



# Introduction to Bible Prophecy

*A Bible study prepared for a Leisure Learning Unlimited class*

BibleTract.org

Note: Scripture used in this Bible Study is from the New King James Version.

## 1. Introduction

My name is Scott Huckaby and I will be leading you in a discussion that will serve as an introduction to Bible Prophecy. This is a specially relevant topic today because I believe we are nearing the end of the age we live in. We will talk about what it means to be at the end of this age and why this transition is very near.

The purpose of this class is to help you understand and appreciate what the Bible has to say about what is soon going to happen on the earth. If you come to believe that the evidence supports the hypothesis that we are near the end of this age, your response to this could be life-changing as it was for me.

The agenda for this class is as follows:

1. After this brief **Introduction**, we will look at...
2. **Assumptions** necessary to appreciate Bible Prophecy
3. **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream** is an incredible prophecy that lays out the history and future of world governments.
4. **The Abomination of Desolation**, this is a key prophetic event that Jesus warned about in the Olivet Discourse.
5. **The Tribulation**, is a terrible 7-year period that the Bible says will come prior to the next age on the earth.
6. **The Rapture** of the church which is an incredible event that I believe occurs prior to the tribulation.
7. And **the Millennium Kingdom** is the new age that will follow the current age.
8. I'll also cover some of the key **Signs of the Times**.

Let's start by going around the room with each of you introducing yourselves and giving me an idea of your background in spiritual matters. I'll start: I am Scott Huckaby, I became a Christian in 1990 after reading a book on Bible Prophecy. This led to my joining Brazos Bend Baptist Church where I currently I lead an adult Bible study class on Sunday mornings.

## 2. Assumptions

In order to better appreciate this introduction to Bible prophecy, there are four assumptions that need to be accepted at least for the purpose of this class...

1. God is
2. God is Almighty
3. God created us for a purpose
4. God's Word is true

Since this is an introduction to Bible Prophecy class I'm not going to take the time to justify these assumptions. I have done a Bible study specifically addressing these assumptions that you can find under Topical Bible Studies on my Website, BibleTract.org. I will however give you a brief explanation for each of these assumptions:

1. It is obvious that God exists because the creation is His testimony. Those who deny the logical conclusion from the evidence available to all are in rebellion against their Creator. You really don't need the Bible to tell you this.
2. God is Almighty and could have brought about the creation any way he wanted to. God is not an absentee landlord of the Universe. He is in active control of the universe and nothing happens outside of His permissive will. God is able to tell us what will happen in the future because He is outside the confines of time, which is simply a dimension of our universe.
3. There is a purpose behind why God created us. He created us so that we may have a relationship with Him. Life is a test to see which of us will respond to Him and enter into that relationship and who rejects God by remaining separate from Him. There are eternal consequences for not making the decision to accept the relationship that God freely offers.
4. God provided a means for us to know Him with the Bible, which is a collection of truth from Him. The postmodern mantra today is how can anyone know what is true? But if God is Almighty, He can accurately present the truth to us and preserve it even using His error-prone creation.

I'd like to also point out that God intended the Bible to be understood by anybody. The Bible is not something that requires a degree in theology to understand. There are a couple basic principles that will serve us well as we endeavor to understand what the Bible says:

**Context:** It is interesting to note that you can make the Bible say anything you want it to say if you take a passage out of context. So to correctly understand what a particular verse is saying, its meaning must be consistent with the larger passage in which it is found. It should also be noted that the meaning of a passage must be consistent with the rest of Scripture. There are no contradictions in Scripture because God can not contradict Himself. There may well be apparent contradictions but these are really gaps in our understanding. Now there may also be translation issues but these are always minor in their scope and so infrequent that you can just about ignore them.

**Literal:** I have learned that the only way to understand the Bible is to take it literally. A lot of people neglect prophecy because they think that it is all symbolic and has to be interpreted. But when we look at the prophecies of the first coming of Christ that was fulfilled, we see that they were fulfilled literally. So the obvious conclusion is that the prophecies about His second coming will literally be fulfilled as well.

- Now there is symbolism in the Bible that does need to be interpreted but this is the same as in any literature, the symbolism is obvious. And in most cases the Bible itself explains the symbolism.

If the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense or you'll end up with nonsense.

