



Foundations #17

Eschatology: A study of God's Plan for Humanity and His Kingdom

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Eschatology: A study of God's Plan for humanity and His Kingdom

Objectives

1. To know God and His plan for eternity in a deeper and more meaningful way.
2. To allow such knowledge to transform how we feel about and respond to Christ.
3. To increase our compassion for those without Christ.
4. To increase our expectation of our Lord's Second Coming.

Theme Passage

Titus 2:11-15 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,** ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. ¹⁵ Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

Lesson 1: Israel in Prophecy

Big Idea: To gain greater insight into GOD's sovereign plan in choosing the nation of Israel to be a blessing to the entire world. To understand that GOD has a plan for Israel's future that involves them coming to the forefront of all other nations as a fulfillment of GOD's covenant to them. A covenant is a sacred promise, in this case, a divine covenant that cannot and will not become void.

Genesis 1:27 *So God created man in His own image; in the **image** of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

→ What does it mean "**created in the image of God?**"

- People possess the attributes of personality, knowledge, emotions, and a will.
- People are eternal; they live forever.
- People have moral freedom and responsibility.
- People are spiritual; they are created to have communion with GOD.

Genesis 1-11 covers four major events:

1. **Creation**
2. **The Fall**
3. **The Flood**
4. **The Tower of Babel**

The remaining 39 chapters of Genesis deal with four patriarchs and cover 200 years. God set aside one group of people, the Jewish nation, to demonstrate His name and work throughout the whole world. Like all other nations, the Nation of Israel began with one man.

Abraham/Isaac	Genesis 12-25
Jacob	Genesis 26-36
Joseph	Genesis 37-50

Genesis 12:1-3 *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ²I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

Genesis 12 God's covenant to Abram; his name meant 'high father.'

1. I will make of you a great nation.
2. I will bless you.
3. I will make your name great.
4. I will make you a blessing to others.
5. I will bless them that bless you.
6. I will curse them that curse you.
7. In you all families of the earth will be blessed.

- God changed Abram's name to Abraham, meaning "father of multitudes."
- There are conditional and unconditional covenants in Scripture.
- A conditional covenant is an agreement that is binding on both parties for its fulfillment. Both parties agree to fulfill certain conditions. If either party fails to meet its responsibilities, the covenant is broken, and neither party has to fulfill the expectations of the covenant.
- An unconditional covenant is an agreement between two parties, but only one of the two parties has to do something. Nothing is required of the other party.
- The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. The actual covenant is found in **Genesis 12:1-3**. The ceremony recorded in **Genesis 15** indicates the unconditional nature of the covenant; God alone moves between the halves of the animals. Abraham was in a deep sleep. God's solitary action indicates that the covenant is His promise and binds Himself to the covenant.
- Circumcision was to Abraham's descendants a sign of the covenant (**Genesis 17:9-14; Acts 7:8**). The Mosaic Law repeated the requirement (**Leviticus 12:2-3**), and Jews throughout the centuries have continued to practice circumcision (**Joshua 5:2-3; Luke 1:59; Acts 16:3; Philippians 3:5**).

→ See **GotQuestions.org** for a one-page article on the "Abrahamic Covenant" and "Is Israel still GOD's chosen people?"

At Grace, we believe that even as God is working through the church in this age, Israel is still God's people in a unique way. The biblical basis for that statement is found in Old Testament covenants and songs, Jewish history, the biblical prophecies, and the New Testament insistence that God is faithful.

→ A glimpse into the Future Kingdom of GOD and the Nation of Israel:

Zechariah 8:23 *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'*

→ An application for the church as we await the fulfillment of **Zechariah 8:23**:

Matthew 5:13-15 *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, **that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**"*

→ Just as the Nation of Israel desired to embrace the various cultures around them, the church often allows culture to mold it.

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Old Testament Timeline:

<u>Noah</u>	<u>Abraham</u>	<u>Isaac</u>	<u>Jacob/Esau</u>		<u>Joseph</u>	<u>Moses</u>		
2500BC	2166BC	2065BC	2005BC		1914BC	1526BC		
<u>Joshua</u>	<u>The Judges</u>		<u>Saul</u>	<u>David</u>	<u>Solomon</u>	<u>Kingdom Divides</u>		
1406BC	1398BC		1043BC	1010BC	970BC	930BC		
Enter Canaan			1 st King.	2 nd King	3 rd King	Judah / Israel		
<u>Elijah</u>	<u>Elisha</u>	<u>Jonah</u>	<u>Amos</u>	<u>Hosea</u>	<u>Micah</u>	<u>Isaiah</u>	<u>Jeremiah</u>	<u>Daniel/Ezekiel</u>
875BC	848BC	835BC	760BC	753BC	742BC	740BC	627BC	605/597BC

The Davidic Covenant

Ezekiel 37:21-28 *"Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²²and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. ²³They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.*

²⁴*"David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. ²⁵Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. ²⁶Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ²⁸**The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."***

The Davidic Covenant refers to God's promises to David through Nathan the prophet and is found in **2 Samuel 7** and later summarized in **1 Chronicles 17:11-14** and **2 Chronicles 6:16**. This is an unconditional covenant made between God and David through which God promises David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever. The Davidic Covenant is unconditional because God does not place any conditions of obedience upon its fulfillment. The surety of the promises made rests solely on God's faithfulness and does not depend at all on David or Israel's obedience.

Vital Dates for the Nation of Israel

605BC The Babylonian Captivity Begins. Daniel was taken to Babylon (Iraq) in 605BC, and Ezekiel was taken in 597BC along with 10,000 other Jews

539BC Persia conquers Babylon. The Edict of Cyrus, King of Persia, supports the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. (The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah address the return)

538BC Zerubbabel leads the first group and oversees the rebuilding of the Temple

458BC Ezra the Priest leads the second group and restores the Worship

444BC Nehemiah leads the final group and rebuilds the Walls.

331BC Greece, under Alexander the Great, defeats the Persians and allowed the Jewish people to maintain their religion and culture. However, there were periods of significant conflict and persecution, most notably under Antiochus IV, who outlawed Jewish practices and desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem, sparking the Maccabean Revolt, **167-134BC**.

70AD Romans destroy Jerusalem and the Temple under General Titus, the son of Emperor Vespasian. This ended the Jewish revolt against Rome that started in 66BC, led by the Zealots. The Arch of Titus in Rome depicts the sacking of Jerusalem.

135AD Roman Emperor Hadrian (117-138AD) banished Jews from Jerusalem and brought great persecution on the Jewish people.

330-1453 The Byzantine Period begins, (Eastern Roman Empire) divided into early, middle, and late eras at its fall in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks. The capital was Constantinople, Turkey. Christianity became the official religion, with Greek being the primary language over Roman Latin. The name was changed to Istanbul after the fall of the Ottomans.

500-1500 Middle Ages Jewish people became dispersed and lived as minorities either under Christian or Muslim control. At times they experienced toleration, but they were also forced to convert or be exiled, forcing many to Eastern Europe.

1517 Reformation officially started on October 31st under the leadership of Martin Luther. Luther's book, *Jesus Christ was Born A Jew* in 1523, helped shed positive favor on the Jewish community, but that changed with his book in 1543, *On The Jews and Their Lies*. Hitler used Luther's material as propaganda to turn many Germans against the Jews.

1897 Zionist movement officially began under Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland. His 1896 pamphlet outlined his plans for a reborn Jewish state.

1917 The Balfour Declaration was a British government statement, issued as a letter from Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur Balfour to Lord Walter Rothschild, expressing support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

1939-1945 World War 2 allowed the world to see the results of antisemitism under Hitler and the need for the Jews to secure a homeland.

1948 (May 14th) Prime Minister David Ben Gurion announced Israel's independence and statehood, the day prior to Britain's withdrawal from Palestine. This led to the May 15th attack of 5 Arab nations against Israel—the War of Independence.

→ **Resource:** YouTube David Guzik *1948 Fulfilled Prophecy or Forced Agenda* (20-minute defense of the distinction between Israel and the Church)

1967 Six-Day War against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. President Nasser stated, "Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel..." The Arab leaders were clear that they wanted a war that would exterminate Israel.

Total Troops Israel **264,000** (all but 50,000 reservists) Total Troops Arab Coalition **547,00**

Aircraft Israel **300** Aircraft Arab Coalition **800**

Tanks Israel **800** Tanks Arab Coalition **2500**

The Arab leadership planned to drive Israel into the Mediterranean Sea, complete annihilation. When it was over, IDF – Israel Defense Forces had occupied the Gaza Strip and the Sinai peninsula of Egypt, Syria's Golan Heights, and the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem, both under Jordanian rule.

