

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a sky at sunset or sunrise. Sunbeams (crepuscular rays) are visible, shining down from the top center through a layer of clouds. The clouds are dark and textured, with some catching the light. The bottom of the image shows a dark silhouette of a landscape with trees and a fence.

COME, LORD JESUS

Studies in Biblical Prophecy

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THE CHRISTIAN AND BIBLE PROPHECY

Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION

1. The Bible is a book about the coming of Jesus Christ.
 - a. In Genesis 3:15 at the dawn of human history, God put Satan on notice that an individual from among the woman's seed would deal a death blow to Satan's head at the cross. That one would be Christ who would have His heel bruised in the process. Here is the first prediction of the coming Christ. He would come to destroy the works of the devil.
 - b. The Bible concludes the drama of redemption in Revelation 22:20 with the words of Jesus Christ saying, "Yes, I am coming quickly." "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." This promise occurs three times in Revelation 22. The answer to the world's problems is not found in man's ability to create a better world but in the return of Christ.
2. The apostolic church was indoctrinated in the truths of Bible prophecy.
 - a. Bible prophecy was a part of evangelistic preaching (Acts 17:1-3). Paul while in Thessalonica reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue from the Scriptures. He explained and proved that Christ (the Messiah) had been prophesied in the Old Testament. He preached all of the relevant OT teaching regarding both advents of the Messiah. He taught kingdom truth.
 - b. Paul's two letters to the Thessalonian church demonstrate this fact. Their new faith in Christ was evident by the waiting attitude in regard to His coming (1Thess.1:10). They had been taught about the day of the Lord (5:1). In 2 Thessalonians 2:5 Paul reminded the Thessalonian church that He had taught them truth regarding the man of lawlessness and the sequence of events in the tribulation.

3. The Christian life draws its cadence from the hope of the coming of Jesus Christ. The believer's spiritual pulse is quickened by the expectation of the blessed hope.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;” Titus 2:11-13.

- a. The basis/foundation for the Christian's conduct in this world is the coming of Christ. God's grace to us in Christ instructs us to turn our back on all those desires that seek fulfilment in this world system. Instead we are to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives - lives that please God.
- b. Why? Because we are waiting for the blessed hope which is the appearing of Christ Jesus. Our anticipation of His coming again should give us a rush of spiritual adrenalin. It is blessed because it is joy to come. We will see Him whom we have yet to see.

Now in the light of this I want to set before you five priorities if we are to gain the greatest amount of profit from the study of Bible prophecy. We are setting out on a journey over biblical territory. So, let's get our compasses set. We want to go in the right direction and all the landscape.

I. THE CHRISTIAN MUST GRASP THE SCOPE OF BIBLE PROPHECY.

A. The Bible unfolds the breadth of God's plan.

As has been said earlier, the Bible is a book about the coming of Christ. It has a plot-line. Like any plot there is a beginning (commencement), progression (continuation), and a conclusion (consummation). Commencement, continuation and closure. History is His (Christ's) story. Woven through the fabric of the biblical text is the story of redemption.

1. The Old Testament cries out, the Messiah is coming. He is the seed of the woman, Shiloh who is coming, the Prophet of whom Moses spoke, the Kinsman Redeemer of Ruth, the Son of David, the ideal King of Israel, the one who would be born of a virgin, the suffering Servant, the Son of Man whose

dominion is an everlasting dominion, Messiah the Prince, the King who is coming riding on a donkey, the Lord whose feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.

2. The Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles of the New Testament declare that the Messiah has come. This was announced to Mary and Joseph. His ministry and message was confirmed by the apostle. God gave witness to Him by signs and wonders.
3. The Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ proclaim that He is coming again.

B. The Bible reveals much that is yet to come.

There is a sense in which all of Scripture is prophecy (2 Pet. 1:20). It is the word spoken by God. But Scripture as prophecy falls into two categories. There is historical prophecy (that which has already come to pass). There is also predictive prophecy:

1. Predictive prophecy is possible because God alone knows the future.
 “Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure” (Isa. 46:9-10).
2. Almost one-third of the Bible is given over to predictive prophecy. God wants His people to know about the future. “For every prophecy concerning Christ’s first coming, there are eight for His second.” Hoyt

II. THE CHRISTIAN MUST BECOME CONVERSANT WITH THE VOCABULARY OF BIBLE PROPHECY.

Every discipline has vocabulary unique to its study. We must master some basic terms that will occur regularly in our study of Bible prophecy.

- A. Prophecy is the presentation of new revelation from God. Prophets were spokesmen for God. See Exodus 4:1-2 for the first occurrence. Prophecy is revelation from God. It is not teaching or illumination.
- B. Eschatology is the study of last things in redemptive history.
- C. The “last days” is a reference to that span of time from the first coming of the Messiah to the Second Coming of the Messiah (2 Tim. 3:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 Jn. 2:18).
- D. The term “rapture” refers to the return of Christ to receive His church (1 Thess. 4:16).
- E. The Second Coming refers to the time when Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David and establish His Messianic Kingdom (Matt. 25:31; Acts 1:10, 11; Rev. 20:1-7).

III. THE CHRISTIAN MUST STAY FOCUSED ON THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF BIBLE PROPHECY.

- A. The plot-line of the Bible is the glory of God displayed in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom (Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:20-25).

1. Christ was raised from the dead and was the first fruits of those who are asleep, each in his own order.
2. After that, those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end (end of the Kingdom), when He delivers up the Kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power (Heb. 2:5-18).

B. The Second Coming of Christ is that grand event toward which all things are moving (Rev. 19:11-16). This is the climax of history.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN MUST GUARD AGAINST PITFALLS ASSOCIATED WITH BIBLE PROPHECY.

A. *The danger of being deceived by false teaching* (2 Thess. 2:3 "Let no one deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first."). False teaching can come by those claiming prophetic utterance or teaching. Books abound on the subject of prophecy. Let the buyer beware. False teaching comes in many disguises. There are those who deny predictive prophecy because of the supernatural presuppositions involved. There are those who attempt to set dates and see the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in contemporary events.

B. *The danger of being intimidated by scoffers* (2 Pet. 3:3-4). One of the characteristics of the last days will be those who will deny the coming of Christ. "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.'"

1. A world given over to anti-Christian world views will have no place for Christian teaching on the Second Coming of Christ.

2. It is a bitter pill to swallow that we are accountable and dependent.

3. It is a challenge to human pride to say that the human spirit cannot make it a better world and that the one we live in will end in judgment.
4. The belief in total uniformitarianism will rule out any idea of the coming of Christ. The theory of evolution does not tolerate a coming supernatural intervention into human affairs.

C. *The danger of disconnecting Bible prophecy from its intent* (1 Thess. 5:6). In the context of the day of the Lord/return of the Lord, Christians are told to “let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.” “The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer” (1 Pet. 4:7).

We are not to be intoxicated by the world's outlook on life. But I want to warn you of the danger of studying Bible prophecy which is ripped out of its ethical and moral context. All predictive prophecy is written to affect our way of thinking and living.

D. The danger of avoiding Bible prophecy because of conflicting interpretations (Rev. 1:3 - "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.") Yes, there are different systems of eschatology, but this should not be allowed to paralyze us in the study of Bible prophecy. I know some Christians who avoid Bible prophecy because of the differences in interpretation or who avoid it because some have abused prophecy. I find it a curious thing that some give themselves to minute specifics in soteriology (e.g., Ordo salutis) but criticize those who examine Bible prophecy in order to understand its details and its "Ordo salutis." [Ordo salutis is the way of salvation, an attempt to arrange in logical order the activities of God and man in the application of salvation to the individual].

V. THE CHRISTIAN MUST EXPERIENCE THE TRANSFORMATION OF LIFE
PROMPTED BY BIBLE PROPHECY.

- A. We should be patient people (James 5:7 - “Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.”)
- The problem of living in a suffocatingly evil world full of injustice, greed, self-indulgence, and oppression
- B. We should be comforted (I Thess. 4:18 - “Therefore comfort one another with these words.”). What words? Words concerning the coming of the Lord for His church.
- The problem of dealing with grief at the time of death
- C. We should be wise in the use of our time and resources (2 Cor. 5:9-10; 2 Tim. 4:1-2 - “...charge you...by His appearing and His kingdom...preach the word...”; 1 Pet. 5:4 - “When the Chief Shepherd appears...unfading crown of glory.”).
- The problem of the use of our money, staying faithful in Christian service
- D. We should be persistently obedient to God (Rev. 2:25; 3:11 - “Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.”).
- The problem of temptation and discouragement

PROPHECY IN THE RING

Lesson 2

INTRODUCTION

1. We study Bible prophecy because, as a part of God's revelation, it is to transform our lives (1 John 3:2-3 - "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."), create stability in our lives (1 Cor.15:58 - "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."), and produce conversions (Acts 3:12-26).

2. We must come to the study of Bible prophecy with humility, persistent study, and charity toward those with whom we disagree (1 Pet. 1:10-12).
 - a. Prophecy has been a taboo subject to many Christians because of the differences of views that surround it. The effect of this: "We mustn't be dogmatic since others disagree." So, avoidance results. A kind of Christian agnosticism.

 - b. Some say "why all the fuss about the future. Debate is fruitless and a big waste of time and effort. Let's just preach the gospel and leave the debate regarding prophecy to the theologians."

 - c. In some circles differences regarding views of the future have sharply divided Christians. Denominations, missions agencies, schools, and churches have all been affected. I could tell you about many debates going on in the church over this matter of Bible prophecy, but I will just say this. Do not let the existence of different interpretations of the Bible in any area drive you away from the pure milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:1ff.).

3. The problem of controversy is involved in the study of Bible prophecy. There are various views regarding the Millennium (from the word, “mille,” a thousand and the word, “annus,” year).
4. The system of eschatology one adheres to will affect (or should) living and attitudes. It also affects our understanding of history and what is happening currently.

III. THERE ARE THREE SYSTEMS OF TEACHING REGARDING THE MILLENNIUM.

Introduction: (1) More is involved than merely the arrangement of events surrounding the return of Christ. (2) The way one thinks about the world and our responsibilities as Christians will to some extent be affected, e.g., postmillennialists - bring in the Kingdom, political activism, believe things are getting better and better. Amillennialists - more pessimistic regarding the future, Satan is bound, generalists when it comes to large sections of prophecy (e.g., Ezekiel 40-48). Pre-millennialists - expectation of an apostate church to continue to develop, more time given to study of the details of Bible prophecy.

- A. Postmillennialists believe that Christ will return after the Millennium (not a literal thousand years but a symbol).

First, a brief statement as to the history of this view.

- (1) Origen (185 A.D. – 253 A.D.) – a leading student of the Word of God, not a postmillennialist but used allegory in his interpretation and denial of premillennialism.
- (2) Augustine (354 A.D. – 430 A.D.) – the Millennium is to be interpreted spiritually; the Millennium is not a literal reign of Christ. See “City of God” pp. 719ff.
- (3) Daniel Whitby (1638 – 1726 A.D.) – world to be converted, Jews restored to the Holy Land, Pope and Turks defeated, the world would enjoy a time

of peace and righteousness for a thousand years. At the close of this “millennium” Christ would personally come to earth. Adopted by many eighteenth and nineteenth century preachers and commentators.

- (4) Liberal postmillennialism – bringing about the Millennium, Walter Rauschenbush (1861 – 1918), a German Baptist minister. The gift of the Statue of Liberty in 1886, expression of liberal postmillennialism.

 - (5) The revival of postmillennialism – within the Reformed-Covenant Theology tradition – Theonomic postmillennialism – Theonomy is the state of being governed by God. Theonomists promote subduing the earth by means of science, education, the arts, and all other pursuits in order to effect God’s dominion over all things. Also called Dominion Theology. See David Chilton’s “Paradise Restored,” pp. 223-226. They claim that the eschatology of dominion is the historic position of the Church (Chilton, p. 227).
1. They take an optimistic view with regard to this present age.
 2. They believe that society will be Christianized by the progress of the gospel.
 3. They believe that Christ’s return will be a literal, visible return, but we do not know the time of His coming.
 4. They believe in a general resurrection of both believers and unbelievers (Rev. 20:12-13). They also believe in a final judgment and the eternal state.
 5. One form of postmillennialism that has risen in popularity in recent years is theonomic postmillennialism. They claim “that the Mosaic law, more or less in its entirety, constitutes a continuing norm for mankind and that it is the duty of the civil magistrate to enforce it, precepts and penalties alike.” Meredith G. Kline

Summary:

1. The Millennium is to come about through Christian preaching and teaching.
2. The result will be a more godly, peaceful, and prosperous world.
3. The new age will not be essentially different from the present one, but there will be more Christians.
4. Evil will not be totally eliminated during the Millennium, but it will be reduced. Moral and spiritual influence of Christians will increase. Many economic, social, and educational problems can be solved as the Church has greater and greater influence.
5. This time, the Millennium will not necessarily be a thousand years. That number is used symbolically.
6. The Millennium closes with the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment.

B. Amillennialists (“a,” no and “mille,” millennium) believe that there will be no millennium of a literal thousand years before the end of the world. Jay Adams objects to the term “amillennial.” He and other amillennialists prefer “realized” millennialism.

A brief overview of amillennialism’s history.