### **What is the most important truth that the Bible presents to us?**

That God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ made a way for us to have a personal relationship with Him. The principle message of the Bible may be summed up in one verse:

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Now this is the message of the whole Bible, the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament certainly makes the point that mankind needs a Savior and that God will provide that Savior in the Messiah. The New Testament tells us who that Messiah is. The Jews don't recognize Jesus as the promised Messiah and so they don't accept the New Testament despite all of the New Testament being written by Jewish prophets like the Old. However, there are individual Jews who do recognize Jesus as the Messiah and it is prophesied that prior to His return, they will as a nation change their mind about Jesus...

Romans 11:25 - For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Alright with this introduction out of the way, let's take a look at some prophecy...

## **3. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**

Let's begin by looking at a key passage where the prophet Daniel not only interpreted king Nebuchadnezzar's dream but told him what it was. Nebuchadnezzar didn't tell what his dream was as a test so he would know if the interpretation was true. While they were anxious to give an interpretation, none of the Chaldean magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, or "wise men" could also tell the king the dream. They said, *"It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."* (Daniel 2:11)

This dream is important because it maps out the significant world governments from the captivity of Israel to the return of Christ...

### **Daniel 2:31-44**

31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

32 "This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

33 "its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

34 "You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

37 "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

38 "and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all-- you are this head of gold.

39 "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

40 "And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

41 "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the

strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

42 "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

43 "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

### **3.1 - Verses 31-33 - How would you describe the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream?**

It was a statue with a head made of gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

### **3.2 - Verses 31-33 - What is the significance of the materials of the image?**

They are of decreasing value which indicates an order of succession.

### **3.3 - Verses 34-35 - What happened to the image in the dream?**

A stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and disappeared.

### **3.4 - Verses 34-35 - How is the stone contrasted to the materials that make up the image?**

- The stone is not man-made while metals (and the clay which is a reference to ceramic) are all hand crafted.
- The stone was not cut with hands, it was different the metals which were worked by human hands, it was the work of God.

### **3.5 - Verse 34 - What is the significance of where the stone struck the image?**

The stone represents Christ who will put an end to the world governments of man. Note that the stone strikes the last man-made material that is of least value, the iron mixed with clay. The last world government of man will see the coming of Christ.

### **3.6 - Verses 34-35 - What is to become of the stone and what is its significance?**

- After the stone struck the image, it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth...
- The stone represents the coming of Jesus Christ in glory to crush the last world government of man and set up a government ruled by Christ.

### **3.7 - Verses 36-38 - What does the gold head in the image represent?**

The head of gold represented the human king that was ruling the world at the time of the prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar.

### **3.8 - What was king Nebuchadnezzar given reign over?**

Nebuchadnezzar ruled the whole world: wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, he was to be ruler over them all (verse 38).

### **3.9 - Verse 39 - What is the commonality between all the statue's materials?**

All the man-made materials represent governments that like Nebuchadnezzar rule over the whole earth.

### **3.10 - What governments have we had in history that have ruled over the civilized world? If Gold corresponds to the Babylonians, what do the other materials represent?**

- **Egyptians** - existed before the time of the dream but worth noting - they were used by God to demonstrate His deliverance to Israel
- **Gold - Babylonians** - in power 605 to 539 BC, took Israel into captivity as God's judgment for turning away from Him
- **Silver - Medeo-Persians** - in power 539 to 330 BC, allowed Israel to rebuild the Temple and return to Jerusalem
- **Bronze - Greeks** - Alexander the Great came in power 330 to ~250 BC, provided a common language to conduct trade and share ideas.
- **Iron - Romans** - added Israel to its empire in 68 BC, they built roads to improve transportation, communication, and trade ("command & control"). The Roman empire broke into nations between 450 to 900 AD.

### **3.11 - Has there been any world governments since the Romans?**

There have been no world governments since the Romans, many have tried but it hasn't happened since then. One might say the Roman empire continued to rule the world until WWII through the European colonial system. In 1945 at Yalta, Stalin & Roosevelt decided to break up the colonial system and these empires further fragmented into nations.

### **3.12 - Verses 41-43 - What does the iron mixed with clay tell us about this future last human world government?**

- The last human world government will be divided; as the two dissimilar materials represent, possibly a mix of dictatorship and a democratic/republic.
- The last human world government will be partly strong and partly fragile, a shaky coalition of nations speaking different languages.