1973 Yom Kippur War; Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel as they celebrated the Jewish holy day of atonement, Yom Kippur. They desired to regain the land they lost during the Six-Day War. After initial success IDF regrouped and drove back

2023 (October 7th) Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups launched a large-scale surprise attack against Israel. Hamas perpetrated the worst terrorist attack in Israel's history on the Jewish holy day of Simchat Torah (Rejoicing in the Torah, the completion of the annual reading of the Torah, the Law of GOD). Hamas murdered some 1,200 civilians, including more than 40 American citizens, and took 251 more innocent people hostage, including 12 Americans. Hamas is a ruthless terrorist group that uses civilians and children as shields. The original 1988 Hamas Charter explicitly states that Israel will be "obliterated" by Islam. The 2017 policy document, while removing some antisemitic language, stops short of recognizing Israel's right to exist.

Three Questions Regarding the Current War in Israel:

1. What is the desire of Hamas?
 - a. The original 1988 Hamas Charter explicitly states that Israel will be "obliterated" by Islam. The 2017 policy document, while removing some antisemitic language, stops short of recognizing Israel's right to exist.
2. What would Israel do if Hamas dropped all its weapons?
3. What would Hamas do if Israel dropped all their weapons?

2024 – Israel (7.5 million Jews, 2 million Arabs). The population of the adjoining Arab Nations, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, totals 135 million, with an estimated 278 million Arabs in the Middle East. The total Jewish worldwide population is 10 million.

God's plan for His Church – The Rapture

(Lesson #5)

God's Plan for Israel – The Tribulation and Rescue at the Second Coming of Christ

(Lesson #5)

Revelation 19:11-16 *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. ¹²His 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. ¹³He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

The Covenant/Dispensational Debate Continues

1. Within each group are variations; guard against believing one size fits everyone.
2. Both sides have a love for GOD and a deep respect for Scripture.
3. Both groups can be guilty of misrepresenting the other.
4. Both boldly proclaim that salvation is in the work of Jesus Christ and is received by faith and grace.

To simplify a difference, Covenant Theology would hold that Israel and the Church are the same. There is no distinction. They do not appreciate calling their view “replacement theology” for that suggests the church replaced Israel. They don’t teach that Israel has been replaced, but that it is the church, and the church is Israel. Most who embrace a Covenant theology hold to Amillennialism. (There is no literal Millennial, 1000-year Kingdom) Lesson #9 addresses this.

Dispensationalists teach that the church and Israel are distinct and that GOD has a plan that includes the Nation in the Tribulation and Second Coming that sets up a literal Kingdom where Jesus will reign for 1000 years.

Many within the Covenant circles state that Dispensationalism, the Rapture, and premillennialism began in the 1800s under JN Darby (1800-1882). With that said, a counterargument is that Covenant theology finds its roots in the Reformation under Calvin and other reformers, though others would say 4th-century Augustine. Either way, there are careful students who pursue the teachings of premillennialism back to the church fathers who lived in the 100s and 200s. The point being, we should research our beliefs as far back in history as possible.

The Apostolic Fathers were a group of early Christian leaders and authors who lived shortly after the apostles. Their writings are typically dated between AD 80–180. **Most of the Apostolic Fathers are believed to have known the apostles personally or were connected to them in some way.** Polycarp is traditionally seen as a disciple of the apostle John. Clement was likely the second, third, or fourth bishop of Rome, and he may have known some of the apostles.

The ante-Nicene (*ante* = *before*) fathers were those who came after the apostolic fathers and before the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. Such individuals as Irenaeus, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr are ante-Nicene fathers. (GotQuestions.org)

Resources:

The Fathers on the Future – A 2nd Century Eschatology for the 21st-Century Church by Michael Svigel (not an easy read)

Eusebius – The History of the Church. Eusebius, 260-339, a Greek Christian identified as the Father of Church History.

Lesson 2: Benefits of Studying Prophecy

Big Idea: It is vital to understand that Scripture is much more than a book with divine information. It has life-transforming and life-enhancing principles. When this idea is embraced, it radically transforms our view of Scripture and increases our desire for it. We see this truth clearly communicated to the membership of the Thessalonica Church.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you _____*

An alarming issue: we probably know of someone who is well-versed in Scripture, but their attitude and actions don't seem to be transformed at all. What is this about? The writer of Hebrews addressed this by explaining Scripture must be received and applied with faith, or trust in GOD. In other words, we seek to be a student of Scripture to be a student of GOD. To know, love, and serve GOD in a deeper and more meaningful way, and to live out the second part of the great command in loving my neighbor as myself. Any other motive is counterproductive and results in confusion and frustration.

→ **Hebrews 4:1-2** *Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

Scripture specifically addresses its benefits to the believer in the area of prophecy.

→ **Revelation 1:1-3** *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. ³ _____ is he who _____; for the time is near.*

Another example where understanding prophecy brings us benefit is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Read through this passage to see how embracing these truths benefits us.

→ **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** *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. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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. 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. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

2 Peter 3:1-13 *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), ² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, ³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶ by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. ⁷ But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*

Unpacking the Passage: 2 Peter 3

1. What was Peter's purpose in writing the letter? vv.1-2
2. What did Peter want them to know about the scoffers? vv.3-7

Psalm 90:4

"Since a thousand years are as one day to the Lord, we cannot accuse Him of delayed fulfillment of His promises. In God's sight, the whole universe is only a few days old! He is not limited by time the way we are, nor does He measure it according to man's standards. When you study the works of God, especially in the Old Testament, you can see that He is never in a hurry, but He is never late.

He could have created the entire universe in an instant, yet He preferred to do it over a period of six days. He could have delivered Israel from Egypt in a moment, yet He preferred to invest eighty years in training Moses. For that matter, He could have sent the Savior much sooner, but He waited until "the fullness of the time was come" (**Gal. 4:4**). While God works *in* time, He is not limited *by* time.

To God, a thousand years is as one day, and one day as a thousand years. God can accomplish in one day what it would take others a millennium to accomplish! He waits to work, but once He begins to work, He gets things done!

The scoffers did not understand God's eternity, nor did they understand His mercy. Why was God delaying the return of Christ and the coming of the Day of the Lord? It was not because He was *unable* to act or *unwilling* to act. He was not tardy or off schedule! Nobody on earth has the right to decide when God must act. God is sovereign in all things and does not need prodding or even counsel from sinful man (**Rom. 11:33-36**).

God delays the coming of Christ and the great day of fiery judgment because He is long-suffering and wants to give lost sinners the opportunity to be saved. "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation" (**2 Peter 3:15**).

God's "delay" is actually an indication that He has a plan for this world and that He is working His plan. There should be no question in anybody's mind whether God *wants* sinners to be saved. God "is not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). First Timothy 2:4 affirms that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." These verses give both the negative and the positive, and together they assure us that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (**Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11**). He shows His mercy to all (**Rom. 11:32**) even though not all will be saved.

-- Warren Wiersbe

1. An understanding of prophecy should _____ a materialistic lifestyle **2 Peter 3:10**

→ **Matthew 6:19-20** _____

2. An understanding of prophecy should _____ a godly lifestyle **v.11**

3. An understanding of prophecy should _____ an expectant lifestyle **vv.12-14**

The Practical and Motivating Nature of Prophecy (write out the passages)

1. Incentive to Godliness and purity **Titus 2:12-13, 1John 3:2-3**

2. Incentive to patience to endure trials **James 5:7-8, 1Peter 1:7-9, Matt 5:11-12**

3. Incentive to Faith

John 14:1-3

4. Incentive to Sincerity

Philippians 1:9-11

5. Incentive to Obedience

1 Timothy 6:13-14

6. Incentive to Watchfulness

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

7. Incentive to Abide in Christ

1 John 2:28-29

In your own words, describe the various benefits we gain from Scripture about the return of Jesus.

Lesson 3: Overview of God's Prophetic Plan

Big Idea: We gain a huge advantage by standing back and taking a look at the big picture of God's plans for eternity. God has not left us in the dark regarding what lies ahead for our future, and it is incredibly exciting. We are aware that not all believers embrace our conclusion, and in lesson four, we will look at the various views of prophecy.

