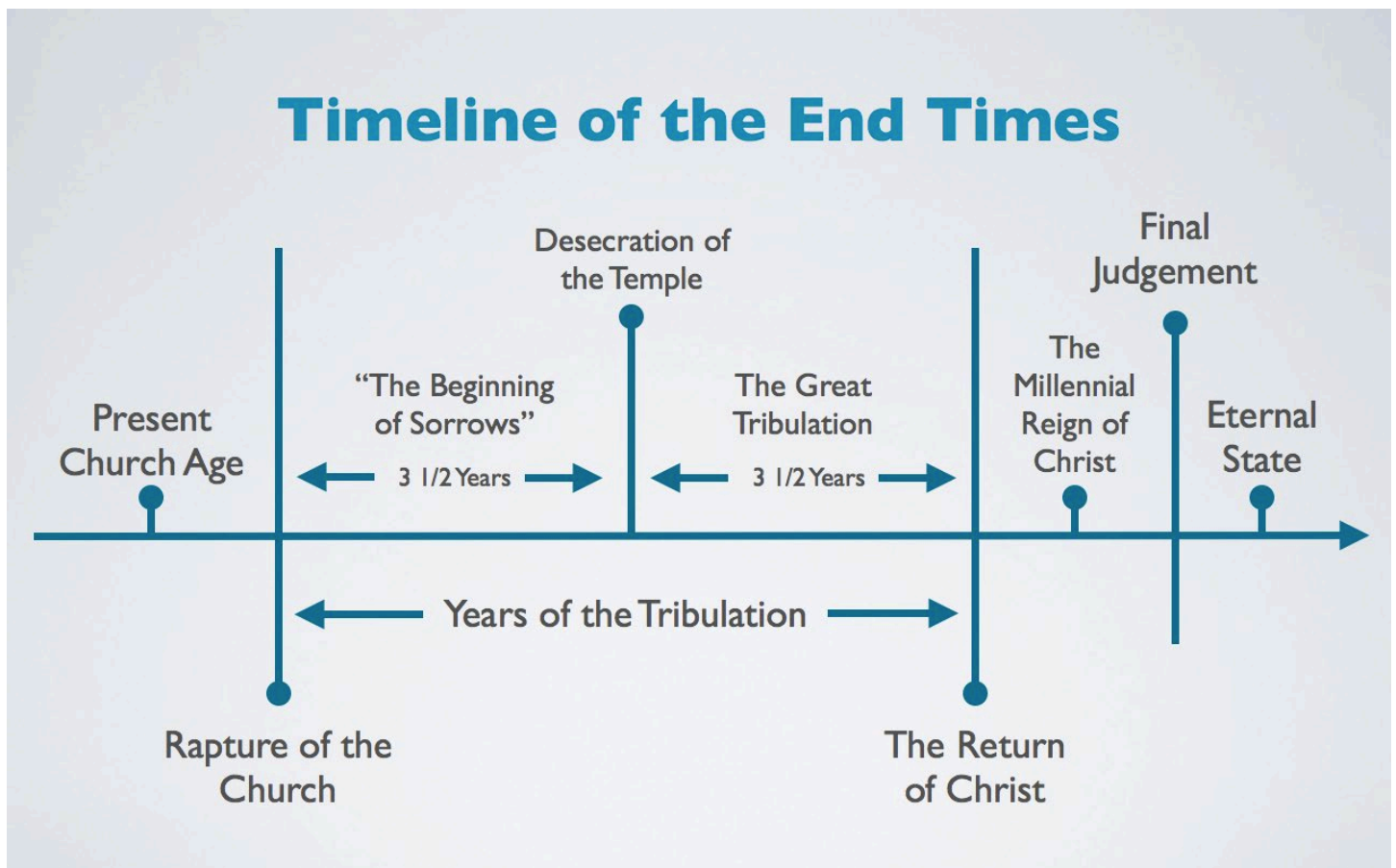
### WHAT WE BELIEVE

#### *Understanding the End Times from a Biblical Perspective*

**ESCHATOLOGY:** The study of 'last things'—God's final plan for creation, humanity, and eternity.

**Pre-millennial** viewpoint, Christ will come back to earth before a thousand-year reign on the earth.

**Pre-tribulational** - Christ will rapture the church out before the Great Tribulation.



## 9 MAJOR EVENTS RELATED TO THE END TIMES

### 1. THE RAPTURE AND FIRST RESURRECTION

**DEFINITION** - The word **RAPTURE**, which comes from a Latin word, means literally to be caught up. And it refers to the meeting in the air of believers in Jesus Christ when He returns for His church.

*John 14, 1 Corinthians 15, Philippians 3, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8.*

**DEFINITION** - The **FIRST RESURRECTION** then is related to it, but not identical to it and refers to the raising of the bodies of those who are believers in Jesus Christ who are dead when He returns for His church prior to the tribulation period and simultaneous with the rapture, and secondly, those who are raised at the second coming prior to the millennium. And so the first resurrection is not limited to one particular person or persons at one particular time.

The phrase **first resurrection** is used in the Bible to talk about the body of believers being transformed and glorified into Christ likeness whenever that takes place.

#### ◆ 1 Thessalonians 4:16

*<sup>16</sup> 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.*

#### ◆ Revelation 20:4-6

*<sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*

#### ◆ 1 Cor. 15:22-23

*<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

## 2. THE REWARDS OF THE BELIEVER (BEMA Seat)

**DEFINITION** - The believer will be judged according to his works and will receive rewards based upon those works. This takes place sometime after the rapture, at the judgment seat of Christ. The term **“Bema”** comes from the Greek word βῆμα (**bēma**), meaning *a raised platform or judgment seat*.