- (1) There was no specific support in the early church, so much time is spent in trying to prove that premillennialism was not believed in the early church.
- (2) Apostles to Augustine – devoid of any testimony whatsoever to amillennialism. Most early church fathers were premillennialists (e.g., Barnabas, Epistle of (fifteenth chapter); Justin Martyr (100 – 165 A.D.) – Dialogue with Trypho – “Do you really admit that this place...”; Clement of Alexander (155 – 220 A.D.); and Origen (185 ca – 254 A.D.))

Allegorical, spiritual the future Kingdom (opposed premillennialism).

Summary: “for the first three centuries we find almost no testimony to the doctrine of amillennialism.” SLJ

- (3) Augustine (354 – 430 A.D.), a great theological mind. He was first a premillennialist but abandoned it because of some of its teachers (“carnal banquetings”), excesses of some of its opponents. He came to teach that the binding of Satan took place in the earthly ministry of Christ. See “City of God, XX. 9 (p. 72). See Rev. 20:1-6 – the Millennium after the binding of Satan; Rev. 20:5 – first resurrection, new birth of the believer.

History overthrew the teaching of Augustine when Christ didn’t come in 650 A.D. It was adjusted up to 1000 A.D. then 1044 A.D., then 1065 A.D. (on Good Friday, March 25), but Christ didn’t come. Augustinian eschatology was shown to be wrong.

- (4) The Reformers – Calvin, Luther, Melanthon, R.C. Church accepted Augustinian eschatology. They accepted a spiritualized form of the Millennium. See Calvin’s *Institutes Vol. II*, P. 265. He criticized premillennialism. He describes its teaching as “fiction,” “insult,” “dream,” and “intolerable blasphemy.” The Reformers did not study much about eschatology.

- (5) Modern era – there occurred a turn from postmillennialism to amillennialism. There are two views: denial that there is a Kingdom on earth. B.B. Warfield (the Millennium is the present state of believers in heaven).

- (6) Advocates – G.C. Berkhouwer, Jay Adams / Fulfillment of the Millennium in heaven (B.B. Warfield, Floyd Hamilton). Fulfillment on earth (Allis, Berkhof).

1. A study of church history reveals that there is no specific support in the early church for amillennialism. Augustine was at first a premillennialist but abandoned this view and began to teach that the Millennium is this present age.
2. Many amillennialists believe that the Kingdom of God is now present in the world “as the victorious Christ is ruling His people by His Word and Spirit.”

3. They believe that there will be a literal return of Christ and that the resurrection of believers and unbelievers will occur at the same time.
4. They believe that there will be a general resurrection followed by the eternal state.
5. They believe that the Church is the new Israel, and that Christ's present session in heaven is the fulfillment of the kingdom promises of the Old Testament.

C. Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the Millennium (a literal thousand years) and will establish His Kingdom on earth at that time.

A brief history of premillennialism.

(1) Dominant view of orthodox Christians from first to third centuries

(2) Revival of premillennialism – rejected by the fifth century. There were advocates, yes, but they were a small minority. Some were radical and hyperemotional. There was a significant revival of premillennialism during the nineteenth century. It involved an organized, systematic study of biblical data concerning the Kingdom of God and a strong belief in divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

- a. Great Britain – Plymouth Brethren – 1830, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) Dispensational Premillennialism. D. L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, Reuben A. Torrey, Billy Sunday. Missions leaders, A.T. Pierson, A.B. Simpson. Pulpit – James H. Brookes (1830-1897), A.J. Gordon, C.I. Scofield.
- b. Bible School movement, Bible and prophecy conferences, Niagara Bible Conference 1875
- c. Faith Missions movement – CAM (1980)
- d. Literature, magazines – Moody Monthly, Study Bibles
- e. Seminaries and denominations, etc.

1. This seems to have been the dominant millennial view of the early church.
2. They believe that the promises made to Abraham and David are unconditional and have had or will have a literal fulfillment.

To Be Continued...

PROPHECY IN THE RING (continued)

Lesson 3

C. Premillennialists believe... (continued)

3. They believe that Israel and the Church are distinct.
4. There are two forms of premillennialism, “historic” premillennialism and dispensational premillennialism.
5. So-called “historic” premillennialism (nondispensational premillennialism) is distinguished from dispensational premillennialism by its hermeneutical system. They understand the return of Christ and the Rapture as one and the same event. Some of the church fathers held to this view (e.g., Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian). It uses a “spiritualizing hermeneutic.” E.g., “Paul sees the Church as spiritual Israel.” Ladd
6. Dispensational premillennialism makes a clear distinction between God’s program for Israel and His program for the church. It also insists on a consistent “literal” hermeneutic. D.P. believe that the church will be raptured prior to the Tribulation period.

IV. THE THREE SYSTEMS OF TEACHING REGARDING THE MILLENNIUM MUST BE EVALUATED BIBLICALLY.

- A. The difference between the three systems of teaching regarding the Millennium are because of different interpretive principles.
 - Postmillennialists and amillennialists use a “spiritualizing” method of hermeneutics when interpreting Bible prophecy (e.g., interpreting “Israel” as meaning the “church.”). In Isaiah 11:6 (wolf and lamb, etc.) Calvin says “By these images, the Prophet indicates that among the people of Christ there will

be no disposition for injuring one another, nor any ferocity or inhumanity.” However, E.J. Young (an amillennialist) says that “... it is impossible to carry through in detail a figurative interpretation. If all is merely figurative, what is the point of such detailed statements concerning the change in animals?”

B. The interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6 serves as an example of these differences.

1. Postmillennialism and amillennialism teach that the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection (i.e., justification and regeneration in Christ) and that the second resurrection is a literal, physical, or bodily resurrection (20:6).
2. Premillennialism teaches that the first and second resurrections are of the same type, literal, physical, or bodily resurrections.

C. The premillennialist interpretation of Revelation 20 is coherent and consistent with the literal hermeneutic used in the rest of Scripture. Prophecies of the first coming of the Messiah were fulfilled literally. We should therefore expect prophecies of the Second Coming of Christ to be interpreted and fulfilled literally (plain literal, allowing for figurative language).

1. Revelation 20:4-5 is a vision.
2. Revelation 20:6 is an interpretation of this vision.
3. The reference to the thousand years is mentioned both in the vision and in the interpretation. If “one thousand” is a symbol in the vision we should expect a change in the interpretation. Notice the past tense in vv. 4-5 and the future tense in v. 6.
4. Notice the continuative “ands” from Revelation 19:11, 17 and 20:1, 4. These are chronological consecutive visions.

Summary

What we have seen are some of the differences between the three millennial systems. They all have in common the belief in the literal, visible, and bodily return of Jesus Christ to this earth. Each believes in a resurrection, judgment, and the eternal state. However, there are significant differences when it comes to the time of Christ's return and the arrangement of the various events associated with the Second Coming. There are also significant differences with regard to the nature of the Millennial Kingdom.

V. ADVOCATES OF THE THREE SYSTEMS OF MILLENNIAL INTERPRETATION MUST CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN A CHRIST-HONORING WAY.

A. Biblical prophecy should not be avoided or minimized because of the differences.

1. Study Bible prophecy and seek to arrive at biblically based conclusions.
2. Teach it. Almost one third of the Bible is given over to the predictive element. All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable.
3. If you are avoiding Bible prophecy and are not giving its proper place in your study, teaching, and living, then something is wrong. Is it your system? Is it your hermeneutics? Is it your unbalanced study?

B. Biblical love must be demonstrated toward those with whom you differ ("speaking the truth in love" - Eph. 4:15).

1. This does not mean acceptance of teaching which you deem to be wrong, but rather acceptance of the person.
2. Attack the problem not the person. Avoid name-calling, guilt by association, and unnecessary separation.

3. Remember, we are on the same team. We are all one body. We must treat one another with respect and honor.

- C. Try to understand the view that you do not accept. Do not misrepresent it. E.g., Some in speaking against premillennialism say, "...the dispensationalists say the Old Testament doesn't have anything to do with us today." (R. Rushdoony). Or "Dispensationalists end up with a shorter Bible than any modernist." "Dispensationalists have ump-teen raptures."

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

O Lord, I pray that you will enable me to rightly handle your Word as I study what it teaches regarding Bible prophecy. Give me a deeper love for the truth of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and grant me the grace to demonstrate Christ-likeness toward those who come to different conclusions than I. May the wonderful truths of Bible prophecy transform the way I think and live as a child of the King who is coming again.

THE PREMILLENNIAL SYSTEM

Lesson 4

INTRODUCTION

1. One's method of interpretation with regard to unfulfilled prophecies of Scripture is that which distinguishes postmillennialism and amillennialism from premillennialism. "The theory (of premillennialism) is based on a literal interpretation of Israel and of the Kingdom of God, which is entirely untenable."
Louis Berkhof
 2. Premillennialists believe that the literal method of interpretation is to be used in all of Scripture including unfulfilled prophetic portions. Dispensationalists insist that the hermeneutical principle of literal, normal, or plain interpretation is to be used for all of Scripture.
 3. Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the Millennium (a literal thousand years) and will establish His Kingdom on earth at that time.
- I. PREMILLENNIALISM MUST BE UNDERSTOOD FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ITS HISTORY.
- A. Premillennialism was the dominant view of orthodox Christians from the first to the third centuries.
1. It was rejected by the fifth century due to the acceptance of Augustinian hermeneutics regarding Bible prophecy. There were advocates of premillennialism but a small minority. Some were radical and hyperemotional.

2. The Roman Catholic church and its amillennialism dominated the eschatology of Christianity.

B. Premillennialism experienced a resurgence in the 1800s and was widely believed in orthodox Christianity in the twentieth century.

1. Great Britain – Plymouth Brethren – 1830, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)
2. Dispensational premillennialism – D.L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, Reuben A. Torrey, Billy Sunday. Missions leaders, A.T. Gordon, C.I. Scofield. Bible school movement, Bible and prophecy conferences, Niagara Bible Conference (1875). Faith missions movement – CAM (1890). Literature, magazines, Moody Monthly, Study Bibles. Seminaries and denominations, etc.

II. PREMILLENNIALISTS DO NOT ALL AGREE ON THE TIME IN WHICH SOME OF THE FUTURE EVENTS WILL TRANSPIRE.

These differences all come down to the issue of interpretation of course. These differences revolve around the question, “Will the church, the body of Christ, be called upon to go through the seven-year period of tribulation?” There are five views regarding the relation of the church to the coming tribulation.

A. Some believe that the church will go through the tribulation. These are called posttribulationists.

“The Church of Christ will not be removed from the earth until the advent of Christ at the very end of the present Age: the Rapture and the appearing take place at the same crisis; hence Christians of that generation will be exposed to The final affliction under Antichrist.” Alexander Reese

1. Posttribs make little distinction between Christ’s coming for His church and His coming to the earth with His church to establish the Kingdom.
2. Posttribs either reject or redefine the hope that Christ could come at any time (imminent).

3. They are not dispensational. They claim that the church knew nothing about the pretrib view prior to 1820. Because of the “novelty” of the pretrib view, we should reject it. SLJ says the early church did not speak to the issue of the Rapture as such. Neither posttrib or pretrib. Gundry’s book on posttrib jumps on pretrib for its novelty but so are his views.
 4. Posttribs argue on the basis of 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11, its sequence, that is, one speaks of the Rapture and the other to the Second Advent. Vocabulary for the Rapture and Second Coming are the same. The Church is not said to be in heaven but on earth during the Tribulation according to Rev. 4-18.
- B. Some believe that the Church will go through the first half of the tribulation. These are called midtribulationists.
1. They hold that the trump of God in 1 Thess. 4:16 and the last trump of 1 Cor. 15:52 are the same as the seventh trump of Rev. 11:15ff.
 2. They argue that the emphasis is on the time period of three and one half years. Vocabulary similarities, etc.
- C. Some believe that only those believers who are “watching” and “waiting” for the Lord’s return will be taken up in the Rapture. These are called partial-rapturists.
1. Believers must endure suffering now or in the Tribulation period (Lk. 22:18-30; Rom. 8:16-17).
 2. In the first resurrection there is a prize to be gained (Phil. 3:11-14). A believer may lose his birthright and thus forfeit his chance to be raptured before the Tribulation (1 Cor. 9:27). Advocates: Ray Brubaker, C.H. Lang

D. Some believe that believers will be raptured before the sounding of the first trumpet (Rev. 8:7) which is before the Day of the Lord begins. These are called pre-wrath rapturists.

1. Similar to midtrib view. The Rapture takes place at the sound of the first trumpet and at the same time as the Second Coming which is before the Day of the Lord (DOL) begins.
2. Seal judgments do not represent the wrath of God. Places the Church within the Olivet Discourse.

E. Some think that believers will be raptured before the tribulation begins. These are called pretribulationists.

1. Sees the Church and Israel as separate. 1 Thess. 5:9; 1:10, the Church is not appointed to wrath. 1 Thess. 5:2, the Day of the Lord is the wrath of God. 1 Thess. 5:6, 8, 10 says not to watch for signs during the Tribulation.
2. The structure of Revelation – occurrence of the word “church”
Four times in chapter 1, nine times in chapter 2, six times in chapter 3. In chapters 4-21 there is no mention. Chapter 22 mentions churches (22:16). Also, argument from Revelation 3:10 – to all the churches (3:13), hour of testing (Rev. 6-19).