Overview of God's Prophetic Plan:

1. The Church Age: **Matthew 16:16-18, Galatians 3:26-28, Ephesians 5:25b-27**

- An "age" is a historical period of time or an era. Some historians divide human history into the Middle Ages, the Modern Age, the Postmodern Age, etc. Biblical history, too, can be divided into different eras, which we call dispensations. More broadly, Biblical history can be divided into two periods, roughly following the division of Old and New Testaments (adapted from GotQuestions.org)
- The Church Age is the period of time from Pentecost (**Acts 2**) to the rapture (**1Thessalonians 4:13-18**). It is called the Church Age because it covers the period in which the Church is on earth. In prophetic history, it falls between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel (**Daniel 9:24-27**). Jesus addressed the Church Age in **Matthew 16:18** when He said, *"I will build my church."* Jesus has kept His promise, and His Church has now been growing for almost 2,000 years.
- The Church is composed of those individuals who have by faith accepted Christ Jesus as their Savior and Lord (**John 1:12; Acts 9:31**). Therefore, the Church is people rather than denominations or buildings. It is the Body of Christ of which He is the head (**Ephesians 1:22-23**). The Greek word *ecclesia*, translated "church," means "a called-out assembly." The Church is universal in scope but meets locally in smaller bodies. The Church Age is marked by the Holy Spirit's permanent indwelling of His people (**John 14:16**).
- Scripture makes a distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church (**1 Corinthians 10:32**). There is some overlap because, individually, many Jews believe in Jesus as their Messiah and are therefore part of the Church. But God's covenants with the nation of Israel have not yet been fulfilled. Those promises await fulfillment during the Millennial Kingdom, after the Church Age ends (**Ezekiel 34; 37; 45; Jeremiah 30; 33; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 19**) * To be discussed in Lesson #9

→ The Church Age will end when God's people are raptured out of the world and taken to be with the Lord (**1 Corinthians 15:51-57**). The rapture will be followed in heaven by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (**Revelation 19:6-9**) as the Church, the Bride of Christ, receives her heavenly reward. Until then, the Church carries on in hope, exhorted to "stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

2. The Rapture of the Church: **1 Corinthians 15:51-58, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

→ **1 Corinthians 15:51-58** *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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ 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." ⁵⁵ "O' Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

3. The Judgment Seat of Believers: **1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10**

→ Three major judgments relate to those "in Christ." These will be discussed in detail in Lesson 8.

○ **Judgment 1:** Believers as to sin

- Christ bore our judgment for the penalty of sin. Our holy GOD could not ignore sin; that would make Him unjust. God the Father addressed our sin in His Son.

→ **John 3:18** *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*

→ **Romans 5:8-9** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while _____
_____⁹ Much more then, having now been _____
we shall be _____ through Him.*

→ **Romans 8:1** *There is therefore now _____ to those who are _____ who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

- **Judgment 2:** Believers as to their sin(s)
 - The “sin” issue was resolved on judgment 1 and will never be addressed again. This judgment is about “**sins**” we commit after being placed in Christ. God’s plan is self-examination, confession, and repentance. When this is ignored, His loving discipline steps in to address unconfessed sin.
- **Judgment 3:** Believers as to works
 - This final judgment of believers is after the rapture of the church in Heaven. The judgment seat of Christ is also not a time to punish sin. Jesus took our punishment once and for all. The judgment seat of Christ is a time when we will be called on to report, to give an account of what we did for Jesus. It will be a serious and necessary time of reckoning, but, as God’s redeemed, we will never be condemned with the wicked.

4. The Great Tribulation: **Matthew 24, Revelation 6-18**

→ The Great Tribulation is unlike anything that has occurred in the history of humanity. Some of the details of the horrific event are recorded in the Book of Revelation. The various views of the Tribulation will be discussed in lesson 4.

5. The Battle of Armageddon: **Revelation 19:11-21**

→ In the Bible, *Armageddon* refers to a climactic future battle between God and His enemies, as recorded in the book of Revelation. “Mount Megiddo” is the predicted location of the battle. **Revelation 16:12-16** is the record of what will happen to end the tribulation period. The word *Armageddon* makes its only appearance in the Bible in this passage:

→ Note: Eschatology is the hardest section of Biblical interpretation because so much of that prophecy is what we call apocalyptic language, or highly symbolic. How do you know when it’s figurative or literal? And how do you know when it’s just normal, historical language? That’s the challenge, and it explains why there are various conclusions on vital topics. The following chapter is such an example.

→ **Revelation 16:12-16** *Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ¹⁵ "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, **Armageddon**.*

6. The Second (visible) Return of Christ: **Matthew 24:23-30, Revelation 1:7**

→ The return of Jesus Christ to earth can easily get confused with the rapture of the church, where Jesus returns to meet His church (those in Christ) in the air. The differences are addressed in lesson 5. For now, it suffices to know that at the second coming, the world will take notice.

→ **Revelation 1:7-8** *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and _____ even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."*

7. The Sheep-Goat Judgment: **Matthew 25:31-44**

→ "Sheep" are referenced as genuine believers who are distinguished from the unsaved, identified as "goats". At the return of Christ and the end of the battle of Armageddon, Christ will separate the two. Those who rejected Christ will be put to death, and those in Christ enter the Kingdom in their earthly bodies. Re: **Matthew 25:31-46**

→ In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, we are looking at man redeemed and saved, and man condemned and lost. A casual reading seems to suggest that salvation is the result of good works. However, Scripture does not contradict itself, and the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that salvation is by faith through the grace of God and not by our good works (re: **Ephesians 2:8-10**). The good works mentioned in the parable are not the *cause* of salvation but the *result* of salvation.

8. The Millennial Kingdom Age: **Isaiah 11:1-9, Revelation 20:4-6**

→ We end Foundations 17 with a study on the 1,000-year literal rule of Jesus Christ. He will rule the world from Jerusalem. It will be a utopia that many dreamed about, but it is a reality.

9. Satan's Release and the Battle of Gog and Magog: **Revelation 20:7-9**

- During the 1,000-year reign, Satan is bound, but then released at the end. He makes one final attempt to overthrow Christ.
- **Revelation 20:7-10** Now when the _____ years have expired, Satan will be _____ from his prison ⁸ and will go out to _____ which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ 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 _____ ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever

10. The Great White Throne Judgment: **Revelation 20:10-15**

- Only non-believers will be at this judgment. The holiness of GOD confronts the sinfulness of mankind. It is one of the saddest passages in all of Scripture. No one escapes, and no one will be able to manipulate or deceive GOD. Every sin in thought, word, and deed, as well as all those sins of omission, that which was left undone, will be addressed.
- **Revelation 10:10-15** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

11. Eternal Damnation of the Lost: **Revelation 20:15**

- C.S. Lewis argued that if he could change one doctrine, it would be that of eternal judgment, but confessed that we don't get the luxury of such an option. It is alarming and, by design, creates tension within believers. Such judgment is ignored by many on the basis that God's love prevails over such judgment. It is becoming more common for church leaders to embrace _____ which teaches that anyone who chooses to change their mind about Christ after their sentence to condemnation has the ability to do so and would be rescued. Though we may wish this to be so, there is no biblical evidence for such a teaching.

12. The New Heaven and The New Earth: **Revelation 21-22**

→ In **Revelation 21:1**, John sees something spectacular: *"Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."* This new earth and new heaven are sometimes referred to as the _____. As seen in Revelation chapters 21–22, the new earth will be the eternal dwelling place of believers in Jesus Christ. Scripture gives us a few details of the new heaven and new earth. The creation of the new heaven and new earth brings the promise that God "will wipe every tear from their eyes" (**Revelation 21:4**). This event comes *after* the tribulation, *after* the Lord's second coming, *after* the millennial kingdom, *after* the final rebellion, *after* the final judgment of Satan, and *after* the great white throne judgment. The brief description of the new heaven and new earth is the last glimpse into eternity that the Bible gives.

→ God is currently transforming _____; one day, he will transform the _____.

Recommended resources:

Heaven, by Randy Alcorn

Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Revelation

GotQuestions.org

Video sermons:

"The Rapture" – John MacArthur

"What is the Millennial Reign of Christ?" – David Jeremiah

Lesson 4: Various Views of Prophecy

Eschatology is a challenging subject, and the Bible's use of apocalyptic imagery to relate many prophecies has led to a variety of interpretations of end-time events. Eschatology is the hardest section of biblical interpretation because so much of prophecy is what we call apocalyptic language that is highly symbolic. How do you know when it's figurative or literal? And how do you know when it's just normal historical language? That's the challenge, and it explains why there are various conclusions.