### Biblical Foundation

Key passages:

- ◆ **Romans 14:10–12** – *“For we shall all stand before the judgment seat (bēma) of Christ... So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”*
- ◆ **2 Corinthians 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 good or bad.”*
- ◆ **1 Corinthians 3:11–15** – Paul describes believers’ works being tested by fire; what endures is rewarded, what burns is lost (but the believer himself is saved).

### Purpose of the Bema Seat

1. **To evaluate believers’ works** (not to punish sin—Christ already bore that on the cross).
2. **To reward faithfulness** and service done for Christ’s glory.
3. **To reveal the quality of each believer’s life and motives.**

## 3. THE RETRIBUTION OF UNBELIEVERS (Tribulation)

**The Tribulation** is speaking of a 7 year period.

**The Great Tribulation** speaking of a 3.5 year period.

**DEFINITION** - This is a period of seven years when God's judgment on unbelieving man will be intense and fulfilled. It will be specifically related to Israel, but will include all of the earth.

- Daniel's 70th week
- Time of Jacob's trouble
- The day of the Lord

### ◆ Revelation 7:9

*<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb,*

*clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,<sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

### **The Specific Events Of The Period**

- The period will begin with a **seven-year covenant** being made between antichrist and Israel. Daniel 9:24, 27
- The covenant will be broken at the midpoint. *Daniel 9:27, 2 Thessalonians 2-4, Matthew 24:15*
- The **seal judgments** in **chapter 6**
- The **trumpet judgments** in **chapter 8 and 9**
- The **bowl judgments** in **chapter 16**

## **4. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (Second Coming)**

**DEFINITION** - It refers to the bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

It will take place at the end of the tribulation period and the millennial kingdom, the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth will immediately follow.

The Bible makes it crystal clear again and again, the time is unknown to man.

## **5. THE REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS (The Millennial Kingdom)**

**DEFINITION** - Here we speak of the millennial kingdom, the 1,000 year period in which Jesus Christ rules over the earth as the promised Messiah, the seed of David.

This reign will follow the second coming or the revelation of Christ, and it will be an intermediate stage of the eternal kingdom, Jerusalem will serve as his capital.

The eschatological kingdom refers to that time, which is yet future, when God will sovereignly reign over the earth through the person of His divinely appointed and anointed mediator, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of David.

## **6. THE RELEASE AND THE REVOLT OF SATAN**

**DEFINITION** - In Revelation 20:7-10, we are told that following the millennial kingdom, Satan will be released for a short time.

This event takes place at the end of that thousand year period.

### **◆ Revelation 20:7-10**

*<sup>7</sup>And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison<sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.<sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came*

*down from heaven and consumed them,<sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

## **7. THE SECOND RESURRECTION (THE SECOND DEATH)**

The phrase *second resurrection* never occurs in the Bible.

**DEFINITION** - This refers to the second resurrection of the dead, dead in terms of spiritually dead. It is actually called the second death.

Here unbelievers will be resurrected to judgment and eternal damnation.

### ◆ **Revelation 2:11**

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.”*

### ◆ **Revelation 20:6**

*“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.”*

### ◆ **Revelation 20:14**

*“Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”*

### ◆ **Revelation 21:8**

*“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”*

## **8. THE RENOVATION OF THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH**

**DEFINITION** - This is the making brand new of the present heavens and the earth. This will be the eternal abode of the saints of God.

Revelation 21 and 22, you have a magnificent description of the new heavens, the new earth, the New Jerusalem, the wonderful location and the wonderful provision for all the redeemed and all of those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

### ◆ **Revelation 21:1-2**

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.<sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

### ◆ **Revelation 22:1-5**

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

## **9. ETERNAL DAMNATION**

**DEFINITION** - This refers to the eternal punishment of unbelievers.

They will indeed be cast into the lake of fire where they will be punished forever.

### **◆ Revelation 20:11-15**

*<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

## **THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

### **1. The Rapture Is An Event Of Controversy**

There are at least five major views out there today concerning the time of the rapture.

- Partial rapturism
- Pre-wrath rapturism
- Post-tribulationalism
- Mid-tribulationalism
- Pre-tribulationalism

### **2. The Rapture Is An Event For Christians - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

<sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming (Parousia) of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

### 3. The Rapture Is Also An Event Of Celebration

<sup>17</sup> 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.

**“caught up”** - *harpazo* - Latin word *rapture* - means to catch up or to snatch up.

### 4. The Rapture Is Also An Event Of Comfort

<sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.

## COMPARATIVE CHART OF RAPTURE AND THE SECOND COMING AS DISTINCT EVENTS

The Rapture	The Second Coming
Christ comes to receive His church in the air.	Christ returns with his bride and angels to the earth.
The seven year tribulation begins shortly after the rapture of the church.	The millennial kingdom (1000 years) of Christ is established after the second coming.
The event is imminent; it could happen at any time.	Numerous signs precede this event (cf. Rev. 6–19).
This is a message of comfort for believers.	This is a message of judgment (and warning) for unbelievers.
The church is of primary importance.	Israel is of primary importance.
The rapture is a mystery.	The second coming is predicted in both the Old and New Testaments.
The judgment seat of Christ for believers occurs (Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).	1) The sheep and goats judgment occurs (Matt. 25: 31-46) 2) Antichrist and the world are judged (Rev. 19:11-21).
Only believers are affected.	All people are affected.
The church is taken into the Lord's presence in heaven.	All believers are brought into the millennial kingdom to reign with Christ on earth.