- The last human world government will have the strength of Roman government that preceded it.
- The continuity of the iron represents the similarity to the Roman government that preceded it. This is where Bible prophecy students get the term, "revived Roman Empire."

### **3.13 - Ceramic is a lot closer to stone in its properties than metal, do you think there is any significance in that?**

It is interesting to note that ceramic has some similar properties to stone yet is man-made... I think it represents man's attempt to replace God in binding the world together with his own religion...

Revelation 13:11-12 - Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast,

### **3.14 - Is there any significance in the two arms, two legs, and ten toes?**

- Probably, I believe the two arms represents the combined Medeo and Persian empires...
- The two legs represent the eastern and western divisions of the Roman empire.
- The ten toes represent the ten governmental powers that will comprise the core of the revived Roman Empire...

A study of another vision that Daniel had about the fourth beast with 10 horns in chapter 7 will reveal more details about this last world empire of man. Further insight about the 10-horned beast may also be found in the Revelation...

Revelation 17:12 - The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.

### **3.15 - Verse 44 – What will the government be like that will replace the world governments of men?**

God's kingdom shall:

- (1) never be destroyed
- (2) not be left to other people
- (3) be used by God to destroy the kingdoms of the dream
- (4) it will stand forever.

## **4. The Abomination of Desolation**

### **4.1 - How do we know Jesus is going to come back?**

Jesus told His disciples that He was going to depart by way of the cross and He said He would come back...

John 14:1-3 - Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are

many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

This is a promise for us today. Today's disciples are those who put their trust in Jesus for their salvation and follow Him. Jesus also told us that we should watch for His return...

Matthew 24:42 - "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Our Lord describes the events prior to His return so that we may watch for Him in the Olivet Discourse. Among the events He described was the abomination of desolation.

Let's take a look at this passage:

Matthew 24:15-21

15 "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.

Note that this passage makes a special point to pray that your flight would not be on the Sabbath because it is being directed to religious Jews who will have a dilemma about doing any kind of work on the Sabbath and may hesitate when they should be taking action to flee. But it has application to all of us because the tribulation is not limited to the Jews.

### **4.2 - What can we learn about the abomination of desolation from this passage?**

- It occurs in the holy place.
- It is an event that begins the great tribulation where Jews in Judea are persecuted.
- Also, look at the meaning of the words themselves:
  - Abomination – something that causes disgust or hatred... detestable
  - Desolation – something that causes a place to be devoid of inhabitants.

### **4.3 - Where can we learn more about the abomination of desolation?**

The Book of Daniel...

Daniel 9:25-27

25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of **the prince who is to come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 Then **he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate**, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

#### **4.4 - What value are the time frames given in this passage?**

It provides the timing of the coming of the Messiah. The "weeks" are weeks of years (seven year periods). Historians have calculated the time of the decree to restore Jerusalem to Palm Sunday works out to the day  $(7+62)*12*360$ . The 70th week is yet to come.

#### **4.5 - What does it mean "Messiah shall be cut off"?**

God's own people will reject the Messiah. The people did not accept Messiah Jesus as King and crucified Him...

Luke 19:41-42 - Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

#### **4.6 - Who will destroy the city and the sanctuary?**

The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the sanctuary.

#### **4.7 - What is the sanctuary?**

The sanctuary is a reference to the temple in Jerusalem. Any study of the Old Testament would reveal that the temple is a very prominent part of Jewish life since King David.

#### **4.8 - Was the sanctuary destroyed?**

Yes, by the Romans in 70 A.D.

#### **4.9 - Verse 26 - What does the "it" in "the end of it" refer to?**

The "it" is a veiled reference to the church age, that period of time we are now in between the end of the 69 weeks and the beginning of the 70th week (verse 27).

#### **4.10 - Why isn't the 69 and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks of Daniel continuous as between the 7 and 62?**

The church age was a mystery during Old Testament times...

Ephesians 5:32 - This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

#### **4.11 - Verse 26 - How did Daniel describe the time leading up to the 70th week?**

Daniel prophesied that the end of the church age would come with a flood, in other words, it would overwhelm people rapidly. Also that the time leading up to Christ's return would be a war opposing Him and there would be desolations happening along with this.