III. PREMILLENNIALISM IS UNFOLDED IN PASSAGES LIKE 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.

A. There is a sequence in the future (first) resurrection (15:20-24).

1. Firstfruits is the guarantee of more to come.

2. After 1900 plus years those who are Christ's at His coming will be resurrected (15:23).

3. Then after another interval (the Millennium) comes the end.

B. There is the subjection of the last enemy (15:25-28).

These verses give an explanation of the how and why of the two "events" of "the end" mentioned at the end 15:24.

1. The Millennial (mediatorial) Kingdom will be merged with the Eternal Kingdom.

2. Death will have been abolished.

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

O Lord, our hearts soar with thanksgiving as we look for that day when the King will come and reign on this earth. We long for that day when all of the Messiah's enemies will be put under His feet and death will be no more. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

INTERPRETING BIBLE PROPHECY

Lesson 5

INTRODUCTION

1. God has given to us His Word, the Bible, to be understood and is profitable “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...” (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - a. Medieval exegesis (600-1500) – fourfold sense of Scripture articulated by Augustine (every passage).
 - 1) The letter shows us what God and our fathers did.
 - 2) The allegory shows us where our faith is hidden.
 - 3) The moral meaning gives us rules of daily life.
 - 4) The analogy shows us where we end our strife.
 - b. The birth of Reformation exegesis (1500s) took place at a time in the history of the church when there was extraordinary ignorance of the content of the Scripture (some doctors of divinity who had never read the Bible through).
 - c. Then came the Renaissance.
 - The importance of the original languages
 - Erasmus and his edition of the Greek New Testament
 - Reuchlin’s translation of a Hebrew grammar and lexicon

- d. Luther (1483-1546) – rejected an allegorical method of interpreting Scripture. Called it “dirt,” “scum,” and “obsolete loos rags.” He believed that Scripture should be interpreted literally. He also believed that the Bible is a clear book (the perspicuity of Scripture). This was in opposition to the Roman Catholic teaching that the Scriptures are so obscure that only the Church can discover their meaning. (Perspicuous – easily understood, clear, lucid).
- 2. Bible prophecy, as a significant part of divine revelation, must be handled accurately with the awareness that it is a special literary form (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - a. Bible prophecy and Apocalyptic literature (Rev. 1:1, “uncovering” or “revelation”). Apocalyptic literature’s purpose is the unveiling of what has been hidden.
 - b. Apoc. as a literary form in comparison to Bible prophecy – similarities and differences. Issues involved – hermeneutical principles, deeper sense? Literal versus symbolic
- I. BIBLE PROPHECY IS TO BE INTERPRETED ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF LITERAL INTERPRETATION.

This is called the grammatical-historical method.

- A. This is consistent with the purpose of language, the way in which prophecies of the first coming of Christ were fulfilled, and is a protection against the imposition of human opinion upon the text of Scripture.
 - 1. When a system of interpretation is infected with the subjective judgments of the interpreter, Scripture loses its authority.
 - 2. The Bible is self-interpreting and that self-interpreting method is the literal method.

- B. This involves gaining a correct meaning of words, following the rules of grammar, regard for the author's context, studying the historical-cultural background of the author (and the original readers), and having regard for special kinds of language (figures of speech, idioms, parables, symbols, types, poetry, and prophecy).

- C. The difference between the premillennial and the amillennial systems of interpretation is not whether Scripture is to be interpreted literally or not, but rather the degree of literalness.
 - 1. The issue is "how much" is to be interpreted "plain literal" and how much is to be interpreted "figuratively literal." E.g., the beast of Revelation – a person or a personification of the lust for power.

 - 2. Another related issue is continuity and discontinuity.

 - 3. Another issue is the universality of symbols (e.g., is oil always a symbol of the Holy Spirit?)

 - 4. Finally, there is the issue of conditionality of the covenants.

II. BIBLE PROPHECY MUST BE INTERPRETED BY COMPARING SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE.

This principle is sometimes referred to as the "analogy of faith."

- A. This is necessary because of the progressive nature of revelation. The gradual development of the whole counsel of God creates a completed picture. Doctrines build on top of one another.

B. New Testament prophecies complement Old Testament prophecies, but they do not change them.

1. The subject of the Kingdom is filled out by comparison of Revelation 20 with the Old Testament prophets. The subject of the Antichrist is to be studied from Daniel 7, Paul's letters, and John's.
2. The Bible is a unified whole and is not self-contradictory by virtue of its authorship.
3. The New Testament often quotes and refers back to the Old Testament. This is done for several reasons; for documentation, to demonstrate a fulfillment (e.g., Heb. 2:12ff. referencing Isa. 8:9-10).
4. Our concern at this point is the question, does the New Testament change the meaning of any Old Testament passage? This raises the issue of spiritualization. For example, one amillennialist has said, "I think it is fairer to say that the New Testament leads us to allow for if not expect nonliteral fulfillments to Old Testament prophecies." He cites such passages as Amos 9:11-15 in Acts 15:14-18 as well as Isaiah 40, "every mountain shall be lifted up and every hill made low" as used in reference to Jesus' earthly ministry as a nonliteral fulfillment.

III. BIBLE PROPHECY MUST BE INTERPRETED WITH REGARD TO SPECIAL TIME FACTORS.

A. The prophets used "telescoping" in describing future events (e.g., Zech. 9:9-10; Isa. 61:1-2; Lk. 4:16-21; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

1. The prophets were not aware of the interval of time between the events they prophesied. They described the suffering and glory of Christ as if it were one event (1 Pet. 1:10-12). "Biblical prophecy may leap from one prominent peak in predictive topography to another, without notice of the valley between, which may involve no inconsiderable lapse in chronology."

2. One can see this in Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-21.

B. The prophets used historical foreshadowing (Joel 1:1-2:11; Dan. 8:9-27; Isa. 8:17-18; Psa. 22; 2 Sam. 7:12-16).

1. This is sometimes referred to as “double reference” or “double fulfillment.” The problem with this terminology is that may lead to the conclusion that a passage may have more than one meaning.

2. Every passage has a single meaning but may have a variety of applications in different situations.

3. Joel does this with the invasion of an army of locusts in his own day which anticipates an invasion by a nation in the time prior to the return of the Messiah. The same is true of Daniel’s prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes as a foreshadowing of the coming Antichrist. See also Zech. 9:1ff. Jerusalem’s deliverance. See Luke 21 of Jerusalem’s destruction.

IV. BIBLE PROPHECY MUST BE INTERPRETED WITH REGARD TO THE PROPHET’S USE OF CHRONOLOGICAL “SWITCHBACKING.”

A. A number of prophetic events may be discussed in non-chronological order. For one example of this see Isa. 8:14-9:6. It becomes the responsibility of the interpreter to discern what any prophetic statement refers to in the light of the total scope of prophecy.

B. This “quilt-work” pattern will have to be deciphered on the basis of texts which give a chronological framework (Dan. 9:24-27).

1. The unfolding of God’s plan gives depth to the events that are described in a compacted and scrabbled way.

2. The Bible has been written this way to force us to search the Scriptures in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

V. BIBLE PROPHECY MUST BE INTERPRETED WITH REGARD TO ITS USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

- A. Symbols are to be interpreted in the light of their context (Rev. 17:1, 15; Ezek. 37:11; Rev. 11:3-4).
 1. Visual language is very important in communication. Symbols are a part of everyday life. They are on the dashboards of our automobiles, on road signs, billboards, buildings, telephones, letterheads, etc. They are a form of communication shorthand.
 2. A symbol is some object that stands for or represents an idea, quality, condition, or other abstraction. "It is an object or happening that suggests a certain meaning but does not explicitly state that meaning." Symbols can be used either to reveal truth or to hide it. They work like parables in that sense. You can readily see their value in Bible prophecy.
 3. A few examples: Rev. 17:1, "great harlot who sits on many waters" (see Rev. 17:15, "waters" represents many peoples and nations of the earth. See also Ezek. 37:11, the dry bones represent the entire nation of Israel.) Principle: Look for the explanation of a symbol if there is one to be found.
 4. The wider context of Scripture can help with some symbols. For example, see Rev. 11:3-4 and compare Zech. 4. Remember that the Bible is a unified whole with the ultimate author being the Holy Spirit. Symbols in some circumstances are tied together though the authors are separated by hundreds of years.

- B. Symbols when interpreted stand for something actual (Rev. 1:20; 11:8; 20:2). To say that symbols are used in Bible prophecy is not to say that they do not represent reality. Sometimes the idea is given that the Bible's use of symbols gives us the right to look anywhere for their meaning. Others hide behind the Bible's use of symbols as an opportunity to vaporize the meaning of the biblical text.
- C. Beware of forcing upon predictive prophecy present-day fulfillments and modern equivalents (Nah. 2:4; Zech. 9:10).
 - 1. For example, finding helicopters and airlifts in Revelation. Finding the modern automobile in Nahum 2:4.
 - 2. This approach to interpretation easily slides into date setting. It confuses people with regard to meaning and application (e.g., M.R. Dehaan saying that Mussolini was the Antichrist).

VI. BIBLE PROPHECY MUST BE INTERPRETED WITH REGARD FOR ITS GOD-DESIGNED PURPOSE.

- A. Predictive prophecy was written to warn, encourage, rebuke, and comfort.
 - 1. The psalms with their messianic prophecies (e.g., Psalm 72, the ideal king) were meant to create longing and looking for God's Messiah.
 - 2. The prophets used predictive prophecy to rebuke Israel and call her to repentance, to keep hope alive, to reveal God's sovereign rule over human history.
 - 3. Jesus prophesied to warn, to call to repentance, to stimulate hope among His people.

4. The Revelation was written to encourage a suffering church.

B. The subject of all Bible prophecy is ultimately the coming to Jesus Christ.

1. The Old Testament is filled with predictions and longings for Israel's Messiah.

2. The Gospels tell us that the Messiah came and is coming back again.

3. The Acts of the Apostles opens with the encouragement that "This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

1. Bible prophecy is a challenge to read, study, and seek to understand God's plan.

2. Bible prophecy will reveal your spiritual condition. It both reveals and conceals. "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things written in it; for the time is near." (Rev. 1:3)

"I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18-19)

THE COVENANTS OF SCRIPTURE

Part I

Lesson 6

INTRODUCTION

1. The unfolding of the plan of God takes place through the covenants and dispensations revealed in Scripture (Eph. 3:11; Acts 2:23).
 - a. In Ephesians 3:9 Paul tells the Church that his calling was to put a floodlight on God's mystery of the church. The mystery is Jew and Gentile in one body (3:6). He uses the word "administration of the mystery." In verse 11 he says that this was God's deliberate purpose for Christ's work from eternity.
 - b. In Acts 2:23 Peter says that "this Man delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." The crucifixion of Christ was no accident.
2. In this way God's redemptive work through the Messiah and the administration of His rule over the world are progressively set forth.
3. In a covenant there is an agreement drawn up by God and imposed upon man for man's benefit and blessing (a gracious undertaking of God/or administration by which He determines to confer upon certain persons His blessings).
 - a. The biblical subject of covenants is massive in place and importance in Scripture (25 references in Genesis).
 - b. There is a sharp division that exists regarding the covenants.

- Covenant theology and dispensationalism
 - The theological covenants as claimed by some to be the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace
- c. The understanding of the biblical covenants is like the “edge pieces” of a giant puzzle. It makes it possible to put the other pieces in their proper places. (Paul Benware, professor of Bible and Theology at MBI)

I. THE EDENIC COVENANT (Gen. 2:8-17)

- A. God mediated His rule over Creation through Adam. In this role he was also a representative man. God has dealt with mankind not as rows of corn but as a tree. When Adam fell all His posterity fell with him. (D. Kidner)
1. This opportunity of man to fulfill his destiny is presented as a real scene. There are two trees (both literal), but symbolical in significance. Note the geographical phrases, the specific details. Eden is an actual place, not make-believe (e.g., like the land of Oz).
 2. Adam was to propagate the race, subdue the earth (a work ethic was established).
- B. Adam was placed in a paradise with the responsibility of obedience to God and dominion over Creation. The ingredients of a covenant are found in Genesis.

- C. The promise of God's covenant with Adam was eternal life. The seal of the covenant was the tree of life (e.g., circumcision in the Abrahamic Covenant and baptism in the Noahic Covenant).

- D. The covenant was broken when Adam sinned. In his representative role sin entered into the world and death ruled.
 - 1. Some object and say that this is unfair. Adam, they say, was set up for a fall.

 - 2. But consider that Adam was given every advantage. Perfect environment, no sin nature (no sinful ancestry), freedom. He had every opportunity to not sin. He was given every opportunity to succeed ("max freedom was allowed Adam ... the minimum freedom was forbidden.").

- E. The covenant with Adam is realized through Christ our representative. Redemption and dominion fulfill mankind's destiny and magnify the glory of God (Gen. 1:28; Heb. 2:5ff.; 1 Cor. 15:25).
 - 1. The theme of redemption is very important in Scripture but there is another theme that is very important, and that is the theme of the Kingdom.

 - 2. The Kingdom (the rule of God over this earth through a mediator) is interwoven with the great covenants of the Scriptures.
 "... inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
 Matt. 25:34

II. THE NOAHIC COVENANT (Gen. 9:8-17)

This covenant is a part of the progress of doctrine regarding man's redemption and restoration to rule in Jesus Christ. See Genesis 6:18 for relation of the covenant to salvation. The Flood was typical of judgment, salvation, and baptism (1 Pet. 3:5, 20).