Four Basic Guidelines:

1. Sincere followers of Jesus hold different views on future events, but their love for GOD is *not* in question.
 2. Almost everyone within the various prophetic camps holds to salvation in Christ alone and the authority of Scripture.
 3. Debates on prophetic teachings date back to the early church, some 2,000 years ago.
 4. Each group could defend its view based on Scripture and provide reasonable arguments. In the final analysis, one of them is correct, but both hold a measure of truth.
- **Premillennialism** is the view that Christ's second coming will occur _____ to His millennial kingdom, and that the millennial kingdom is a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. In order to understand and interpret the passages in Scripture that deal with end-times events, there are two things that must be clearly understood: a proper method of interpreting Scripture and the distinction between Israel (the Jews) and the church (the body of all believers in Jesus Christ).
 - First, a proper method of interpreting Scripture requires that Scripture be interpreted in a way that is consistent with its context. This means that a passage must be interpreted in a way that is consistent with the audience to which it is written, those it is written about, those who wrote it, and so on. It is critical to know the author, intended audience, and historical background of each passage one interprets. The historical and cultural setting will often reveal the correct meaning of a passage. It is also important to remember that Scripture interprets Scripture. That is, often a passage will cover a topic or subject that is also addressed elsewhere in the Bible. It is important to interpret all of these passages consistently with one another.
- Finally, and most importantly, passages must always be taken in their normal, regular, plain, literal meaning unless the context of the passage indicates that it is figurative in nature. A literal interpretation does not eliminate the _____ being used. Rather, it encourages the interpreter not to read figurative language into the meaning of a passage unless it is appropriate for that context. It is crucial to never seek a "deeper, more spiritual" meaning than is presented. Spiritualizing a passage is _____ because it moves the basis for accurate interpretation from Scripture to the mind of the reader. Then, there can be no objective standard of interpretation; instead, Scripture becomes subject to each person's own impression of what it means. **2 Peter 1:20-21** reminds us that "no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Applying these principles of biblical interpretation, it must be seen that Israel (Abraham's physical descendants) and the church (all New Testament believers) are two distinct groups. It is _____ because, if this is misunderstood, Scripture will be misinterpreted. Especially prone to misinterpretation are passages that deal with promises made to Israel (both fulfilled and unfulfilled). Such promises should not be applied to the church. Remember, the context of the passage will determine to whom it is addressed and will point to the most correct interpretation. (*GotQuestions.org*)

- **Postmillennialism** is an interpretation of Revelation chapter 20, which sees Christ's second coming as occurring _____ the "millennium," a golden age or era of Christian prosperity and dominance.
 - Postmillennialism is the belief that Christ returns after a period of time, but not necessarily a _____. They believe that **Revelation 20:4-6** should not be taken literally. They believe that "1,000 years" simply means "_____."
 - Those who hold to postmillennialism believe that this world will become better and better. After this happens, Christ will return. However, it is easy to see that the world will be a terrible place during that future time. Also, in **2 Timothy 3:1-7**, Paul describes the last days as "terrible times."
- **Amillennialism** sees the 1,000 years as spiritual and non-literal, as opposed to a physical understanding of history. Although the prefix *a-* would typically signify a negation of a word, the amil position sees the millennium as "realized," or better explained as "millennium now." To simplify, amillennialism sees the first coming of Christ as the inauguration of the kingdom, and His return as the consummation of the kingdom. John's mention of 1,000 years thus points to all things that would happen in the church age.
 - In amillennialism, the "1,000 years" is happening right now. Christ's work in this world—His life, death, resurrection, and ascension—greatly hindered the works of Satan so that the message of the gospel could leave Israel and go out to the ends of the earth, just as it has done. The 1,000 years spoken of in **Revelation 20**, in which Satan is "bound," is figurative and fulfilled in a spiritual sense. Satan is "bound" in that he is restricted from implementing all his plans.
 - The amillennial view, along with premillennialism, is one of the oldest in church history, having been held since the first century. In the 5th century, Augustine settled on the amillennial view as his understanding of eschatology. Additionally, amillennialism was the primary view of most of the Reformers in the 16th century.

- **Pre-tribulation**, the prefix defines the view. In this case, pre-trib holds that believers will be taken into Heaven with Christ, prior to the 7-year Great Tribulation. Two of my favorite preachers and authors teach this. John MacArthur and Chuck Swindoll.
- **Mid-tribulation** holds the view that believers will experience the first half of the tribulation, which is under a deceptive peace agreement with the anti-Christ. Once he reveals his true nature and turns on those who love GOD, they are taken to Heaven to avoid the second 3 ½ years.
- **Pre-wrath tribulation** was made popular in the 1980s by Marv Rosenthal, who once served on Israel My Glory, but left to promote his view that could be called the ¾ tribulation rapture. It teaches that believers will experience part of the second half of the tribulation, and when things seem almost hopeless, believers are received, raptured into Heaven.
- **Post-tribulation**, as the term suggests, holds the view that believers do not escape any of the 7 years of the Great Tribulation. Their deliverance will come at the end when Jesus returns visibly at the Battle of Armageddon.
- **Preterism** (Latin, *praeter* = *past*) According to preterism, prophecy in the Bible is really history. The end times have already been fulfilled. The full preterist movement essentially teaches that all the end-time prophecies of the New Testament were fulfilled in AD 70, when the Romans attacked and destroyed Jerusalem. Partial preterism would teach that most prophecies have been fulfilled, but events like the second coming are still to come. The most popular partial preterist was the late R.C. Sproul.

Covenant versus Dispensationalism

- **Covenant theology** is a Reformed framework for interpreting the Bible, viewing it as a series of God's covenants with humanity that progressively reveal His plan for redemption. It emphasizes the importance of covenants (sacred promises) as the structure through which God relates to people. Key covenants include the covenant of works (Adam's relationship before the Fall), the covenant of grace (God's plan to restore fallen humanity through faith in Jesus Christ, re: **Genesis 3**), and historical covenants like those with Abraham, Moses, and David, all pointing to the New Covenant established by Christ.
 - Covenant Theology isn't so much a "theology" in the sense of a systematic set of doctrine as it is a framework for interpreting Scripture. It is usually contrasted with another interpretative framework for Scripture called "Dispensational Theology" or "Dispensationalism."
 - Some label covenant theologians with the title "Replacement Theology" (i.e., the Church replaced Israel). This is a result of Covenant Theology's view that the Church is Israel and Israel is the Church and its denial of any future plan for Israel. In 2002, Knox Theological Seminary issued a document clearly stating the Covenant Theology position: "The inheritance promises that God gave to Abraham . . . do not apply to any particular ethnic group, but to the church of Jesus Christ, the true Israel" (adapted from *GotQuestions.org*).
- **Dispensationalists** hold to a literal interpretation of the Bible as the best _____. The literal interpretation gives each word the meaning it would commonly have in everyday usage. Allowances are made for symbols, figures of speech, and types, of course. It is understood that even symbols and figurative sayings have literal meanings behind them. So, for example, when the Bible speaks of "a thousand years" in Revelation 20, dispensationalists interpret it as a literal period of 1,000 years (the dispensation of the Kingdom), since there is no compelling reason to interpret it otherwise.
 - Hermeneutics is the _____ and _____ of Bible interpretation. The careful student of Scripture should seek to discover the original writers' intended meaning to the original readers.

The divide between Covenant and Dispensationalism can be best simplified in four areas, though many more details cover each system:

1. How Scripture is interpreted
2. The view of Israel and the Church
3. The issue of a literal kingdom.
4. How much value is placed on the 16th-century Reformers

Resource: *The Fathers on the Future, A 2nd-century eschatology for the 21st century*. Michael Svigel. A PhD from Dallas Theological Seminary, who defends that the earliest church writers supported a literal 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ.

Application: Two Vital Principles Regarding Spiritual Tolerance

The firmer one's grip on "justification" (how one is saved), the less angst one has for those "in Christ" who hold various views unrelated to salvation. The Apostle Paul set this example for us.

1. When tolerance is appropriate, even when motives are not.

→ **Philippians 1:16-18** *Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶ The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷ but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, _____ and in this _____ yes, and will rejoice.*

2. When tolerance isn't appropriate, regardless of one's motives.

→ **Galatians 1:6-9** *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be _____. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be _____.*

→ **1 Corinthians 16:2** *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

These two principles are reminders of how desperately we need GOD's grace to discern truth and when to exhibit room for disagreement and when to confront it.

Lesson 5: The Rapture and the Return of Christ

Big Idea: It is easy to apply certain passages to the wrong event, and that must be avoided for numerous reasons. This study is designed to sharpen your interpretation of Scripture as well as make accurate distinctions between two vital future events.

"When was the last time you went to bed with Jesus' second coming on your mind, thinking, 'It could be tonight' or got up in the morning with the thought, 'Today might be the day'? We are so frantically busy taking care of our daily needs that we never even think about it, much less make sure we are telling others about it." -- JD Greear

The Rapture and Second Coming (Revelation) are similar but separate events. Both involve Jesus' return, and both are end-times events; however, it is crucially important to recognize the differences. In summary, the rapture is the return of Christ in the clouds to _____ before the time of God's wrath. The second coming is the return of Christ _____ to bring the tribulation to an end and to defeat the Antichrist and his evil world empire.