#### **4.12 - What are desolations?**

Desolations are events that cause a place to be devoid of its inhabitants. These are serious calamities which serve as wake-up calls to drive us to God for salvation rather than the multitude of other things (aka gods) that people trust in for their salvation (government, bank account, self, etc...).

#### **4.13 - What kind of wake-up calls have we had?**

Both world wars were wake-up calls because they effected the whole world. The gulf war was another one which involved the whole world and it demonstrated the potency of a unified world power. I also believe the 9-11-01 terrorist attacks on the U.S. was a world-shaking event because it was not just an attack on the U.S., it was an attack on Western values. All the world has rallied around the idea that we need to work together to stamp out terrorism.

#### **4.14 - Verse 27 - What happens during the 70th week?**

The prince who is to come will confirm a covenant, bring an end to sacrifice and offering, and make people desolate which means devoid of hope.

#### **4.15 - When does the abomination of desolation occur?**

At the mid point of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. This timeframe is reinforced by Scripture in many other places, see Revelation 11:2, 12:14, 13:5 and Daniel 7:25 & 12:7.

#### **4.16 - What is the sacrifice that is ended?**

The temple sacrifices that the Jews practice according to the Mosaic Law.

#### **4.17 - What must there be for the sacrifice to be ended?**

The sacrifices must have first started.

#### **4.18 - What is needed for Israel to have sacrifices?**

The sacrifices must be done at the temple.

#### **4.19 - When was the last time Israel had sacrifices?**

The sacrifices in Israel ended with the destruction of Herod's temple in 70 AD.

#### **4.20 - So when did this 70th week occur?**

The 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel hasn't happened yet and can not until there is a temple and the sacrifices begin.

#### **4.21 - Why will Israel rebuild the temple and resume the sacrifices?**

Besides the fact that God says it will happen, it is part of Israel's heritage as a people. They will do this in their zeal to please God and bring the Messiah. Certainly there is a desire for this to happen as any one who has visited the Temple Institute in Jerusalem can attest. They already have most of the instruments they need to resume the sacrifices, all they need is the temple. There is also a building anticipation for the Messiah to come.

#### **4.22 - Does it seem likely that Israel will have a temple in Jerusalem any time soon?**

No, it seems impossible today but the Lord loves to demonstrate His sovereignty over impossible situations. I wasn't yet living at the time but I understand that it seemed impossible for Israel to re-establish itself as a nation in the land prior to 1948.

#### **4.23 - So what does this tell us about whether this passage talks about a past or future event?**

It must be yet future because it says "Then he shall confirm a covenant." And the prince that is to come brings an end to the sacrifices which means there must be another temple.

#### **4.24 - Verse 27 - What does it mean the prince will "CONFIRM a covenant with many"?**

I believe this means that there is already a peace agreement with multiple parties in place, the prince just reinforces it and gives it a guarantee.

#### **4.25 - Where in the world do we see this scenario being set up today?**

The so-called "peace process" between Israel and their Arab enemies surrounding them. The power of the Revived Roman Empire, which is the Western Confederation of nations, will guarantee the treaty with Israel. This is what will give them the security to proceed with building a temple. It however is a false security that only lasts 3 ½ years (until the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of years).

**Jeremiah 6:14** - They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace.

**1Thessalonians 5:3** - For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

## **5. The Tribulation**

### **5.1 - There are more prophecies in Scripture about the tribulation than any other time period. Why do you think that is?**

The tribulation will be a terrible time on the earth. The tribulation is the pouring out of God's wrath as part of a cleansing to get people back on track in a relationship with Him and to establish the Messianic Kingdom that He has promised. God out of His Grace does not want us to dismiss His judgment but to conduct our lives in anticipation of it...

2 Peter 3:9 - 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.

### **5.2 - Which book of the Bible tells us the most about the tribulation?**

Most of the prophets had something to say about the tribulation but the most thorough report on the tribulation is from the Apostle John in the Revelation. Time does not permit us to delve into the Book of Revelation in detail so let me give you a rough overview along with some key passages to give you a flavor of it. As I go through this, you may want to refer to the End Time Chronology chart that is part of your hand-out...

### **5.3 - Revelation 1:1 – First of all, what is revealed in the book of Revelation?**

Revelation 1:1 - 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,

The book of Revelation tells about the revelation of Jesus Christ and things which must shortly take place.