Notice the altar in Genesis 8:20 – an altar, sacrifice, represents a life that should have been forfeited.

- A. This Covenant is universal in scope and promises the assurance of a world that will not be judged by water.
- B. The seal of the Covenant is the rainbow which is a reminder of God's mercy and grace.
- C. This is an everlasting covenant and has typical significance (9:12-13, 16). God's judgment is dissipated by grace.
- D. The Noahic Covenant's immutable and unalterable promises are a pledge of Israel's future restoration (Isa. 54:9-10).

III. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (Gen. 12:1-3)

Note the statements regarding Shem, Ham, and Japheth, especially Shem. Note also the development of the first human kingdom in Genesis 11 (Babel). "The greatest human character in the Bible is Abraham." D.G. Barnhouse

- A. The Abrahamic Covenant is foundational to all the covenants that come after it. "The way one looks at Abraham's covenant more or less settles the entire argument in eschatology."

Two competing claims:

1. Amills – no national promises to Israel as a nation (seed of Abraham – a covenantal community apart from racial considerations).

2. Premills – promises given to Abraham, to Abraham’s believing seed (Israelites), to Abraham’s believing seed (Gentiles).

B. The Abrahamic Covenant contains personal, national, and universal promises (Gen. 12:2-3; 17:7, 19).

The parties of the Abrahamic Covenant – God and Abraham (12:1)

God did bless Abraham. He made his name great (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity). Israel was made a great nation.

1. There is a promise of land (Gen. 12:1).
2. There is a promise of descendants (Gen. 12:2).
3. There is the promise of blessing and redemption (12:3)

C. The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional and eternal in nature.

1. Only God passed between the halves of the animals (Gen. 15:8-18).
2. It was still in effect even after the patriarchs of Israel sinned (e.g., Gen. 26:1-4, 6-11).
3. The Holy Spirit through Zacharias affirms that it was still in effect after the record of Israel’s sin (Lk. 1:67-75).

- D. The Abrahamic Covenant's fulfillment guarantees Israel's permanent existence as a nation, her ownership of the Promised Land, and the Messiah's kingdom rule (Ezek. 36:1-37; Rom. 11:25-27).

Summary

1. The Abrahamic Covenant has been partially fulfilled personally, nationally, and universally.
2. The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional in nature. If it is conditional then not every promise of that covenant has to be fulfilled.
3. The Abrahamic Covenant guarantees the blessing of the world through Jesus Christ through His redemptive work.
4. The Abrahamic Covenant guarantees Israel's permanent existence as a nation and her permanent ownership of the Promised Land.

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

We thank you, Lord, for the beauty of your eternal plan fulfilled in your eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our hearts sing with joy as we anticipate the display of the delights of your Coming Kingdom.

THE COVENANTS OF SCRIPTURE
PART II
Lesson 7

INTRODUCTION

1. The redemptive and dominion work of the Messiah is anticipated in the Edenic and Noahic covenants.
 - a. God promised Adam dominion over Creation (Gen. 1:26).
 - b. Upon the loss of his dominion Adam was given the promise of a redeemer in the seed of the woman (3:15).
 - c. God used the Noahic Covenant as a ground for assurance to Israel that there would be an earth in which her national restoration would take place.
2. The Abrahamic Covenant contains promises which are personal, national, and universal.
 - a. Personal – great nation, many nations, kings
 - b. National – guarantee of national existence and greatness
 - c. Universal – blessing through physical descendants, blessings to Gentiles through Israel (the Scriptures and the Messiah).

3. The Abrahamic Covenant (AC) is unconditional and guarantees Israel's permanent existence as a nation and her permanent ownership of the Promised Land.
 - a. The matter of conditional (bilateral) or unconditional (unilateral) is of the greatest importance. Is fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant dependent on Israel's continued obedience? If the AC is conditional then the blessings have been shifted to the Church. If the AC is unconditional then Israel has a future. By unconditional I mean dependent on God for fulfillment.
 - b. Arguments for the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant
 - (1) No conditions are attached to the AC. See Gen. 15:1 – It is God in His infinite faithfulness who guarantees He will fulfill these promises.
 - (2) When the AC is restated in subsequent passages the focus of attention is the blessing upon Abraham.
 - (3) Restatements of the AC occur even after sins and failures of Israel.
 - (4) Abraham's obedience is the result of the Covenant (Gen. 22).
 - (5) Apostasy does not deny the fulfillment of the promises of the AC. It only delays its fulfillment.
 - (6) Obedience only conditions the time of the enjoyment of the promises. It does not condition the fulfillment of the Covenant itself.
Illustration: One receives an automobile as a graduation gift, but if she gets a speeding ticket then she loses the use of the car but retains the title.
 - (7) Take for example the biblical truth of the eternal security of the believer. The believer sins, but this does not cancel his relationship to Christ.
 - (8) Amills say that the territorial promises of the AC have already been fulfilled based on 1 Kings 4:21 (compare to Gen. 15:18-21). But they must understand that the extension of Israel's power was not as a national

homeland but as an empire. Also, you must remember that later prophets write of a future fulfillment of the AC (e.g., Amos 9:13-15).

c. Has Israel been disinherited? Were the promises given to Abraham's physical seed?

(1) They were confirmed to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 17:19; 28:13-14).

(2) In Matthew 1:1 Jesus is said to be the seed of Abraham.

(3) Promises were given to Abraham's natural seed and his spiritual seed.

(4) See Matthew 21:33-44 – the Kingdom of God was taken from you (Israel) and given to the Church. Israel has had the Kingdom of God in some sense. But Jesus does not say Israel is permanently set aside. The term "nation" is never used of Israel in the Gospel of Matthew (ethnos, v. 43). The Church is referred to as a nation (1 Pet. 2). The Church now has the stewardship of the Kingdom.

(5) Romans 11:1-10 – Paul's own conversion points to the fact that there is a future for Israel and seven thousand believed in the day of Elijah. At the present time there is an election according to grace. This is all evidence that God has not cast away His people (There is a believing remnant because there was an election.).

d. Has the Church inherited Israel's promises?

IV. THE PALESTINIAN COVENANT (Deut. 28-30)

A. The Palestinian Covenant finds its basis in the territorial promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. It was established after the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant.

1. Established at the end of Israel's 40 years of wilderness wandering

2. A new generation of Israelites was being prepared for the possession of the Promised Land.
- B. The Palestinian Covenant promises a gathering of scattered Israelites from all over the world, restoration to their land, regenerated Israelites, judgment of Israel's enemies, Israel's obedience, and prosperity (Deut. 30:1-9).
- C. These promises will not be fulfilled until after all the curses and blessings in Deut. 28 have been fulfilled. This will be accomplished when the Messiah comes again to establish His dominion on earth.
1. These promises were made to the literal nation of Israel.
 2. These promises would not be fulfilled until after all the curses of Deut. 28 have been completed (Deut. 30:1-3).

Summary

V. THE DAVIDIC COVENANT (2 Sam. 7:8-16)

- A. The Davidic Covenant find its basis in the kingdom promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.
- B. The Davidic Covenant promises that David's line of descent would endure forever. This includes a house, a kingdom, and a throne. Solomon was promised a permanent throne not a perpetual seed.
1. Promise of a physical line of descent (2 Chron. 21:7)
 2. Kingdom ... forever – even though it might not function at all times.

3. Throne – ruling authority which David exercised as a king

C. These promises to David are to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The throne of David is not the throne of God in heaven.

1. Several descendants of David have sat upon his throne. Only one descendent of David ever sits on the right hand of God's throne in heaven.
2. David's throne was not established until his lifetime. The throne in heaven was established long before David's throne (Psa. 93:1-2).
3. Jesus drew a clear distinction between His throne and the throne of God (Rev. 3:21).

D. This fulfillment will take place in the future when Christ establishes His literal, earthly, and political kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14:4, 9; Isa. 9:6-7).

1. It will be fulfilled after the Roman empire and its final great ruler (Dan. 7:13-14).
2. See Matt. 25:31-46; Zech. 14:4, 9 (will be King after His feet have touched the Mount of Olives at the Second Coming); Psa. 110:1-2 (will sit at His right hand until it is time for Him to rule); Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:19-21.

Summary

VI. THE NEW COVENANT (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 34:23-31; 36:1-38)

A. The New Covenant finds its basis in the seed promise in the Abrahamic Covenant.

- B. The New Covenant promises regeneration, forgiveness of sin, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, universal knowledge of the Lord, obedience of Israel, and national blessings.

- C. The New Covenant is unconditional and everlasting (Ezek. 36:32; Jer. 32:40).

- D. The Church enters into the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant but does not replace Israel in her participation in the fulfillment of the New Covenant (Lk. 22:20; Rom. 11:27; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8-13).
 - 1. The Church – mystery doctrine (Eph. 3:2-9)

 - 2. The church has a relationship to the New Covenant.

A TIME FOR RESPONSE – A SUMMARY

- 1. The Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenant are all unconditional in nature and await the Second Coming of Jesus Christ for the completion of their fulfillment.

- 2. The sin and disobedience of Israel can cause a delay in the fulfillment of these covenants but not a cancellation of them.

- 3. These covenants, to the extent that they have already been fulfilled, have been fulfilled literally which is a basis for believing that they will be finally fulfilled in this way.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT

Luke 22:20

Lesson 8

INTRODUCTION

1. On the night before His crucifixion Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples. He said, “With great desire I eat the Passover before I suffer” (i.e., “before I become the Passover”). “Through His sacrificial, vicarious, and substitutionary death many sons and daughters of Adam would experience redemption.” The unleavened bread spoke of “sinlessness.” Four cups of wine were part of the Passover observance (the cup of sanctification, the cup of praise, the cup of redemption, and the cup of acceptance). Notice also that Jesus emphasized the future as He was eating the meal with the disciples (“until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God”). He said in connection with this, “The cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” What is this New Covenant? If it is new then what is the old? In what sense is the blood connected to the New Covenant? How did the disciples understand this reference to the New Covenant?

2. We must turn to the Old Testament to find some answers to these questions (this was the Bible of Jesus and the disciples). See Jeremiah 31:31-34.
 - a. The New Covenant is the last of the historical biblical covenants: Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3: “land,” “seed,” “blessing,” Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 30:1-10: “land”). Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16: “seed”). New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34: “blessing”).

 - b. The theological theme of the Old Testament is the Kingdom of God (“God mediates His will on earth through mediators.”). Adam – the first mediator of God’s Kingdom. Messiah – the final mediator. Man was destined to rule over Creation. Man was to be the king of the earth.

- c. Jeremiah – In prison, invasion by Neb., captivity in Babylon, a future day when God will restore Israel to the land (Jer. 30:3). The restoration will follow the time of great tribulation for Israel (30:7). Rebuilding of Jerusalem was prophesied (30:18-24), and resultant kingdom blessings (31:1-12). The blessing of Israel in that future day would be based on the New Covenant that God would make with Israel. This would be in contrast to the Old Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, which could not produce righteousness in the people.

- d. Chief point of Jeremiah 30-34 – God is not going to destroy His people. See 32:37. Israel will be regathered from captivity. There is to be an enduring compact. The New Covenant is an unconditional covenant with Israel. It rests upon the forgiveness of sins. This truth is not stressed in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. There is a covenant that has as its direct object the forgiveness of sin, namely, the New Covenant. The covenant is inaugurated in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- e. Views regarding Jeremiah 31:31-34. Postmills say that the New Covenant will be fulfilled in the golden age preceding the second advent of Jesus Christ. Amills believe that the New Covenant is being fulfilled in the present age. It is fulfilled in the salvation of both Jewish and Gentile believers in the church of Jesus Christ. The promise of Jer. 31:31 (house of Israel and house of Judah) is transferred to the church through a spiritualization of the text.

- I. THE NEW COVENANT IS THE CULMINATING BIBLICAL COVENANT IN THE DRAMA OF REDEMPTION (Jer. 31:31-34).
 - A. It grows out of the seed/blessing promise in the Abrahamic Covenant.

 - B. God established the New Covenant with the nation of Israel (Isa. 59:20-21; Jer. 31:32 “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers is the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.”) The Mosaic Covenant was not established with Gentiles but with the nation of Israel. And I should also add that the New Covenant is tied into the endless existence of the

nation of Israel (the physical descendants of Jacob) and with the rebuilding and permanent standing of the city of Jerusalem (Jer. 31:31-40).

II. THE NEW COVENANT PROMISES REGENERATION, FORGIVENESS OF SIN, THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD, THE OBEDIENCE OF ISRAEL, AND NATIONAL BLESSINGS FOR ISRAEL (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-36).

- A. You will notice that some of the promises of the New Covenant are purely spiritual in nature, but others are material and national in nature.
- B. In Ezekiel 34 and 36 many national blessings are mentioned (e.g., wild beasts will be eliminated from their land. There will be national security. There will be no more threats and insults from other nations. Ezek. 34:28-29, etc.).

III. THE NEW COVENANT IS UNCONDITIONAL AND EVERLASTING (Ezek. 36:32; Jer. 32:40).

The fulfillment of the New Covenant will not depend on the obedience of Israel. Of course, to enjoy the benefits of the New Covenant faith in the Messiah will be necessary. But the carrying out of the New Covenant will not be because Israel deserves it (Ezek. 36:32 "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the nations, to which ye went."). The New Covenant will cause Israel's obedience. Once it is established the New Covenant will never be abolished or annulled.