- The rapture and the second coming of Christ are often confused. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a scripture verse is referring to the rapture or the second coming.
- **Matthew 24:40-41** *Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.*

- Is Matthew 24 addressing the Rapture or the Return of Jesus? Rapture / Return

Matthew 24:27-31 *For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. ²⁹Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

1. Christ's glory will appear in such a way that all doubt is removed. When these verses are embraced, the false Christ's attempt to deceive is exposed.

→ **Matthew 24:23-26** *"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ 'Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.*

2. Atmospheric heavens will be visibly affected and noticed worldwide.
3. The angels will separate sheep from goats, the saved from the unsaved.
4. This occurs at the Return, not at the Rapture.

What about the "fig tree" analogy in Matthew 24

- **Matthew 24:32-35** *"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*
 - *"This 'generation' will by no means pass away..."* When you take this to mean the generation that heard Jesus teach, then you have a problem. Critics use this since Jesus didn't return. Some theology teaches that Jesus returned "spiritually" when Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD. This is taught as an attempt to justify Jesus' promise of a return and address the skeptics.
 - A popular teaching was built out of the "fig tree" to say that when Israel became a Nation again in 1948, that generation would not pass. However, that is forcing the analogy, and it has been over 75 years.
 - What if "this generation" is referring to those alive during the signs that Jesus said would occur prior to His return? This makes the most sense.
 - The "fig tree" analogy is Christ using nature to state the obvious: when you see its leaves, summer is near. When you see the signs of Matthew 25 appear, Christ's return is near.

What about the “those who endure until the end” passage in Matthew 24?

- **Matthew 24:12-14** *Then many false prophets will rise up and _____¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of _____¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved.¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

- False teachers will be very effective in their deception. (How will AI come into play in this area?)
- Salvation, as in numerous applications in many cases, refers to spiritual salvation. The context and comparison of Scripture with Scripture reveal that this is about deliverance and survival of the Great Tribulation and entrance into the 1000-year Kingdom reign of Christ.
- All the world will hear of God’s message, which aligns with the 144,000 witnesses of Revelation 7:1-8 (Lesson 6-7)

What about the “desolation of abomination” passage in Matthew 24?

- **Matthew 24:15-22** *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),¹⁶ “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.²¹ 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.²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.*

- This does not describe the Rapture, nor does it describe the 70AD Roman invasion of Jerusalem. Even though it would apply in certain ways, it was horrible, and the cruelty of Rome was unimaginable.
- The passages that follow verses 15-22 refer to Christ’s visible return. vv. 23-32
- The Anti-Christ and the Jews in the Great Tribulation period.

The midpoint of the Tribulation period is most important, for at that time an event will take place that was prophesied centuries ago by Daniel (**Daniel 9:24-27**). Please notice that this prophecy concerns only the Jews and the city of Jerusalem ("thy people and ... thy holy city," **Daniel 9:24**). To apply it to the church or to any other people or place is to misinterpret God's Word. (**Daniel 9:27** talks about a restoration of the sacrifices, and this would demand a temple.)

The logical place for this seven-year period is after the Rapture of the church. "The time of Jacob's trouble," the Tribulation period, will be seven years long. **Second Thessalonians 2:1-12** indicates that the Antichrist cannot be revealed until the *restrainer* is taken out of the midst. That restrainer is the Holy Spirit in the church. Once the church is out of the world, then Satan can produce his masterpiece, the Antichrist.

He will make the agreement for seven years, but after three-and-one-half years ("in the midst of the week") he will break that agreement. He will then move into the Jewish temple himself and proclaim that he is God (**2 Thes. 2:3-4; Revelation 13**).

The Antichrist will cause a living statue of himself to be put into the temple, and his associate (the false prophet, Rev. 20:10) will cause the whole earth to worship it. Satan has always wanted the world's worship, and in the middle of the Tribulation he will begin to receive it (**Matthew 4:8-11**). Jesus called this statue "the abomination of desolation" (**Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15**).

An interesting parenthesis occurs at the end of Matthew 24:15—"whoso readeth, let him understand." This statement indicates that what Jesus was teaching would have greater significance for people reading Matthew's Gospel in the latter days. By reading the Prophet Daniel and the words of Jesus, these believers will understand the events and know what to do. This is another evidence that the Olivet Discourse applies to people during the Tribulation period. – Warren Wiersbe

Matthew 24

Destruction of Temple	v1-3
Deception of false Messiahs (Christ)	v4-5
Disputes and wars among Nations	v6-7a
Devastations of natural disasters	v7b
Deliverance up of believers for persecution	v8-10
Defection of false believers	v11-13
Declaration of the gospel globally	v14
Daniel' prophecy	v15-22
Darkened skies	v23-29
Descent of Jesus from Heaven in full glory	v30-31

The important differences between the Rapture and Second Coming are as follows:

1. At the rapture, believers meet the Lord in the air (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**). At the second coming, believers return with the Lord to the earth (**Revelation 19:14**).
2. The second coming occurs after the Great Tribulation (**Revelation chapters 6-19**). The rapture occurs before the tribulation (**1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10**).
3. The rapture is the removal of believers from the earth as an act of deliverance (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, 5:9**). The second coming includes the removal of unbelievers as an act of judgment (**Matthew 24:40-41**).
4. The rapture will be secret and instant (**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**). The second coming will be visible to all (**Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:29-30**).
5. The second coming of Christ will not occur until after certain other end-times events take place (**2 Thessalonians 2:4; Matthew 24:15-30; Mark 13:5-26, Revelation chapters 6-18**). The rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment (**Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58**).

The Return of Christ

Revelation 19-20

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Re-entry of the Son of God | 19:11-14 |
| 2. Rule of the Son of God | 19:15-21 |
| 3. Removal of Satan | 20:1-3 |
| 4. Reign of the Saints | 20:4-6 |
| 5. Release of Satan | 20:7 |
| 6. Revolt of Society | 20:8-9 |
| 7. Resurrection of Sinners | 20:11-15 (eternal judgment) |

God is currently transforming _____; one day, He will transform the _____.

Lesson 6 Overview of the Book of Revelation (part 1)

Big Idea: God has not kept His children in the dark regarding what lies ahead. In Revelation, we have the big picture of unparalleled future events. As followers of Christ, we should be both excited and alarmed, prepared and motivated about what we learn through the last book of sacred Scripture.

The Greek *apocalypse* is our English “revelation,” which simply means “unveiling, uncover.” However, in our day, it’s a synonym for chaos and catastrophe. The Holy Spirit uncovers and reveals to the Apostle John what lies ahead for humanity. The book opens with John receiving a visit from the glorified Christ, who addressed seven churches.

Outline of the Book of Revelation by John MacArthur

- I. **The Things Which You Have Seen (1:1-20)**
 - A. The Prologue (1:1-8)
 - B. The Vision of the Glorified Christ (1:9-18)
 - C. The Apostle’s Commission to Write (1:19, 20)
- II. **The Things Which Are (2:1-3:22)**
 - A. The Letter to the Church at Ephesus (2:1-7)
 - B. The Letter to the Church at Smyrna (2:8-11)
 - C. The Letter to the Church at Pergamos (2:12-17)
 - D. The Letter to the Church at Thyatira (2:18-29)
 - E. The Letter to the Church at Sardis (3:1-6)
 - F. The Letter to the Church at Philadelphia (3:7-13)
 - G. The Letter to the Church at Laodicea (3:14-22)
- III. **The Things Which Will Take Place After This (4:1-22:21)**
 - A. Worship in Heaven (4:1-5:14)
 - B. The Great Tribulation (6:1-18:24)
 - C. The Return of the King (19:1-21)
 - D. The Millennium (20:1-10)
 - E. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)
 - F. The Eternal State (21:1-22:21)

The Book of Revelation is the culmination of the prophecies about the end times, beginning with the Old Testament. The description of the antichrist mentioned in ***Daniel 9:27*** is developed fully in chapter 13 of Revelation. Outside of Revelation, examples of apocalyptic literature in the Bible are ***Daniel chapters 7-12, Isaiah chapters 24-27, Ezekiel chapters 37-41, and Zechariah chapters 9-14***. _____ these prophecies _____ in the Book of Revelation.

- There are seven “beatitudes” in Revelation: **1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.**

The 7 Churches

Revelation 2-3

The message to the 7 churches was *not* sent to satisfy their curiosity about the future. God’s people were going through persecution, some were yielding to temptation, and they needed correction and direction.



The seven churches of Revelation are viewed in three primary ways:

1. as literal, local churches in the 1st century
2. as representative of all churches throughout time
3. as prophetic of seven historical periods or spiritual stages within the history of the Church.