### **5.4 - What is the revelation of Jesus Christ?**

It is the revealing of who Jesus is to the whole world. Every person on earth will see Him when He comes.

### **5.5 - Revelation 1:19 - What may we conclude about the order of events in Revelation?**

Revelation 1:19 - Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

They are generally chronological, interspersed with parenthetical flash forwards to the scene in heaven to give the reader hope.

Chapters 2 & 3 are letters to 7 churches that existed in John's day but many Bible scholars believe that the reason God addressed these particular churches and chose this particular order was significant: It represents the church age.

Prophetic passages often have multiple applications through "types", partial fulfillment and actual fulfillment. Also, the fact that there are 7 churches is significant: the number 7 has

symbolic significance in the Bible, it means "completion". (as in completing creation in 7 days).

At any given time (including John's time) congregations can be found that have these characteristics. However, if one was to describe the church taken as a whole throughout its history, it maps very closely to Chapters 2 & 3. We are now in the final, Laodicean church age where there is a lot of apathy regarding Christ.

I'm convinced from my study of the Bible that people who receive Christ into their lives during the Church Age will not suffer through the Tribulation. This event where the Lord takes us out of the world is called the Rapture of the Church. I believe that Revelation 4:1 is symbolic of this event...

Revelation 4:1 - After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

It is interesting to note that the church is only shown in Heaven with the Lord in the rest of the book of Revelation.

The wrath of God is described as three sets of judgments, seals (as in a seal to a scroll of God's Word), trumpets (as in God speaking), and bowls (as in pouring out God's wrath). Each set of judgments have 7 specific aspects to it. The seal judgments describe a quarter of all people on earth dying as a result of nuclear war...

Revelation 6:12-16

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

#### **5.6 - Revelation 6:12-16 - What events are associated with the sixth seal?**

- a great earthquake (blast)
- the sun became black as sackcloth of hair (dust in atmosphere - "nuclear winter")
- the moon became like blood (dust in atmosphere - further away from the detonations)
- the stars of heaven fell to the earth (ICBM warhead entering atmosphere)

- the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up (air sucked into mushroom cloud)
- every mountain and island was moved out of its place (terrain changed)
- people hid themselves in the caves and in mountains (bomb shelters)

#### **5.7 - Why would God allow the use of nuclear weapons rather than bring about these events supernaturally?**

It is consistent with the pattern God has established for the way He operates, acting as subtly as possible. God allowing nuclear weapons to be used will accommodate those eager to explain away the course of events. If the destruction is man's doing, they think it can all be fixed given enough funding and education because they have faith in the fundamental good of mankind (which is a deception). Even if the events were supernatural, they would fail to attribute them to God. Note that people accused Jesus of performing miracles by the power of Satan (Matthew 12:24). If God did not orchestrate events to provide for a convenient explanation people would still come up with some reasoning that provides for any cause but God. Those who have made up their minds about God are given a plausible explanation to continue in their condition.

The trumpet judgments of Revelation 8 and 9 describe another third of all people on earth dying which I take to be the after effects of nuclear war.

#### **Reference: Revelation 13**

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

**5.8 - Revelation 13:2 - What three things will the dragon give the beast?**

The Dragon will give the Beast his power, his throne, and great authority.

**5.9 - Who is "the dragon"?**

The dragon represents the devil (see Revelation 12:9).

**5.10 - Revelation 13:3 - What kind of following will the beast have?**

All the world will marvel after and follow the beast.

**5.11 - Who will give authority to the beast, a.k.a. Antichrist?**

The dragon or devil will give authority to the Antichrist.

**5.12 - Who gives authority to the devil?**

God does, He permits Satan to have authority for a time because it serves His purpose. God is in control of all things and all authorities are ordained by God...

Romans 13:1 - Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

**5.13 - Revelation 13:5 – What is the significance of the time period here?**

The beast will continue 3 1/2 years, this is a reference to the second half of the tribulation which Jesus called the “great tribulation.”

**5.14 - Revelation 13:5-6 - What will the beast talk about?**

The beast will speak of great things and blasphemies, he will be a great orator and a consummate politician.

**5.15 - What three things will the beast blaspheme?**

The Antichrist will blaspheme God's name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. No doubt the Antichrist will dismiss the rapture by saying it is good that those born-again Christians are gone... their closed mindedness about spiritual matters is what was holding society back from being a utopia (or something similar).