IV. THE NEW COVENANT PROVIDES FOR THE REDEPTIVE BLESSINGS OF THE CHURCH (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:14; Rom. 11:11-20).

- A. The church does not receive Israel's national blessings (e.g., national restoration and blessings related to the land of Palestine).
- B. The apostles functioned as ministers of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6).

- C. The church celebrates the provision of the New Covenant in its communion service (1 Cor. 10:21; 11:23-30; Luke 22:20).

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

1. The New Covenant is a call to come to the Lord Jesus Christ to enjoy the good things that He offers. He offers a changed heart. He is a transformer. He offers to cancel your sin debt. He offers the gift of the Holy Spirit. Why would you reject this offer? Do you know of anything better than this? The spilling of the blood of Jesus Christ is your opportunity to live with the joy of knowing that your sins are forgiven. You do know, don't you, that your unwillingness to believe is a spiritual felony. You are condemned to an eternal hell if you do not come to Christ to have your guilt removed.
2. The New Covenant is the promise of good things to come. There is a bright and happy future planned for all New Covenant people. God has a future for a converted national Israel. One day national Israel will turn to their Messiah. The Kingdom of God is coming. It will be at the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom that the New Covenant will be finally fulfilled.

THE LAST DAYS
Hebrews 1:1-2
Lesson 9

INTRODUCTION

1. The time period in which we now live is called the last days (2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 4:1 “later times”; Jude 18; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 Jn. 2:18 “last hour”).
They are last in reference to what has preceded them. For there to be a last there must be a finish/goal toward which time is moving.

2. This refers to that period of time from the death and resurrection of the Messiah until His Second Coming. This is a time in which God is completing His redemptive purposes for the church.
 - a. Christianity believes that history has meaning (linear view of history).

 - b. In contradiction to evolution, socialistic utopianism, catastrophism, etc.

3. This Messianic age in which we now live includes the dispensation of grace (Acts 2:1 to Revelation 19:21) and the church age (from its birth at Pentecost to the Rapture of the Church).
 - a. I have introduced the word “dispensation” and I must define it. The idea behind the word is found in Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4 and refers to a “particular way of God’s administering His rule over the world.”
Eph. 1:10 – the way God administers His rule in the coming Millennium
Eph 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4 – God’s administration of His rule now
Definition: “a particular way of God’s administering His rule over the world as He progressively works out His purpose for world history.”

- b. Essential elements in each time frame: the way God administers His purposes redemptively and in ruling/dominion. There is a particular responsibility for man. And a certain amount of divine revelation is given that had not been given before. Also, in a secondary sense: a test for man, failure of man, divine judgment.

I. THE LAST DAYS IS A TIME DURING WHICH THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS BEING DELAYED IN ITS COMING AND THE NATION OF ISRAEL HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY SET ASIDE (Matt. 21:33-46; 22:1-14; Rom. 11:11-32).

A. Israel's rejection of the Messiah resulted in the postponement of the Kingdom promised to Israel in the Old Testament and offered by Jesus in His earthly ministry.

- 1. The word "postponement" does not indicate any divine afterthought or mismanagement. Rather it expresses the movement of God's kingdom plan from the human standpoint.
- 2. Jesus' offer of the Kingdom and its rejection by Israel by rejecting Him has resulted in the Kingdom being yet to come. It is not here now.
- 3. This in no way takes away from the necessity of the cross of Christ. "The postponement of the kingdom is related primarily to the question of God's program in this age through the Church and not to the necessity of the crucifixion." C. Ryrie

B. Israel's present state of unbelief has divine purpose and is not permanent.

- 1. Israel's present state of unbelief has a three-fold purpose: our salvation, promise of millennial blessings, provocation of Israel to believe.

2. Israel's present state of unbelief should be a warning to the Church of the danger of unbelief. God will reject an apostate church. He will judge it and cut it off.

C. Israel has not been disinherited and the Church has not inherited Israel's promises (Matt. 21:33-44; Rom. 11:1-10).

1. Matt. 21:33-44 – Kingdom of God taken from you (Israel) and given to the Church. Israel has had the Kingdom in some sense. The Church now has the stewardship of the Kingdom.

2. Rom. 11:1-10 – Paul's own conversion points to the fact that there is a future for Israel and seven thousand believed in the day of Elijah.

3. Israel is not the Church and the Church is not Israel.
Rom. 9:6 – “not all Israel who are of Israel”
Gal. 6:15-16 – “and upon the Israel of God”

D. In this present dispensation of grace man is to believe in Christ through whom grace and truth have been realized (Jn. 1:1-18). Man's failure in this dispensation to accept God's gift of righteousness will result in judgment (Psa. 2:1-3; Rev. 6-19; 19:17-21).

1. Dispensation of Innocency
2. Dispensation of Conscience
3. Dispensation of Human Government
4. Dispensation of Promise

5. Dispensation of the Mosaic Law
6. Dispensation of Grace
7. Dispensation of the Millennium

II. THE LAST DAYS INCLUDES A TIME GAP AND A MYSTERY TRUTH NOT REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Dan. 9:26-27; Zech. 9:9-10; Dan. 2:40-41).

- A. The mystery is the truth of the equality of Jew and Gentile in one body, the Church (Eph. 3:6; 1 Cor. 12:12-25).

“Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

Eph. 3:5 – “... as has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.” The “as” is descriptive in nature not restrictive (“to the extent”).

1. Blessing to the Gentiles was revealed in the OT (Isa. 2:1-4; 61:5-6; Gen. 12:3).
2. The concept of a body into which redeemed people are placed is nowhere found in the OT.
- B. At the present time God is building His church and the Church is acknowledging Christ as King (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:13).
 1. The Church is not the Kingdom. As members of the body of Christ we are citizens of the Kingdom and are ambassadors of the Kingdom, but the Church and the Kingdom are not the same.
 2. The Church is the seed of Abraham but the Church is not Israel. There is natural seed (physical descendants of Abraham), spiritual seed (Christ, Gal. 3:16), spiritual seed – believers (Gal. 3:29).

- C. Old Testament revelation uses a time compression method in describing Israel's last days and overlooking the mystery of the Church (Isa. 9:1-7; Dan. 9:26-27; Zech. 9:9-10).

- D. The last days also includes a time of revelational "silence."

The Lord is not speaking through living apostles and prophets. His revelation through the gift of tongues has ceased as well. His revelation continues through the gift of the Scriptures, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and evident in Spirit transformed Christlike lives.

III. THE LAST DAYS IS A TIME OF INCREASING SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DECLINE (2 Tim. 3:1-9).

The Scriptures tell us that we are to expect a deteriorating condition in the professing church. Apostasy is a present reality and future prospect in the church. (1) There is one coming (2 Thess. 2:3). (2) Apostasy is "a departure from truth previously accepted, involving the breaking of a professed relationship with God." C.R. (3) "To apostatize" (Lk. 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12), apostasy from the Word of God, Christian doctrine, or the living God. It is a willful leaving of previously known truth and embracing error.

- A. Christians are to be discerning and watchful in times like these (1 Jn. 2:18-27; 1 Thess. 5:1-11).

1. Believers are to know that apostasy is coming (2 Tim. 3:1) and avoid it (3:5).

2. The anointing given to believers is the protecting work of the Holy Spirit in guarding us from error.

3. Believers are not to sleep in spiritual indifference but be alert to the spiritual conditions around them (1 Thess. 5:6).

- B. The events leading to the Second Coming of Christ will cast their shadows over the last days.
 - 1. We would expect this would we not? The approaching apostasy, the coming of the Antichrist, the banishment of God from the everyday life of people, all these events and others in the day preceding the Second Coming will cast their long shadows over the world prior to their time.
 - 2. Much that is happening in the world is prophetically significant.

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

- 1. The Church of Jesus Christ has been called to the colors of the gospel in these last days (2 Pet. 3:9).
- 2. Christians should be living in sober intoxication as they anticipate the return of Christ. Clear, balanced thinking and joy in the Lord.

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

I Thess. 4:13 – 18

Lesson 10

INTRODUCTION

1. This present age is a time for the gathering of the Church. God is visiting the nations to take out a people for His name (Acts 15:14). Jesus Christ is building His church.

2. The next event in the redemptive-dominion plan of God is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take His church home to be with Him. This great event is called the Rapture and is spoken of in a number of passages in the New Testament (Jn. 14:1-3; Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:20; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
 - a. It is referred to in various ways: “receive you to Myself” (Jn. 14:3), “adoption as sons” (the adoption, Rom. 8:23), “the redemption of our body” (the redemption, Rom. 8:23), “salvation is nearer to us than when we believed” (the salvation, Rom 13:11), “we shall all be changed” (the change, 1 Cor. 15:51), “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (the upward call, Phil. 3:14), “will transform the body” (the transforming, Phil. 3:21); “our gathering together to Him” (the gathering, 2 Thess. 2:1), “I will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world” (the keeping, Rev. 3:10).

 - b. In 1 Thess. 4:17 “caught up ... in the clouds ... in the air” (the catching up; the rapture [Latin]).

3. The church at Thessalonica was disturbed by the question of whether deceased believers would enjoy the return of Christ in the same way that living believers would.
 - a. Previous eschatology references in 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:12, 19; 3:13.

- b. Now two paragraphs – 4:13-18 and 5:1-11
- c. Reflects some doctrinal deficiencies in the Church
- d. The Thessalonian believers were worried not whether those who had died would rise, but whether they would have a share in the glories at Christ's return. What is said in these verses that would comfort a Christian who has lost a loved one?

I. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH IS TO BE AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO BELIEVERS (1 Thess. 4:13, 18).

- A. Christians are not to be ignorant and hopeless with regard to the return of Christ for His church.

Contrast this to the church in America today where new converts are turned away from Second Coming/Bible prophecy teaching because of some differences of interpretation associated with it. How wrong-headed we are in this.

- 1. Believers need a knowledge of biblical truth in order to grow.
- 2. Believers need to know about eschatology. They must not stay ignorant.

- B. Any sorrow which Christians may have over the loss of a loved one is unlike the hopeless grief of the non-Christian.

The world of the first century lived under a cloud of despair about death and the life hereafter. E.g., Lucretius, Theocritus, Catullus, etc.

- 1. Our world today is no less infected with gloom and despair about death and dying. We hide it from us. Death is entertainment.

2. False religions and cults teach their ideas about death and dying, but none bring any real hope.

C. The prospect of the Rapture of the Church promises completion of the believer's redemption and reward (1:10; 2:12; 3:13).

II. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH WILL BE A TIME OF RESURRECTION (4:14).

A. The historical facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus are the guarantee of the hope for the believing dead.

The Christian faith and hope are anchored in history. The belief in the return of Christ is not some fantasy created by wishful thinking.

B. Departed saints will follow the lead of Jesus in His return from heaven.

1. The souls and spirits of departed saints are brought with Christ to receive their resurrection body.

2. This all underscores the uncertainty of human life. Live each day as if it were our last day on earth.

3. Because of Jesus, death now belongs to the believer (1 Cor. 3:22). Death has been changed to sleep through Jesus.

III. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH WILL INVOLVE THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST (4:15-16).

A. It will mean equal blessing to the living and the dead (v. 15).

1. We who are alive – this refers to that generation of believers alive at the time of the Rapture.
2. Those who have fallen asleep – The dead in Christ will participate in the Parousia.

B. It will be a personal return (v. 16a). Jesus who died and was resurrected. The next time not as a cuddly baby.

Attention is fixed on Him in whom will be centered all the power and all the glory of the occasion. The very one who died (v. 14).

C. There will be a signal.

1. There will be a shout. It will be a shout of command. See John 11:43, “Lazarus, come forth.” John 5:28, “all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.” John 10:27, “My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me” (will the unbelieving world hear any sound at all?) Jn. 12:28-29 with Acts 9:7, 22:9.
2. The voice of the archangel. This is Michael. It is a great victory for the angels when Christ comes for His church. This is also an expression of the great battle that is going on within the spiritual realm. Jude 9 – protecting the body of Moses; Dan. 10:13, 21 – protecting Israel in Daniel’s day; Dan. 12:1 - protecting Israel during the Great Tribulation; Rev. 12:7-9 - defeats Satan and his demons and casts them down to the earth.
3. The trumpet of God - A sign of assembling, a sign of going forward. This is the call for the final assembly of the church of the Firstborn. The symbol is that of the Old Testament, since the trumpet was used to assemble the people of God. According to 1 Cor. 15:52, this is the last trump.

- First trump – when? Ex. 19:13 (Heb. 12:26), launching Israel as God’s channel of world witness
- Same trumpet of Matt. 24:31?
- Same trumpet of Rev. 11:15?

IV. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH WILL MEAN A TIME OF REUNION FOR BELIEVERS (4:16-17).

- A. Believers will be caught up together. The Greek word here is *harpazo*. Our English word, rapture, comes from the Latin word, *rapto*, meaning, “seize by force.”
 1. It will happen with force and suddenness.
 2. It will be irresistible.
- B. It will be in the clouds. This is the element with which those caught up are surrounded (literal clouds, Acts 1:9). In Daniel 7:13, the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven. Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Rev. 1:7.
- C. Believers will be with Christ (Jn. 14:1). Literally “into a meeting with the Lord.” In papyrus used of an official delegation going forth to meet a newly appointed magistrate, or other dignitary, upon his arrival in their district.