The seven churches described in **Revelation 2-3** are literal churches at the time John the Apostle was writing Revelation. Though they were literal churches in Asia Minor at that time, there is also spiritual significance for churches and believers today. The first purpose of the letters was to communicate with the literal churches and meet their needs. The second purpose is to reveal seven different types of individuals/churches throughout history and instruct them in God’s truth. A possible third purpose is to use the seven churches to foreshadow seven different periods in the history of the Church. The problem with this view is that each church displays characteristics that could fit the Church at any time of its history. So, although there may be some truth to the seven churches representing seven eras, there is far too much speculation in this regard. Our focus should be on what message God is giving us through the letters to the seven churches. re: GotQuestions.org

Revelation 2:1-7 *"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ² 'I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁴ Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.'"*

Jesus' Model of Counseling/Confronting - Revelation 2:1-7

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Encouragement preceded and followed confrontation | 2-3, 6 |
| 2. Christ openly and clearly stated the problem | 4 |
| 3. Confrontation was done in love with the hope of restoration | 4-5a |
| 4. Christ told them how to be restored | 5 |
| 5. Christ clearly laid out the consequences if they did not repent | 5b |
| 6. Christ spoke with the expectation that they would repent | 7 |

* This model should be used when confronting another believer.

_____ literally means a change of mind that results in God-honoring decisions and behavior.

The Things which Will Take Place after This (4:1-22:21)

1. Worship in Heaven (4:1-5:14)
2. The Great Tribulation (6:1-18:24)
3. The Return of the King (19:1-21)
4. The Millennium (20:1-10)
5. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)
6. The Eternal State (21:1-22:21)

A good defense for a pre-tribulation rapture is that the church is not mentioned after Revelation chapter 3. It can be argued that something as significant as the Lord's church, and especially its focus in chapters 2-3, would have been given instruction on how to prepare and endure the great tribulation if it were designed to experience it.

Revelation 4:1 _____ *I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven.*

"After these things" points to a transition; something different occurs after the messages to the seven churches.

Who are the 24 Elders? (Isaiah 6:1-3, Ezekiel 1:1-22, 10:12-15)

Bible scholars have introduced over a dozen different interpretations of the 24 elders. Chuck Swindoll narrows them to five common views:

1. Twelve Old Testament patriarchs and the Twelve New Testament Apostles
2. Great saints of the Old Testament, to distinguish them from the saints of the New Testament.

Revelation 5:9-14, 15:2-4

3. Representatives from the New Testament church displaying victory crowns. **Revelation 3:21**
4. God's angelic council of "holy ones" leading worship. **Psalms 89:7** implied
5. Special priesthood from among the redeemed to worship in rotation as in the Old Testament priestly order.

1 Chron. 24:4-5

Why was the Apostle John Weeping? Who did he find Worthy?

Revelation 5:1-7 Jesus is praised and takes the scroll from GOD the Father

Revelation 5:8-14 Four creatures, twenty-four elders, and a multitude of angels worship

Revelation 6:18 The Great Tribulation

Lesson 7 Overview of the Book of Revelation (part 2)

Big Idea: In Revelation 6-18, three sets of symbols represent three series of divine judgment in the form of seals, trumpets, and bowls. The 7th of each set brings with it the next 7 judgments. All of these judgments will be experienced during the Great Tribulation. History has no equal to its horror. Yet, GOD's mercy is revealed as 144,000 witnesses share the gospel around the world, resulting in a massive number of salvations.

The Greek *apocalypse* is our English "revelation" that simply means "unveiling, uncover." However, in our day, it's a synonym for chaos and catastrophe. The Holy Spirit uncovers and reveals to the Apostle John what lies ahead for humanity. The book opens with John receiving a visit from the glorified Christ who addressed seven churches.

Outline of the Book of Revelation by John MacArthur (full outline in Lesson 6)

- I. **The Things Which You Have Seen (1:1-20)**
- II. **The Things Which Are (2:1-3:22)** (The Seven Churches)
- III. **The Things Which Will Take Place After This (4:1-22:21)**
 - A. Worship in Heaven (4:1-5:14)
 - B. The Great Tribulation (6:1-18:24)
 - C. The Return of the King (19:1-21)
 - D. The Millennium (20:1-10)
 - E. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)
 - F. The Eternal State (21:1-22:21)

The tribulation is a future time period when the Lord will accomplish at least two aspects of His plan: 1) He will complete His discipline of the nation Israel (**Daniel 9:24**), and 2) He will judge the unbelieving, godless inhabitants of the earth (**Revelation 6-18**). The length of the tribulation is seven years. This is determined by an understanding of the seventy weeks of Daniel (**Daniel 9:24-27**). The Great Tribulation is the last half of the tribulation period, three and one-half years in length. It is distinguished from the tribulation period because the beast, or Antichrist, will be revealed, and the wrath of God will greatly intensify during this time. Thus, it is important at this point to emphasize that the tribulation and the Great Tribulation are not synonymous events. Within eschatology (the study of future things), the tribulation refers to the full seven-year period, while the "Great Tribulation" refers to the second half of the tribulation.

It is Christ Himself who used the phrase *Great Tribulation* with reference to the last half of the tribulation. In **Matthew 24:21**, Jesus is referring to the event of **Matthew 24:15**, which describes the revealing of the abomination of desolation, the man also known as the Antichrist. Also, Jesus in **Matthew 24:29-30** states, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (ESV). In this passage, Jesus defines the Great Tribulation (verse 21) as beginning with the revealing of the abomination of desolation (verse 15) and ending with Christ's second coming (verse 30).

Other passages that refer to the Great Tribulation are **Daniel 12:1b**, which says, "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time" (ESV). It seems that Jesus was quoting this verse when He spoke the words recorded in **Matthew 24:21**. Also referring to the Great Tribulation is **Jeremiah 30:7**, "Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it" (ESV). The "distress for Jacob" refers to Israel's experience of persecution and natural disasters such as have never before been seen.

Considering the information Christ gave us in **Matthew 24:15-30**, it is easy to conclude that the beginning of the Great Tribulation has much to do with the abomination of desolation, an action of the Antichrist. **In Daniel 9:26-27**, we find that this man will make a "covenant" (a peace pact) with the world for seven years. Halfway through the seven-year period, this man will break the covenant he made, stopping sacrifice and grain offerings, which specifically refer to his actions in the rebuilt temple of the future. **Revelation 13:1-10** gives even more detail concerning the beast's actions, and just as important, it also verifies the length of time he will be in power. **Revelation 13:5** says he will be in power for 42 months, which is three and one-half years, the length of the Great Tribulation.

Revelation offers us the most information about the Great Tribulation. From Revelation 13, when the beast is revealed, until Christ returns in Revelation 19, we are given a picture of God's wrath on the earth because of unbelief and rebellion (**Revelation 16-18**). It is also a picture of how God disciplines and at the same time protects His people Israel (**Revelation 14:1-5**) until He keeps His promise to Israel by establishing an earthly kingdom (**Revelation 20:4-6**).

-- GotQuestions.org

Matthew 24

Revelation 6

- | | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| 1. Deception by false Christs | vv4-5 | AI and worldwide deception (re: John Lennox) |
| White horse v2 <i>*not to be confused with Jesus in 19:11-16</i> | | |
| 2. Disputes and war among the nations | v6 | Red horse v3-4 war |
| 3. Devastation throughout the world | v7 | Black horse v5-6 famine |
| 4. Deliverance of believers unto death | v9 | Pale horse v7-8 death |
| 5. Defection of false believers | vv10-13 | |
| a. The <u>cost</u> will be too high | v10 | |
| b. The <u>lie</u> will be too convincing | v11 | |
| c. The <u>sin</u> will be too attractive | v12 | |

6. Declaration of the Gospel to the world **v14**
7. Desolation spoken of by Daniel **v15**
8. Despair upon those in the tribulation **v16-22**
9. Descent of Jesus Christ will be evident **v23-31**
10. Depiction of the fig tree **v32-35**
11. Days of Noah as an example **v36-39**

144,000 witnesses **Revelation 7**

Christians persecuted and killed

Matthew 24:9, Revelation 6:9-17

Church age believers were raptured before Revelation 4; of those who did not get raptured, many will turn to Christ for salvation. They will experience the most severe suffering in history. **Matthew 24:21**

Revelation 6:9-11 *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

Will Everyone Have the Opportunity for Salvation in the Tribulation Period?