**5.16 - Revelation 13:7-10 - Who will the beast persecute?**

The Antichrist will target saints, those who trust in Christ for salvation. There will be a lot of Christian martyrs during the tribulation. If you are not a Christian before the rapture, you'll pretty much have to expect to die for your faith if come to Christ after the rapture.

**5.17 - Revelation 13:16-18 - What is the mark of the Beast?**

The false prophet will cause all people to receive a mark of either the name of the beast or the number of his name (666) on their right hand or foreheads. People will need this mark in order to buy or sell anything.

**5.18 - What is the significance of the number 666?**

The number 3 is used in Scripture to represent God which makes sense since the Godhead consists of three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Likewise the number 6 is the Biblical number of man, so 666 is man's attempt to be as God.

**5.19 - What technology today makes it more understandable how no one may buy or sell without a certain mark?**

Most transactions can not even be made without computers to keep track of the money. There are also today rice grain-sized transponders for identification of animals and body parts. It is also interesting to note that all product bar codes already display "666" on them... Check it out, the beginning middle and end of bar codes are marked with two thin parallel lines usually a little longer than the rest of the bar code bars. The two thin parallel lines is also the bar code for the number 6.

- Revelation 16 describes yet more calamities that will come on the earth as the bowl judgments.
- Revelation 17 and 18 describes the failure of the world's financial institutions that the Bible calls



“Mystery Babylon.” For more on this, see my study on “Financial Signs of the End-Times.”

- Revelation 19 describes the Lord’s return in glory with His saints thus ending the war at Armageddon.
- Revelation 20 describes the Millennial Kingdom and the last two chapters give us the most specific information the Bible provides on the eternal state after God renovates the universe by fire. Everything is burned up and a new universe is created that is not subject to the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics or in church-speak free from sin.

Enough of the tribulation, let’s shift gears to the Blessed Hope of the church...

## 6. The Rapture

### 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18

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.

#### 6.1 - Verse 14 - Who gets to be with Christ when they die?

Those who believe that Jesus died and rose again will get to be with Him when they die.

#### 6.2 - Verse 15 - When does the resurrection happen & in what order?

The resurrection happens when the Lord comes, the dead Christians rise first, then *“we who are alive and remain.”*

#### 6.3 - Verse 16 - What will happen just prior to the resurrection of the church?

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

#### 6.4 - Verse 17 - Where is Christ during the resurrection of the church?

Christ meets the church in the air at the rapture. Note that this is different than His return to earth in glory to set up His Kingdom. So it is clear that the rapture and His second coming are two separate events.

#### 6.5 - Verse 18 - How are these verses comforting?

We have been promised that if we trust in Jesus, we will be saved at His coming... verse 14 – *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.”* (*“lest you sorrow as others who have no hope”*, verse 13)

#### 6.6 - How does verse 18 reinforce the idea that the Rapture occurs before the tribulation?

The Rapture must happen before the tribulation because it a comfort to the Church. Knowing that we have to face the tribulation before we are resurrected is no comfort yet this is what many people teach.

#### 6.7 - How does verse 17 show that Paul expected the rapture to be an imminent event even back in his day?

Paul expected that the rapture could happen at any time because he included himself in those who would not face death, *“we who are alive and remain...”* He also said:

1Thes 5:9 - For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

This is the comfort we have in knowing that the rapture is imminent and will occur before the Tribulation. The Lord has promised that He will keep us from *“the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world”* (Revelation 3:10).

#### 6.8 - What explanations do you think will be given for the rapture?

- New Age Religious people will say something like this is the cosmic god taking away the “bad seed” to prepare the way for a quantum leap into a new state of existence.
- Secular people may believe space aliens zapped them: “We have a common foe so we must all work together”. -OR- “We have a common friend so we must all work together.” Note that Jesus said there would be signs in heaven preceding His return...

Luke 21:11 - “And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.”

Jesus said there would be great deception during the time of the tribulation in His Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24). I’m sure a lot of this deception will be explanations to dismiss the rapture as something other than what it really was.

- It also occurs to me that the rapture may be masked by a major distraction such as a nuclear war. Who would miss a few million Christians when millions more are dead or suffering from nuclear weapons. The Bible speaks of nuclear war during the tribulation and there is one war described in Ezekiel 38-39 that I believe happens prior to the tribulation because it describes Israel using their weapons as fuel for 7 years.