SUMMARY

1. The Rapture then is composed of three great acts of divine omnipotence. These take place in a moment (Gk. atom) of time.
 - There will be a resurrection and transformation of believers who are dead at that time.
 - There will be a transformation of believers who are living at that time (1 Cor. 15:52 “and we shall be changed”).
 - There will be a translation of all believers (two groups).
2. The Rapture of the Church will include every true believer in the body of Christ.
 - a. This is a comfort to the Church.
 - b. No true Christian will be left behind.
3. Is there any event in the panorama of prophecy that must take place before the Rapture? Will the Church be raptured after the appearance of the Anti-Christ? What is the Great Tribulation and the relation of the Church to it?

THE GREAT TRIBULATION
Daniel 9:24-27
Lesson 11

INTRODUCTION

1. After the time of the gathering of the Church (Acts 15:14; Eph. 3:4-10) and then its Rapture to be with Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-53), there will be a period of time known as the Tribulation (a.k.a. the Great Tribulation) (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 3:10) which will affect the entire world.
 - a. See Christ's reference to this time when outlining the future of Israel to His disciples.
 - b. It is also referred to in Revelation 7:14, "the tribulation, the great one."
2. Daniel's Seventieth Week (the Tribulation) is referred to by other terms such as the day of the Lord (Zech. 14:1). The day of the Lord, however, is not confined to the Tribulation.
 - a. The Day of the Lord – used to describe the intervention of God in human history when executing judgment. Used of a future time (Joel 2:28-32) during which there will be judgment and blessing.
 - b. The Tribulation (entire period of Daniel's Seventieth Week). The Great Tribulation applies to the second half of the week.
 - c. The Time of Jacob's Trouble – Jer. 30:7

d. The Wrath of God – Zeph. 1:15; Rev. 11:18; 15:1; 16:1

e. The Seventieth Week of Daniel

I. THE TRIBULATION IS THE SEVENTIETH WEEK OF DANIEL WHICH IS A WEEK OF SEVEN YEARS (Dan. 9:24-27).

A. This week of seven years is the last of a seventy-week prophecy of 490 years. The subject of this prophecy is Israel's future.

B. Sixty-nine weeks (483 years) concluded with the death of Christ.

C. There is a gap between the sixty-ninth week (A.D. 33) and the seventieth week. This time period is the Church Age.

D. The seventieth week of Daniel has special reference to Israel and not the Church (Dan. 9:24).

II. THE TRIBULATION WILL BE PRECEDED BY THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.

A. Because of the promise to the Church to be kept from the hour of trouble, i.e., the Tribulation (Rev. 3:10)

1. "I will keep you from the hour of testing. It is to come upon the whole world. It is a time of tribulation (Lk. 8:13 with Matt. 13:21 and Mark 4:17). So, it will be a special hour (time) of trial which will be worldwide. This time of trial is described in Revelation 6 to 19.

2. "I will keep you from this ..." The meaning of ek- basic idea is one of emergence, but not always so (e.g., 2 Cor. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:10). Protection from entrance into wrath. Ek can be understood to mean "a continuing state outside of" rather than "emergence from within." See John 17:15.

B. Because of the promise of John 14:1-3 and 1 Thess. 4:13-19

The Tribulation is called "the great day of His wrath" (Rev. 6:17). Believers are promised deliverance from the wrath to come. Note the context of 1 Thess. 5:9 indicates that Paul has been speaking of the beginning of the Day of the Lord.

C. Because of deliverance from the wrath of God in the Tribulation (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9)

III. THE TRIBULATION WILL BEGIN WITH THE SIGNING OF THE COVENANT WITH ISRAEL BY THE ANTICHRIST (Dan. 9:27).

A. This covenant will be made to guarantee the security of Israel.

B. There will follow the judgments of the seals, trumpets, and bowls of Revelation 6-19.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIBULATION IS TO BRING ABOUT THE CONVERSION OF ISRAEL AND TO BRING JUDGMENT ON THE UNBELIEVING WORLD (Jer. 30:7; Zech. 13:8-9; Isa. 26:21; 2 Thess. 2:12).

A. Israel will need to be prepared for the Messianic Kingdom.

- B. The Tribulation will manifest the indignation of the Lord against the Gentile nation (Psa. 2:5; Isa. 26:20-21).

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

1. The Second Coming of Christ to the earth to establish His Kingdom will be preceded by the darkest time in human history.
2. The Tribulation will be a consummating phase of the conflict of the ages in preparation for the Kingdom of Christ (Matt. 24:3; Rev. 11:15).
3. The Tribulation will culminate in the great battle of Armageddon and the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven (Rev. 16:12-16; Matt. 24:30).

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

Mark 13:24-27

Lesson 12

INTRODUCTION

1. There is a time of tribulation coming on this earth. It is that seven-year period of time (Dan. 9:24-27) during which the judgments of God will fall upon the world and Israel will be called to believe on her Messiah. It will be a time of God's wrath poured out on a rebellious world.
 - a. It will be a time of the cumulative effect of human evil (Rom. 2:8-9; Rev. 3:10; 2 Thess. 2:11 "... and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")
 - b. It will be a time of retribution and Satanic conspiracy (2 Thess. 1:6-7 "... when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.")
 - c. It will be a time of warfare, internationalism, martyrdom of believers, antisemitism, religious activity, celestial disturbances, and evangelism.
2. The sign of the Great Tribulation will be the desecration of the temple (the abomination of desolation). This event will serve as a signal to Israel in the Tribulation to flee to the mountains. It will be a claim to deity by the Antichrist. Abomination, i.e., disgusting, revolting, etc./Desolation, i.e., devastation, ruin, etc. The Antichrist will make the temple abominable and therefore desolate.

- a. This will be a signal to head for the mountains and go into hiding because of the dictator of the Middle East. There will be great terrors of persecution under the Antichrist.
 - b. The violent measures of the Antichrist will be cut short by the sudden appearance of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives.
 - c. Mark 13:24 - "But in those days, after that tribulation." This introduces a sharp contrast between the appearance of the false messiahs with their signs and wonders and the appearance of the true Messiah "in those days."
- I. THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST TO EARTH WILL BE SIGNALLED BY A DISPLAY OF DIVINE POWER IN THE HEAVENS (Mk. 13:24-25).
- A. These celestial disturbances will stand in stark contrast to the counterfeit signs and wonders of the false christs and false prophets. These heavenly fireworks are predicted in the Old Testament (Isa. 13:10, 34:4; Joel 2:31, 3:15-16). Listen to Isaiah 24:23 speaking of this time, "Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and His glory will be before His elders." Listen to Amos 8:9, "And it will come about in that day, declares the Lord God, that I shall make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark at broad daylight."
 - 1. Is this plain literal or figurative literal language? I think they will be actual physical disturbances. Mark may be using "phenomenal language," but this does not deny that these will be actual events in the physical universe.
 - 2. These will be some of the final sighs of a groaning creation awaiting its redemption. Creation has tottered under the load of sin's curse and longs for its renewal when the last Adam will arrive on earth.

3. There was darkness and an earthquake associated with the death of Christ on the cross as a harbinger of the final redemption to come.

B. The sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-13) describes some of these cosmic disorders. Violent upheaval in nature, severe gravitational disturbances of the solar system, meteor showers, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves.

1. God will supernaturally act upon physical forces controlling the movements of the celestial bodies.

2. At Pentecost Peter quoted Joel 2:28ff. as indicating that the coming of the Holy Spirit marked the beginning of the last days.

C. This is not a symbolic reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The language used here by Jesus is used elsewhere in speaking of His Second Coming (Matt. 13:41, 16:27, 25:31).

1. There is an interpretation of these verses which says that this is not a description of the Second Coming of Christ. It refers them to a spiritual event already past.

2. They are one short step away from that position that claims all the NT Second-Coming prophecies are allegorical.

II. THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST TO EARTH WILL TAKE PLACE IN A BLAZE OF GLORY (Mk. 13:26).

- A. The coming again of Jesus will be visible to those living on the earth. Jesus Christ will be seen by all for who He really is, the triumphant Son of Man. At His first coming His glory was veiled. He was rejected and suffered. The second time the Suffering Servant will be seen as the King of kings and Lord of lords ("He who is

the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; ..." 1 Tim. 6:15).

- B. The coming again of Jesus will be the personal return of the glorified Son of Man (8:31, 38; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-16). The reference here is to Daniel 7:13-14. He has been granted all the features of absolute rule, i.e., authority, glory (honor), and a kingdom (organized form of His government). He will come to take what is rightfully His (Rev. 4-5).
- C. The coming again of Jesus will be in contrast to the false claims of the false christs and He will exercise power as the ruling Messiah (Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14:1-7).
- D. The coming again of Jesus will be a time of judgment upon the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and unbelievers alive at that time (2 Thess. 2:8; Matt. 25:31-46). Jesus Christ will smite the nations and He will rule them with a rod of iron.

III. THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST TO EARTH WILL DRAW ALL THE ELECT INTO THE TRIUMPH OF HIS KINGDOM (Mk. 13:27).

- A. Old Testament saints, the Church, believers martyred during the Tribulation, redeemed Jews and Gentiles converted during the Tribulation and alive at Christ's coming will all converge upon the Messianic Kingdom (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 6:9-11; Isa. 2:2-4; Rev. 7:13-14; Rom. 11:25-27).
- B. Israel will repent and believe in the Messiah when they look upon Him whom they have rejected and pierced (Zech. 12:10; 13:1).

Summary

Two truths are emphasized in Mark 13:24-27. One, the world is going to see Jesus Christ for who He really is. It will be a time of unveiling. The glory that was hidden will be visible and overpowering. Secondly, the great concern of Jesus at His coming

will be the bringing together of His people so that they can be with Him in His kingdom rule.

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

1. The promise of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ makes history a coherent whole with a meaningful ending. History without the Second Coming of Jesus Christ would be like a movie with a bad ending or no ending. We are made to enjoy stories. The drama of redemption is the greatest story ever told.
2. The truth of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be ridiculed by counterfeit Christianity in the last days (2 Pet. 3:3-4 “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”)
 - a. Mockers following their own lusts will lampoon the cherished hope of true Christians. They will poke fun at our “escapist” mentality.
 - b. Naturalism which ridicules the biblical account of Creation will not allow for any divine intervention in human history. The world view that tells us that all living creatures evolved by an unguided, purposeless material process of random genetic change and natural selection does not tolerate the belief that God created the universe out of nothing and that Jesus Christ will return to this earth to bring everyone into account to Him.
3. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is an encouragement to live hopefully in the discipline of grace (Titus 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 2:19). “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”
 - a. This present age must not be allowed to define our reason for living.
 - b. The believer’s pain and suffering is the waiting room for a redeemed body in a redeemed Creation with the Lamb of God and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. “The sum of all a believer’s sad yesterdays is as nothing to him when he remembers the glory which is to be at the Lord’s return.” Maurice Roberts

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST
Zechariah 14:1-7
Lesson 13

INTRODUCTION

1. The central theme of the Bible is the coming of God's Messiah (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 22:20).
 - a. The first promise of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that the Messiah will come. At the First Coming He will overcome both sin and Satan. But see Romans 16:20 "And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." The crushing of Satan is not a completed thing. Legally it was accomplished at the cross, but it will actually take place at the Second Coming. Satan's judgment awaits the future.
 - b. The last promise also testifies to the Savior's coming (Rev. 22:20 "He who testifies to these things says, Yes I am coming quickly. Amen. Come Lord Jesus.")
2. This truth unfolds in the Bible like a growing plant (Dan. 7:13-14; Mal. 3:1-2; Isa. 53:2-9; Zech. 9:9).
In the Old Testament the message is, "He is coming." In the Gospels it is, "he has come." In the Epistles and the Revelation it is, "having come, He is coming again."
3. The truth of the Second Coming will be ridiculed in apostate Christianity in the last days (2 Pet. 3:3-4, "Knowing this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.'")

- a. Supernaturalism will be disallowed and therefore there will be no place in the world and life view of people for a Second Coming.
- b. People will say that “it hasn’t happened so it won’t.” “Jesus won’t come because he hasn’t come.” In other words, the thinking will be, “things like this just don’t happen.”
- c. A lust-driven society of men will laugh at the very idea of a Second Coming.

I. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WILL BE A PERSONAL, LITERAL, AND VISIBLE RETURN (Zech. 14:1-7; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7).

- A. He will be seen by every eye.
All will recognize and realize this is the Messiah they have hated, scorned, killed, and rejected. The Jewish nation will see that He truly was their Messiah. Even though the earth is a sphere He will be seen.
- B. His feet will touch down on the Mount of Olives.
He will come back to that place from which he ascended in order to bring judgment on those who are laying siege to Jerusalem. The Messiah, the Man of War, will intervene on behalf of His people Israel. He will come when the Antichrist will be in the midst of His attack on the city of Jerusalem (Zech. 12:9).

II. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WILL TAKE PLACE IN POWER AND GLORY (Matt. 24:30; Rev. 19:11-21).

- A. He will appear in the external and visible glory of God (Matt. 17:2, 5).
The appearance of Jesus Christ will be in blazing light. The “spotlight” will be upon Him. At His first coming the Shekinah Glory came “incognito.” But the second time all will see Him in His outward glory.