There is a view that those who hear the gospel and reject it before the rapture cannot be saved. Those saved during the tribulation, then, are those who had never heard the gospel before the rapture. The text for this view is **2 Thessalonians 2:9-11**, which says the antichrist will work miracles to deceive "those who are perishing" and that God Himself will "send them a powerful delusion" to confirm them in their unbelief. The reason given is that "they refused to love the truth and so be saved" (verse 10). *Granted, those who are hard-hearted toward the gospel before the rapture are likely to remain so.* And the antichrist will deceive many (**Matthew 24:5**). But "those who refused to love the truth" does not necessarily refer to people who heard the gospel before the rapture. *It could be anyone who wholly rejects God's salvation, at any time. So, there is no clear scriptural evidence to support this view.*

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³ 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, ⁴ 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. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

There is a repeated and alarming theme within the severe judgment of the tribulation: they refused to _____

Revelation 9:1,20, 16:9, 11

Who are the 144,000 witnesses of Revelation 7? GotQuestions.org

How one answers the question “who are the 144,000?” depends on which interpretive approach one takes to the book of Revelation. ***The futurist approach, which we consider the best, interprets the 144,000 literally. When taken at face value, Revelation 7:4 seems to speak of 144,000 actual people living during the end-times tribulation.*** Nothing in the passage leads to interpreting the 144,000 as anything but a literal number of Jews—12,000 taken from every tribe of the children of Israel, according to verses 5–8.

These 144,000 Jews are “sealed,” which means they have the special protection of God. They are kept safe from the divine judgments and from the wrath of the Antichrist. They can freely perform their mission during the tribulation. It had been previously prophesied that Israel would repent and turn back to God (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25–27), and the 144,000 Jews seem to be a sort of “first fruits” (Revelation 14:4) of that redeemed Israel. Their mission seems to be to evangelize the post-rapture world and proclaim the gospel during the tribulation period. As a result of their ministry, millions—“a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Revelation 7:9)—will come to faith in Christ.

The Great Tribulation concludes at Revelation 19 with the return of Jesus Christ to earth.

Chapters 19-22 are covered in Lessons 8-9.

Lesson 8: Judgment of Believers

Big Idea: There will be a judgment, and there will be surprises. Our desire at Grace is that all your surprises will be good ones. The purpose of this study is to increase the possibility of that desire to become a reality as you gain greater insight into what lies ahead regarding our accountability to Jesus Christ.

1. We must recognize that salvation marks the beginning of our journey as Christ followers and that it is much more than just an entrance into eternal life.
2. Salvation places us in a brand-new status, giving us a dual status of sinner-saint. The process of growing away from self-worship into GOD worship is sanctification.
3. We will give an account of how we used the salvation GOD gave us in Christ.

Three major judgments relate to those "in Christ":

Judgment 1 - Romans 3:23-28, 5:1-2, 8-11, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 2:16, 3:24, Titus 3:7

1. Subjects: Believers as to _____
2. Time: AD 30
3. Place: _____, Calvary
4. Basis of Judgment: Christ's finished _____
5. Result: _____ condemnation removed, eternal life inherited.

Romans 3:23-26 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

- _____ human being falls into the same category of sinner. v23
- GOD's standard is _____; no one meets that standard. v23
- Our justification (made right) is through the redeeming work of Jesus. v24
- Propitiation is to satisfy, and GOD's wrath was replaced by Christ's blood. v25
- In Christ, GOD the Father was both "just" and the "justifier" of sinners. v26

Romans 5:1-2 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Romans 5:8-11 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

⁹ *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

- "Do you not know" is a common phrase that Paul used to remind the believers of foundational teachings they already should have known but were failing to apply.
- "Do not be deceived" about what? Thinking it is possible to be a _____ believer and have an _____ lifestyle.
- "Such were some of you" - salvation transforms our thinking, which affects our lifestyle. In the past, prior to salvation, you lived like this.

Judgment 2 - Psalms 139:23-24, Proverbs 28:13, Isaiah 59:1-2, Matthew 18:35, Hebrews 4:12-13, 12:6-16, James 1:21-27, 4:7-10, 1 John 1:8-10, Revelation 2:5, 16, 3:15-23

1. Subjects: Believers as to their _____
2. Time: During their life as Christians
3. Place: On _____
4. Basis of Judgment: Unconfessed sin and disobedience **or** confessed sin through self-judgment
5. Result: Chastisement and loss of joy, **or** restored fellowship and renewed joy

Psalms 139:23-24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; (thoughts – KJV, ESV) (concerns – Holman) ²⁴ And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

- This is what the prayer of a believer should look like.
- It addresses our thought process and how it honors or dishonors GOD.
- It is a prayer of submission to follow GOD, a view that counters American Christianity, which has GOD following our plans and meeting our desires.

Proverbs 28:13 *He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*

- We have in this passage a serious warning and a glorious promise.
 - What is the warning?

 - What is the promise?

1 John 1:8-10 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

Judgment 3 - Matthew 6:19-21, 19:29, John 12:26, 1 Corinthians 3:8-15, 9:24-27, 15:58, 2 Corinthians 5:9-11, Colossians 3:23-25, 2 Timothy 4:8, Hebrews 6:10, 1 Peter 5:2-4, 1 John 2:28, 2 John v8, Revelation 22:12

1. Subjects: Believers as to _____
2. Time: After the rapture of the church
3. Place: Judgment Seat of Christ in _____
4. Basis of Judgment: The _____ of believers
5. Result: _____

Matthew 6:19-21 *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- A logical argument given about the earth, Heaven, and treasures.
- Treasures have to be sent ahead of time during our present life.
- This means that Heaven/eternity will _____ be the same for every believer.
- The way we turn our _____ towards spiritual things is by _____ in spiritual things.

1 Corinthians 3:8-15 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his _____ according to his _____.⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.
¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,
¹³ _____ for the _____, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test _____ of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will _____
 _____ ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will _____ but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The usual explanation of this passage is that it describes the building of the Christian life. We all build on Christ, but some people use good materials while others use poor materials. The kind of material you use determines the kind of reward you will get. While this may be a valid *application* of this passage, **it is not the basic interpretation.** Paul is discussing the _____ the temple of God. (In 1 Cor. 6:19-20 the individual believer is God's temple; but here it is the _____ that is in view. In **Ephesians 2:19-22**, the whole church is compared to a temple of God.) Paul points out that one day God will judge our labors as related to the _____. God is concerned that we build with quality. If we are going to build the local church the way God wants it built, we must meet certain conditions. – Warren Wiersbe

- This is the work we do as Christians; we can never work to become Christians.
- Bad works are done for selfish motives; for the praise of man or to meet our emotional needs, etc. Good works reveal pure God-centric motives with others in view and no concern for applause or recognition.
- There will be rewards and there will be losses. Paul didn't explain what the losses would be, but we know it is something we want to avoid at all costs.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 Therefore we make it our _____, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we _____ all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that _____ may receive the things done in the _____, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- Our primary _____ in life should be to please Christ.
- The judgment is mandatory; _____.
- Our accountability occurs at the "bema" (Greek) judgment seat of Christ.
- _____ in this text is morally evil, but worthless, wasted, unfit quality. This is why it's vital to understand that the issue of "sin" was addressed at salvation, and the issues of "sins" are addressed during our life as a Christian. This is about works, but don't assume this is a minor issue to stand before Christ with little to show in the way of love and service.

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and _____
_____ before _____.

A *bema* was a raised platform on which judges sat to view athletic games. Their job was to make sure contestants followed the rules and to present awards to the victors (see **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**). The *bema* was never a place to reprimand the athletes or to punish them in any way. It was a place of testing and reward.

Colossians 3:23-24 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

- How we are to serve: _____
- Who we are truly serving: _____
- Our confidence in serving: _____ from the Lord that we will receive the reward

2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2 John 8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may _____
_____.

Revelation 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

→ What should these truths do within me?

Objectives for this series in review:

1. To know GOD and His plan for eternity in a deeper and more meaningful way
2. To allow such knowledge to _____
3. To increase our compassion for those without Christ
4. To increase our expectation of our Lord's Second Coming

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Lesson 9: Millennial Kingdom and Eternity

Big Idea: Have you ever thought about “Heaven” being temporary? More than likely, the answer is no. Heaven is where the throne of GOD is? Yet, there is a “new Heaven” coming as well as a new earth. This study provides insight into what is in store for believers within and beyond the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ.

Various Views of the Millennial Kingdom Revisited:

(See: David Jeremiah - *YouTube*, “3 Views of the Millennial Kingdom, and what the Kingdom will look like” - 35 minutes)

- **Premillennialism** is the view that Christ's second coming will occur _____ to His millennial kingdom, and that the millennial kingdom is a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. In order to understand and interpret the passages in Scripture that deal with end-times events, there are two things that must be clearly understood: a proper method of interpreting Scripture and the distinction between Israel (the Jews) and the church (the body of all believers in Jesus Christ).