Another important reference to the rapture is found in 1 Corinthians 15:50-57. For a study on this passage and

others dealing with the rapture, see my study on “our Blessed Hope.”

## 7. The Millennium

### Reference: Revelation 20:1-6

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.  
2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;  
3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.  
4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.  
5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.  
6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

### 7.1 - Revelation 20:1-3 - What will become of Satan?

An angel locks Satan in the bottomless pit for 1000 years.

### 7.2 - Revelation 20:4-6 - Who is involved in the first resurrection?

Christians raptured prior to the tribulation along with Christians killed during the tribulation

### 7.3 - What will the saints be doing during the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth?

The saints will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years.

### Conditions during the Millennial Kingdom

#### Reference: Isaiah 65:17-25

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.  
18 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, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

24 "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the LORD.

### 7.4 - What five things will not exist in this glorious Kingdom to come

1. verse 19 - weeping and crying
2. verse 20 - death before 100 yrs old
3. verse 22 - working for others
4. verse 23 - labor in vain or pain
5. verse 25 - animals killing each other

### 7.5 - Isaiah 65:17-25 speaks of a new heavens and a new earth but why can't this refer to the eternal state?

Because it is in context with verse 20 which refers to people being subject to death (the curse of sin is not fully removed). Per Revelation 21:4, “*there shall be no more death*” in the eternal state.

### 7.6 - What does it mean in verse 17 that “the former shall not be remembered or come to mind”?

The fallen condition of this world as we know it today will be forgotten.

### 7.7 - What are the implications of this for the eternal state?

Since the new heavens and new earth of the millennial reign of Christ foreshadows the eternal state, we can expect that we too will not remember the trials and tribulations of this life. Per Revelation 21:4, “*God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*”

- We see this even in our memories of earlier days in our mortal lives (the good-old days). We find that the good things are more easily remembered while the bad things are diminished. God out of His grace gives weight to the good things because He is good.

### **7.8 - What does verse 19 tell us about the millennial reign?**

That conditions on earth will be more like they were in the Garden of Eden than they are now.

### **7.9 - Why will things be so much better during the millennial reign of Christ?**

Because the Lord has at least partially redeemed creation (v. 17) and is personally ruling the nations. One of the purposes the dispensation of the millennial reign of Christ will serve is to show us that even in perfect conditions, man still needs a Savior.

### **7.10 – Verse 20 – How long will people live during the millennial reign of Christ?**

At least 100 years, there will be no children dying.

### **7.11 – Verse 22 – It says that the time of God’s people will be as that of a tree, what does this mean?**

That people will live as long as a tree.

#### **How long does a tree live?**

Trees routinely live many hundreds of years. There are redwoods on the west coast that were around since Christ first came. So people who come to Christ during His millennial reign will generally not die and will be given a glorified body when the Lord recreates heaven and earth ushering in the eternal state. Some will live during the entire time of the millennial reign of the Lord.

### **7.12 - Will there be any sin in this Kingdom?**

Per verse 20 there will be sin and people who do not accept Christ as their Savior will die at 100 years old. Per verse 22 those who receive Christ into their life will live as long as a tree.

### **7.13 - What does verses 21-22 tell us about the millennial reign?**

People will enjoy the fruit of their labors. This is more proof that much of the curse will be removed...

Genesis 3:17-18 - Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.

### **7.14 - What part of the consequences of the fall of man does verse 23 address?**

The pain of child birth...

Genesis 3:16 - To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

### **7.15 - What implications do you think the removal of laboring in vain and the pain of child birth will have on the population?**

The earth will be re-populated very fast. Note that the pain of child birth may imply more than the physical pain of giving birth. The millennium will reverse the trend among western nations today where people are having smaller families or avoiding children altogether because they are seen to be a financial burden.

#### **The Eternal State**

#### **Reference: Revelation 20:11-21:5**

11 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.

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

### **7.16 - Revelation 20:11-13 - What happens at the great white throne?**

At the Great White Throne, the dead were judged according to their works.

### **7.17 - How do you think those who are judged according to their works will fare?**

Per verse 15, anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into hell. Per Philippians 4:3 and Revelation 3:5,

only those who have trusted Jesus as their personal Savior have their names written in the Book of Life. Everyone judged at the Great White Throne will end up in the lake of fire because salvation can not be earned by good works.