B. His enemies will not be able to stand before Him.

1. He will come in victory/triumph. "God will give an exhibition of real power in the Lord Jesus Christ."
2. The crucifix which is often used to symbolize Christianity is limiting in what it projects/teaches about Jesus Christ. The tendency is to think of Him as a dying, defeated, despairing man. He is not.

III. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WILL COME UNEXPECTEDLY UPON UNBELIEVERS (Matt. 24:50; Lk. 21:34-35).

A. The unbelieving world will be deceived in its pursuit of peace and safety (1 Thess. 5:3).

The Day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. It will come as a surprise to those on the earth at the time.

1. Peace and safety is a description of the attitude of the world system prior to the return of Christ. The attitude is one of general indifference to God (e.g., days of Noah, Matt. 24:37-39; Lk. 19:28-30).
2. The world system will be locked into a false sense of security (e.g., the days of Ezekiel, 13:10; Jer. 6:14). For the safety idea see Dan. 9:27.
3. The world situation prior to the Day of the Lord (DOL) will be marked by some evidence of peace. The DOL will break the peace (Rev. 6:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:2ff.).

B. The unbelieving world will be made to realize that its real problem is man's rebellion against God.

Man has sought to create world peace, utopia, a new world order, but the real problem is not the environment. The real problem is not chemical or biological. The real problem is the sinful heart of man.

IV. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IS AN INCENTIVE FOR HOPE AND THE DISCIPLINE OF GRACE (Titus 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 2:19).

A. This present age must not be allowed to define the believer's reason for living.

1. We are to deny ungodliness and worldly desires. The believer's thoughts and desires must be God-driven. He is to live contrary to the spirit of the age.
2. We are to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.
 "The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment (i.e., clear-minded) and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer." (1 Pet. 4:7). We have to know what is important and what isn't important.

B. The believer's pain and suffering is to be colored by great expectations. As our mortal body decays the inner man is to be renewed day by day. Yes, physically, we are losing it little by little. We wait for the redemption of our body (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

1. Early Christians were encouraged by this prospect (e.g., prison, persecution, deprivation, death).
 Illustration – My own sickness coming home from the Philippines and anticipation of arriving at home
2. Those who are oppressed, defrauded, and abused are told to be patient for "the coming of the Lord is at hand." James 5:8

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

1. We believe that the ultimate goal of history is for God to glorify Himself by demonstrating the fact that He alone is the sovereign God.
2. The return of Christ to this earth forecasts final accountability. He will come as judge the next time. Are you prepared to meet Him?

THE GLORIES OF THE COMING KINGDOM

Psa. 2:7-8; Rev. 20:4

Lesson 14

INTRODUCTION

1. The redemptive-dominion plan of God calls for the realization of the destiny of man through the rule of the Messiah over the earth (Gen. 1:26 – “let them rule over ...”; Psa. 2:7-9; Isa. 11:1-5; Heb. 2:5-15).
 - a. First words of God concerning the purpose of man have to do with dominion. Man was created to have dominion over God’s Creation (Gen. 1:28).
 - b. But not just to rule – but to have communion, fellowship with God. “Everyone who is called by my name, and whom I have created for my glory, whom I have formed even whom I have made.” (Isa. 43:7)
 - c. However, there has been a tragedy – rebellion in Paradise. Because of sin man lost his dominion and lost his fellowship with God. What did Adam and Eve lose? They lost moral purity, became subject to disease and death, had to work for their livelihood, and were driven from the garden.
2. The historical covenants with Abraham, David, and Israel (Palestinian Covenant and the New Covenant) contain promises which must be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

Gen. 3:15 – The first Bible prophecy of a coming kingdom in which all evil will be put down and made subject to the promised seed. C. Feinberg

 - a. Man’s destiny began with an earthly rule and it will be consummated in an earthly rule, i.e., the Kingdom of God.
 - b. Christ is going to establish His Kingdom - one of the great themes of prophecy in the Bible. Leading theme in the NT. Past ages have been building toward

the consummation of God's Kingdom. It will demonstrate the wisdom and glory of God as He establishes the rule of His Son. Christians are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

We will examine four features of the Coming Kingdom of God on this earth.

I. THE COMING KINGDOM WILL BE INAUGURATED AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND WILL BE 1000 YEARS IN LENGTH (Rev. 20:2-7).

A. The Millennial Kingdom will mark the end of all human kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). Characteristics/nature of these Gentile powers/empires: living utterly for themselves, progression of "lawlessness," strong and powerful, control political affairs of this world.

1. Christ will come and destroy all Gentile world dominion.

2. "Became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Dan. 2:35

B. The Millennial Kingdom of Christ will be followed by the Eternal Kingdom. (1 Cor. 15:20-28; Rev. 20:4-6; Rev. 22:5)

1. Is the number "1000" merely a symbolic number representing "the perfection of fullness of time?" As per Augustine, "The City of God"

2. Not everything in the Book of Revelation is symbolic, e.g., seven churches

3. The number 1000 is used in the vision and then in the interpretation of the vision (Rev. 20:4-7).

II. IN THE COMING KINGDOM CHRIST WILL RULE AS KING ON THE THRONE OF DAVID (Dan. 7:14; Lk. 1:32-33; Rev. 19:15).

A. The Messiah will govern with complete justice from the city of Jerusalem (Isa. 11:4; 65:20; Psalms 72; Isaiah 2:3; Zechariah 14:10).

1. The Lord Jesus Christ will rule as a benevolent dictator/despot/monarch exercising complete justice for all.

2. Unlike the rule of sinful men through the centuries, the Messiah will be impartial, merciful, and just. He will not be subject to lust for power, insecurity, greedy, unstable, distracted, moody, or corrupt.

B. The millennial government will be composed of national kings (Ezekiel 37:24), tribal kings (Matthew 19:28), and city kings (Luke 19:11-27). The King of kings will rule (the King of the Jews, Matthew 2:2; 27:11, 37). Believers will be given governing roles (Revelation 2:26-27). The twelve tribes of Israel will be ruled by the twelve apostles as governors. Jesus will appoint city kings or mayors. The saints will judge the world (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

C. The Church will participate in the government of the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 5:10 – “And thou has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” 1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:12 – “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him ...”)

Heirs of the Kingdom (Ephesians 2:6)

Danger of losing our inheritance (Colossians 3:24)

III. THE COMING KINGDOM WILL BE A TIME OF VIBRANT SPIRITUAL LIFE (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 14:16).

A. The Lord Jesus Christ will receive universal worship (Isa. 11:9-10; Ezek. 40:1 – 46:24).

1. The temple will be rebuilt in the Millennium which will be the center of spiritual activity in the Kingdom. The Shekinah glory of God will reside in the temple.

2. The Holy Land will be an ideal place to worship (Isa. 4:5). A special canopy will be prepared by God (the “Kingdome?”).

B. Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1-3).

He will not be free to deceive nor will his demonic powers be able to roam about to do evil.

C. Righteousness, peace, joy, and the full knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth (Isa. 2:4; 9:3-4; Jer. 31:34).

Jesus Christ will reign in righteousness (Isa. 32:1). Only the righteous will enter the Kingdom (Matt. 25:37). Those who thirst after righteousness will be filled (Matt. 5:6).

1. The Millennium will be an era of world peace (Zech. 9:9-10; 8:4-5). Former enemies like Egypt, Israel, and Assyria will be at peace with each other (Isa. 19:23-25).

2. It will be a time of great joy (Isa. 61:7, 10). Israel will celebrate the fulfillment of the promises of God to her. She will observe the feast of tabernacles in the fall of the year.

IV. THE COMING KINGDOM WILL BE A TIME OF PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL PROSPERITY (Isa. 35:1-2; Amos 9:14, one harvest will follow another).

- A. There will be a partial lifting of the curse on Creation in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms (Ezek. 34:26; Isa. 55:13; 65:25).
 - 1. The curse which has fallen on the ground (thorns and thistles) and the animal kingdom (fear of man was placed in animals, Gen. 9:2-3) will be lifted.
 - 2. The wilderness will be revitalized with water and vegetation (Isa. 35:1-2; 6-7). Rain will come (Ezek. 34:26). There will be dramatic changes in nature. Labor problems will be solved (Isa. 65:21-25; Ezek. 36:29-30).
 - 3. There will be peace between animals and between man and animals (Isa. 65:25).
- B. There will be the absence of sickness and lengthened life expectancy (Isa. 33:24; Ezek. 34:16; Isa. 65:20, 35:5-6, eyes of the blind shall be opened). Jer. 30:19-20; Ezek. 47:22 – tremendous increase in the birthrate.
Isa. 33:24 – “And no resident will say, ‘I am sick’; The people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.”
- C. There will be significant geographical changes in Palestine (Zech. 14:4, 10; Isa. 2:2). These changes will accommodate the building of the millennial temple.

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

- 1. The glories of the coming Kingdom of God on earth will be a fitting final chapter in the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ over evil.

2. The glories of the coming Kingdom of God will demonstrate the magnificence of God's sovereign ruling authority.
3. Ruling and reigning with Christ in the coming Kingdom is an incentive for faithful service in this present age.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT AND THE ETERNAL STATE
Revelation 20:11-15; Acts 17:31
Lesson 15

INTRODUCTION

1. The Bible, God's Word, sets forth clearly and boldly the final accountability to God of every human being.

Adam and Eve had to answer to God for their disobedience. From the moment of their sin judgment was required. An eternal crime against God had been committed. The theme of judgment flows on through the Bible. Sacrifices had to be made for sin. This was judgment upon the animal in the place of the sinner. The Savior came and was judged by the Father on the cross. Satan was thereby judged. There awaits a judgment for all men. It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment (Heb. 9:27).

2. God will execute this judgment through a series of judgments at the end of the age. These judgments will include:
 - a. The judgment of the believer's works (1 Cor. 3:10-15).
 - b. The judgment of Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:1-3).
 - c. The judgment of saints of the Tribulation (Rev. 20:1-4).
 - d. The judgment of Jewish survivors of the Tribulation (Ezek. 20:34-38).
 - e. The judgment of Gentile survivors of the Tribulation (Matt. 25:31-46).
 - f. The judgment of Satan and fallen angels (Rev. 20:10).
 - g. The judgment of the unsaved dead (Rev. 20:11-15).

I. THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED IS BIBLICALLY ASSURED (2 Pet. 3:7).

A. The holiness and righteousness of God require it (Hab. 1:13 – “Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil.” Psa. 89:14 – “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne.”

1. God is righteous and we are not. We are sinners. We are under His judgment (Rom. 1:18ff.).

2. “We shall answer for what we have done, and we shall all be judged either on the basis of our own righteousness (which will condemn us) or on the basis of the perfect righteousness of him who is our Savior.” J.B.

B. The sinfulness of man requires it (Rom. 2:1-2, by judging sin in others, Gen. 42:22 – “you would not listen”; Rom. 2:15-16, by judging sin in oneself, Gen. 42:21 – “truly we are guilty concerning our brother”; Gal. 6:7 – “God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows...” operates many times in the present life, but not always; Psa. 73:3-20, the prosperous wicked enter suddenly into judgment; Lk. 16:25 – “God balances life’s inequalities, “Son, remember ...”)

C. The atoning work of Christ and the resurrection guarantee it (Jn. 12:31, 33 – “If the judgment of God fell on Christ who bore our sins, then surely it will fall on those who elect to bear their own sins.” God has committed all judgment into the hands of His Son (John 5:22) and has raised Him from the dead to carry out this charge (Acts 17:31).

1. All judgment belongs to God (Heb. 12:23 – “God, the Judge of all”)

2. He has delegated the work of judgment to His Son (Jn. 5:22 – “He has given all judgment to the Son”; 2 Tim 4:1 – “Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead”).

Keep in mind also that Jesus, as Redeemer, died to save sinners. No one will be able to say, “I am dealing with a Judge who made no effort to save my

soul.” Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. All must deal with Him as Mediator or as Judge.

II. THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED WILL OCCUR AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (Rev. 20:11-15).

A. At death the unsaved go immediately to Sheol-Hades (Lk. 16:23-26). The request of relief from the one in torment is denied for two reasons.

1. The requirements of justice (“during your life ... received your good things”)
2. The irreversible condition of a person’s lot after death (“a great chasm fixed”). There will be no movement from one state to the other in the afterlife.

B. After the millennial reign of Christ all the unsaved will be raised and judged.

1. Jesus Christ is on this throne for all judgment has been delegated to Him.
2. All kinds of people are counted among the unsaved waiting to be sentenced. They will have no defense attorney. The only one available is Jesus Christ, the righteous (1 John 2:1-2 - “...And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”).
3. The books will be opened and will reveal the magnitude of each unsaved person’s guilt. The book is a record of those who are saved. It is opened to prove none of the unsaved were in it.

C. The unsaved will be given proof that they deserve eternal punishment according to the sins committed and the light provided (Rom. 2:5-6; Matt. 11:20-24; Lk. 12:47-48).

- The “more tolerable” statement regarding Tyre and Sidon in comparison to Capernaum
- The “storing up wrath for yourself” of religious people
- They “receive many lashes”.

All tells us that the greater the light the greater the responsibility. Those who reject the greater light will suffer the greater punishment.

D. The punishment of the unsaved will be everlasting (Matt. 18:8; Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:9).