- **Postmillennialism** is an interpretation of Revelation chapter 20, which sees Christ's second coming as occurring _____ the “millennium,” a golden age or era of Christian prosperity and dominance. Postmillennialism is the belief that Christ returns after a period of time, but not necessarily a _____. They believe that **Revelation 20:4-6** should not be taken literally, and that “1,000 years” simply means “_____.” Those who hold to postmillennialism believe that this world will become better and better. After this happens, Christ will return. However, it is easy to see that the world will be a terrible place during that future time. Also, in **2 Timothy 3:1-7**, Paul describes the last days as “terrible times.”

- **Amillennialism** sees the 1,000 years as spiritual and non-literal, as opposed to a physical understanding of history. Although the prefix *a-* would typically signify a negation of a word, the amil position sees the millennium as “realized,” or better explained as “millennium now.” To simplify, amillennialism sees the first coming of Christ as the inauguration of the kingdom, and His return as the consummation of the kingdom. John's mention of 1,000 years thus points to all things that would happen in the church age.

The Angel's message from GOD to Mary.

Luke 1:30-32 *"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

- What does this passage teach about Jesus, more specifically about his Kingdom?
- The unconditional covenants demand a literal, physical return of Christ to establish the kingdom.

At the second coming, these covenants will be fulfilled as Israel is re-gathered from the nations (**Matthew 24:31**), converted (**Zechariah 12:10-14**), and restored to the land under the rule of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks of the conditions during the millennium as a perfect environment, both physically and spiritually. It will be a time of peace (**Micah 4:2-4**; **Isaiah 32:17-18**), joy (**Isaiah 61:7, 10**), and comfort (**Isaiah 40:1-2**). The Bible also tells us that only believers will enter the millennial kingdom. Because of this, it will be a time of obedience (**Jeremiah 31:33**), holiness (**Isaiah 35:8**), truth (**Isaiah 65:16**), and the knowledge of God (**Isaiah 11:9**; **Habakkuk 2:14**). Christ will rule as king (**Isaiah 9:3-7**; **11:1-10**). Nobles and governors will also rule (**Isaiah 32:1**; **Matthew 19:28**), and Jerusalem will be the political center of the world (**Zechariah 8:3**). **Revelation 20:2-7** gives the precise time period of the millennial kingdom. –GotQuestions.org

Questions Regarding the Millennial Kingdom

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Will every believer be in their glorified body? | Yes | No |
| 2. Will only believers begin the millennial reign? | Yes | No |
| 3. Will Jesus be in his physical body during the Kingdom | Yes | No |
| 4. Will Christians be able to sin in the Kingdom? | Yes | No |
| 5. Will all animals be tame in the Kingdom age? | Yes | No |

Those in the church age who had died and were called up at the Rapture along with the living saints will return with Christ in their glorified bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:50-57 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ 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.” ⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:58 _____ my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Those who became believers in the Tribulation period are set aside as “sheep” and enter the Kingdom in their natural, non-glorified bodies, therefore capable of sin and death. From this group that will be large in number, Satan will deceive and lead in a very brief and quickly doomed rebellion at the end of the Kingdom.

Matthew 25:31-34 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the _____ on His right hand, but the _____ on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, _____ prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 25:41 “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:

Those who occupy the millennial kingdom with *glorified* bodies can be divided into three subgroups: the church, whose bodies were either resurrected or changed at the rapture (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**; **1 Corinthians 15:21-23, 51-53**); tribulation martyrs, who are resurrected after Christ returns to earth (**Revelation 20:4-6**); and the Old Testament saints, who we assume are resurrected at the same time (see Daniel 12:2). Those who occupy the kingdom with *earthly* bodies have survived the tribulation and can be subdivided into two groups: believing Gentiles and believing Jews.

Long life will be restored to those in their natural body, similar to what we read about in the Old Testament, allowing many children to be born who need Christ as their Savior. A massive group of these people born during the Kingdom age will reject Christ even though He is on the planet, just as many rejected Him the first time. These are vulnerable to Satan's deception once he's released from bondage.

Revelation 20:7-10 *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to _____ the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And _____ ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

Millennial Latin, *Mille* = 1,000 and *Annum* = years

Two Major Purposes of the Millennial Kingdom:

1. _____

Throughout Scripture, we read that certain things were accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Re: **Matthew 1:22, 2:17, 8:17, 12:17, 21:4, Mark 15:28, Luke 4:21, 22:37, John 12:38, 19:36, James 2:23**

Luke 22:44 *Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things **must be fulfilled** which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*

2. _____

Our purest motive for serving Christ is our love for Him and others. With that said, the Bible often addresses the theme of GOD rewarding those who faithfully serve Him. Jesus spoke of this often. Many theologians believe the rewards will be evident in the Kingdom. Those faithful over little things will become rulers over many things.

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

1 Corinthians 3:14 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."*

2 John 8 *For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward."*

Luke 18:28-29 *Then Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed You."²⁹ So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,³⁰ who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."*

Colossians 3:24 *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."*

Hebrews 6:10 *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister."*

What will it be like in the Kingdom?

1. Christ will reign from Jerusalem
 - A Theocracy will be in place; the spiritual and political world will be united.
2. Satan is bound
3. Believers will make the world function
 - Glorified saints are serving Christ by serving one another. The population is growing, and food and transportation will be needed. The government will function from Jerusalem.

4. World Peace
5. Animals in harmony with one another and humanity
6. Nature Transformed
7. Long life for those in non-glorified bodies.

- **Isaiah 65:18-20** *But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. ²⁰ No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old*

8. One central Worship

Nations do not lose their identity in the Kingdom and are called to participate in Worship. Those in their natural bodies will include sincere and insincere worshippers, similar to our present church age in that regard.

Zechariah 14:16-21 *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ²⁰ In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹ Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.*

What happens when Satan is released?

Revelation 20:7-10 *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was*

cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

In **Revelation 20**, Gog and Magog are symbolic names for the nations of the world, gathered from the four corners of the earth by Satan after the Millennium, who make a final, large-scale rebellion against God's people. While first appearing in Ezekiel as a specific leader and land, *John in Revelation uses the term "/Gog and Magog\" to represent a global force of evil, ultimately defeated by fire from heaven and cast into the lake of fire with Satan.*

(See: GotQuestions.org - Gog and Magog and New Heaven and New Earth.)

The New Heaven and New Earth, aka - The Eternal State

Revelation 21-22

In **Revelation 21:1**, John sees something spectacular: "Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." This new earth and new heaven are sometimes referred to as the "eternal state." As seen in Revelation chapters 21–22, the new earth will be the eternal dwelling place of believers in Jesus Christ. Scripture gives us a few details of the new heaven and new earth. The current heaven and earth have long been subject to God's curse because of mankind's sin. All creation "has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (Romans 8:22) as it awaits the fulfillment of God's plan and "the children of God to be revealed" (verse 19). Heaven and earth will pass away (Mark 13:31), and they will be replaced by the new heaven and the new earth. At that time, the Lord, seated on His throne, says, "I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:5). In the new creation, sin will be totally eradicated, and "there shall be no more curse" (Revelation 22:3, NKJV).

The new heaven and new earth are also mentioned in Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; and 2 Peter 3:13. Peter says that the new heaven and new earth will be "where righteousness dwells." Isaiah says that "the former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind." Things will be completely new, and the old order of things, with the accompanying sorrow and tragedy, will be gone.

The new earth will be free from sin, evil, sickness, suffering, and death. It will be earth as God originally intended it to be, prior to the curse of sin. It will be Eden restored.

A major feature of the new earth will be the New Jerusalem. John calls it "the Holy City . . . coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Revelation 21:2). This glorious city, with its streets of gold and pearly gates, is situated on a new, glorious earth. The tree of life will be there (Revelation 22:2). This city represents the final state of redeemed mankind, forever in fellowship with God: "God's dwelling place is now among the

people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. . . .

In the new heaven and new earth, Scripture says there are seven things notable for their absence—seven things that are “no more”:

- no more sea (Revelation 21:1)
- no more death (Revelation 21:4)
- no more mourning (Revelation 21:4)
- no more weeping (Revelation 21:4)
- no more pain (Revelation 21:4)
- no more curse (Revelation 22:3)
- no more night (Revelation 22:5)

The creation of the new heaven and new earth brings the promise that God “will wipe every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:4). This event comes *after* the tribulation, *after* the Lord’s second coming, *after* the millennial kingdom, *after* the final rebellion, *after* the final judgment of Satan, and *after* the great white throne judgment. The brief description of the new heaven and new earth is the last glimpse into eternity that the Bible gives.

It is true, all those “in Christ” will live happily ever after...forever. Joyfully praising and serving GOD throughout the created universe and for all of eternity.

Eternity will not be long enough to praise GOD for all that HE is!