Isaiah 64:6 - But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

### **7.18 - Revelation 21:1 - What happens to the world?**

God re-creates heaven & earth... The apostle Peter explained how God would do this...

2 Peter 3:10 - 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.

### **7.19 - Revelation 21:4 - What will the new heaven and earth be like?**

There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

The rest of the chapter describes the New Jerusalem that will be like a cube 1500 miles high. And Revelation 22:20 gives us the last words from Jesus, "*Surely I am coming quickly.*"

For more on the Millennial Kingdom and our eternal state, see my Topical Bible study on "Heaven."

## **8. Signs of the Times**

We really do not have time to do this topic proper justice so I'll refer you to my Topical Bible studies on "Signs of the Times" and "Signs of the Financial End-Times." This Bible study addresses several categories of end-time signs such as the following:

**Nature** – I believe that the perceived global warming is a sign of the times...

Luke 21:25-26 - And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.

**Society** – The Bible says that society will get worse and worse which is logical if men really have a sin nature...

2 Timothy 3:1-5 - But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of

themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

**Technology** – The Bible describes many things that could not be understood in the time that they were written but can easily be understood today...

Daniel 12:4 - But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

**Politics** – The Bible says there will be a one-world government in the time prior to Christ returning...

Revelation 13:7 - It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

**Finances** – The Bible says the wealth that people trust in for their deliverance will become worthless in the end times...

James 5:3 - Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

**Israel** – This is the number one sign of the end-times:

### **8.1 - Has the Church replaced Israel in God's promises?**

No, God has made separate promises to Israel and the church. If you get this basic concept wrong, you'll have a difficult time taking the Bible literally for what it says, you'll end up having to spiritualize everything it says about end-time events. God is not done working through Israel as a nation...

Romans 11:25-26 - For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

God keeps his promises. He has made many to Israel that have great prophetic significance. The time of the Lord's return can be determined by certain key events associated with Israel. This has caused many Bible students to refer to Israel as God's prophetic time clock. Jesus said that Israel would be an important indicator of His return in the parable of the fig tree...

Matt 24:32-34 - 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. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near-- at

the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. A study of the fig tree in the Old Testament shows that it is symbolic of the nation Israel.

**8.2 - There are many Bible references to Israel being restored to the land. Indeed they had been taken off into captivity by Babylon, how do we know that these prophecies have not been fulfilled in History?**

We know that the prophecies in these verses have not been fulfilled from their context. Some are talking about restoration to the land from Babylon, others are clearly talking about a time that better fits today or has not yet been fulfilled...

**8.3 - How do we know that Ezekiel 37:21-25 is a reference to a restoration of Israel to their land that has not been fulfilled in history?**

Ezekiel 37:21-25

21 "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;

22 "and 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.

23 "They 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.

25 "Then 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.

For on thing this is talking about restoration from multiple nations (verse 21). When Israel was restored from Babylon, they were only taken from one nation. However, the most significant thing that indicates that this verse has not been fulfilled is in verse 25 that they shall dwell in the land forever.

**8.4 - What is verse 22 talking about that they will no longer be two nations?**

Israel was divided into Judah and Israel during the time of the kings. There will be no such division when God restores them from the nations in the end-times. This is the case in Israel today.

**8.5 - What does verse 23 have to say about whether this passage has been fulfilled or not?**

This says the nation of Israel will return to being God's people. Israel as a nation is really very secular. Not even the ultra orthodox are God people because they have rejected the Messiah. So this passage is talking about a future fulfillment.

**8.6 - What does it mean that David will be king over them all?**

- The Lord Himself who is a descendant of King David will rule them.
- I also take it literally that the resurrected King David will serve as an under-shepherd to the Lord as Governor of Israel during the His millennial reign on the earth. Saints will have positions of authority in the Lord's government (see my study on heaven).

**8.7 - Could God remove Israel from the land and re-gather them again?**

I believe this passage allows for that but I don't believe that is what will happen because it is not God's pattern. God has dispersed Israel as punishment from turning away from Him. Since the current re-gathered Israel has not yet turned to Him. A careful reading of this passage reveals that Israel is returned to the land and then God cleanses them and makes them His people. So the people of Israel are returned to the land in unbelief, exactly the situation today.