1. Jesus used three terms to describe the nature of this punishment.

- “Outer darkness” – i.e., exclusion from the immediate presence of God (Matt. 25:30).
- “Undying worm” – i.e., gnawing of remorse and conscience (Mk. 9:47-48).
- “Unquenchable fire” – unending pain (Mk. 9:47-48).

Jesus used the term “GeHinnom” to designate the place of final punishment. It was the synonym for a horrible place. It was used eleven times by Christ (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30, etc.).

2. The “lake of fire” probably refers to the same place.

- Gehenna – place of torment
- Lake of fire – quality of torment

3. The duration of punishment is eternal.

- Matt. 18:8 – “the eternal fire”
- Matt. 25:46 – “eternal punishment”
- 2 Thess. 1:9 – “eternal destruction

Not just “age-lasting.” Usage determines its meaning. Same term is used for God in Rom. 16:26. God is *aionios* (eternal). In John 3:16, eternal (*aionios*) life.

E. The false teaching of universalism and annihilationism attempt to deny eternal punishment of the unsaved. These are evil teachings in that they contradict the teaching of the Word of God and drive a stake through the heart of missions.

1. Universalism/restorationism teaches that sooner or later all will be saved (including, possibly, even demons and Satan!).
2. Annihilationism teaches that sooner or later all the wicked/unsaved will be annihilated (including, possibly, even demons and Satan). Two main theories:

the “second change theory” (JWs). The “prolonged punishment theory” – whenever the soul has discharged the penalty in punishment, then the soul will be annihilated.

3. The attraction of these views – the wish is the father of the thought. Several things need to be said. Let me refer you to “Let the Nations Be Glad” by John Piper, pages 120ff. “A hell of eternal conscious torment.”

III. ALL OF THE SAVED WILL SPEND ETERNITY WITH GOD IN THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH (Rev. 21 & 22).

- A. The saved will have the everlasting opportunity to serve God (Rev. 22:3). “... His bond servants shall serve Him.”

1. Believers will not be idle. The word used here refers to “priestly” service.
2. This present life is a “workshop for eternity.” The martyrs out of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:15) serve God day and night in His temple.
3. There will be no fatigue. No boredom.

- B. The saved will have the everlasting opportunity to enjoy fellowship with God (Rev. 22:4). “... they shall see His face.”

1. The saved will have immediate access to the glory of God.
2. Looking upon His face was denied to Moses (Ex. 33:20, 23 – “man shall not see me and live.”).

3. Worship will be our eternal delight.

A TIME FOR RESPONSE

1. Are you counted among that great host of the saved who will enjoy the everlasting dominion with God (Rev. 22:5)?
2. Or are you counted among those who will everlastingly endure the agony of being excluded from the beauty of the presence of God?

APPENDIX

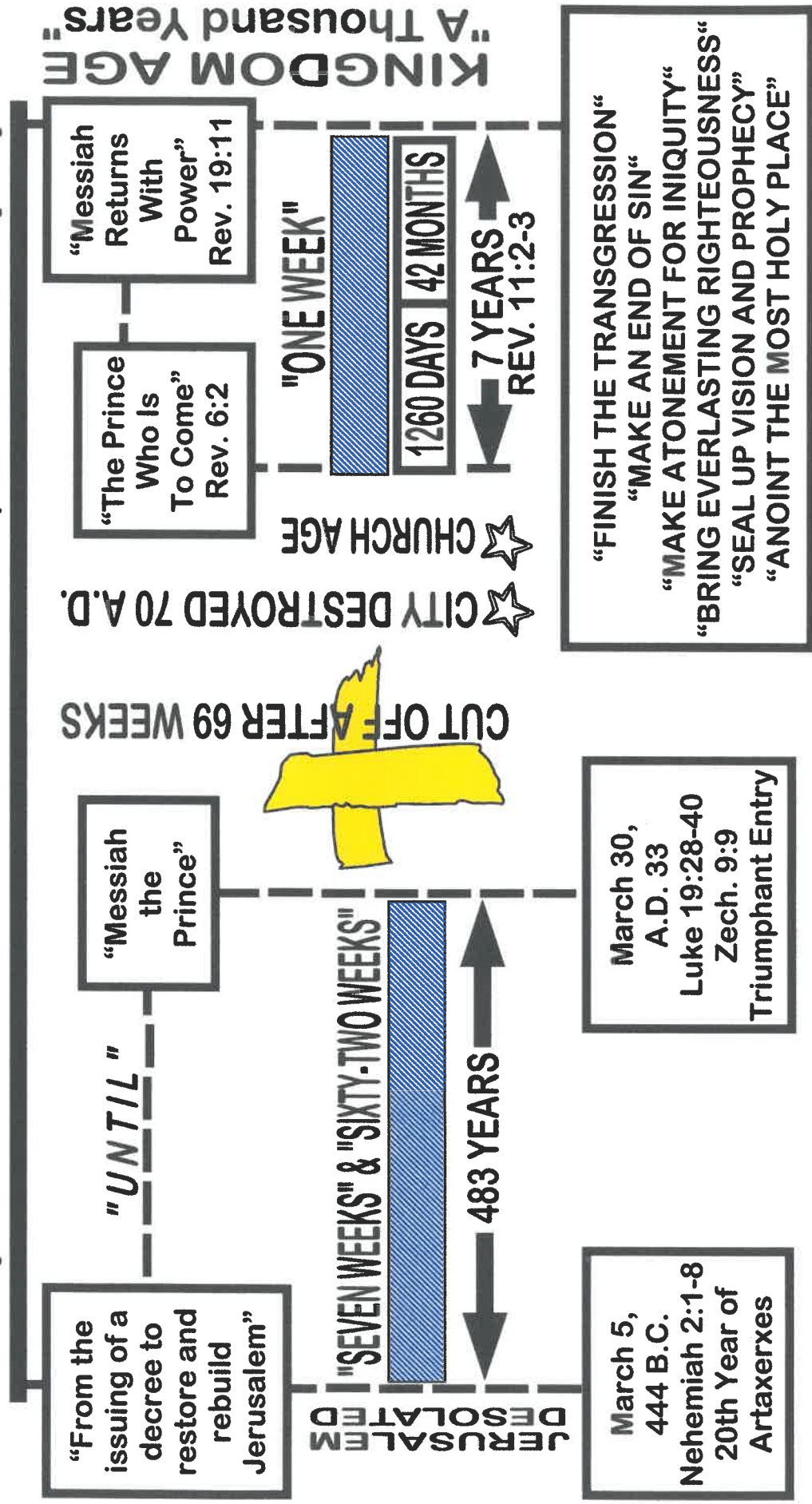
BIBLE ESCHATOLOGY

CHARTS

DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

Daniel 9:24-27

"Seventy Weeks Have Been Decreed For Your People And Your Holy City"



BABYLON MEDO-PERSIA GREECE ROME

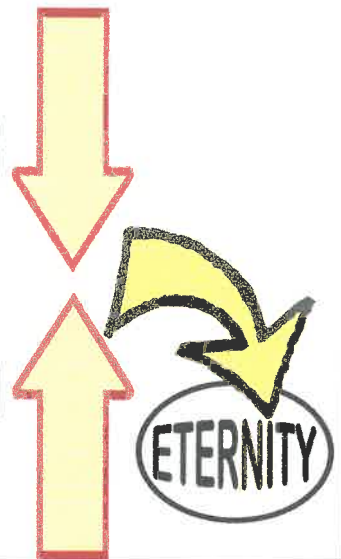
POSTMILLENNIAL VIEW



PRESENT AGE
IS THE
KINGDOM
OR CHURCH
WILL
ESTABLISH
THE KINGDOM

2ND COMING

GENERAL
RESURRECTION
& GENERAL
JUDGMENT



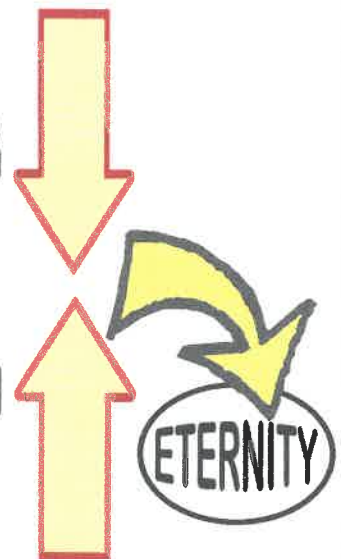
AMILLENNIAL VIEW



KINGDOM
PROMISES
FULFILLED NOW
IN HEAVEN OR
KINGDOM
IS NOW
PRESENT ON
EARTH

2ND COMING

GENERAL
RESURRECTION
& GENERAL
JUDGMENT



PREMILLENNIAL PRETRIBULATIONALVIEW



CHURCH
AGE

RAPTURE

CHURCH
IN HEAVEN

SEVEN YEAR
TRIBULATION ON EARTH

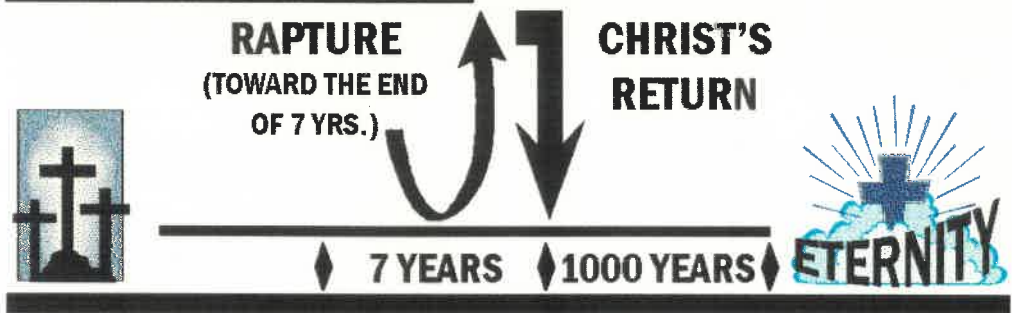


2ND COMING

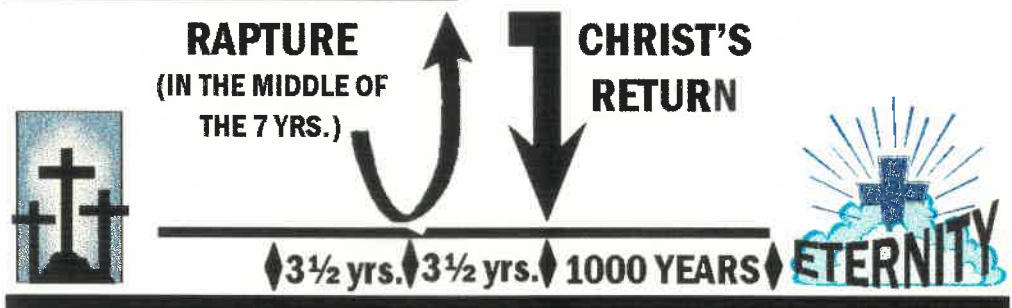
EARTHLY
KINGDOM
FOLLOWED
BY ETERNITY

The Rapture of the Church

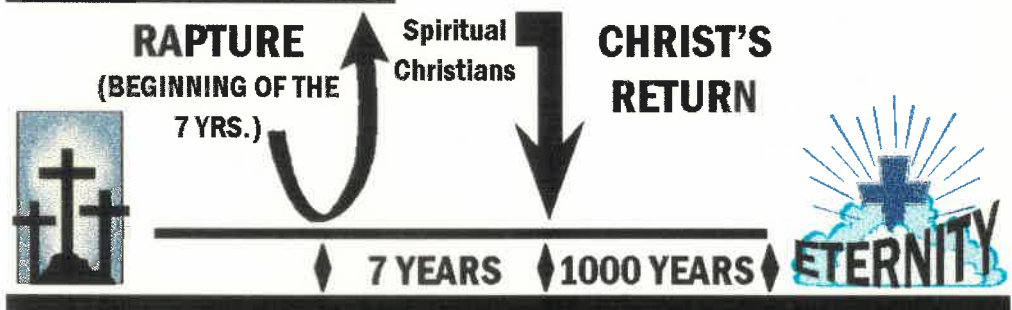
POSTTRIBULATIONISM



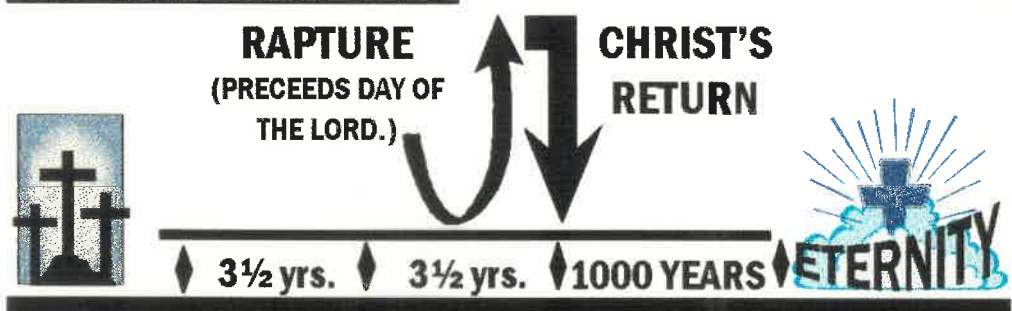
MIDTRIBULATIONISM



PARTIAL RAPTURE



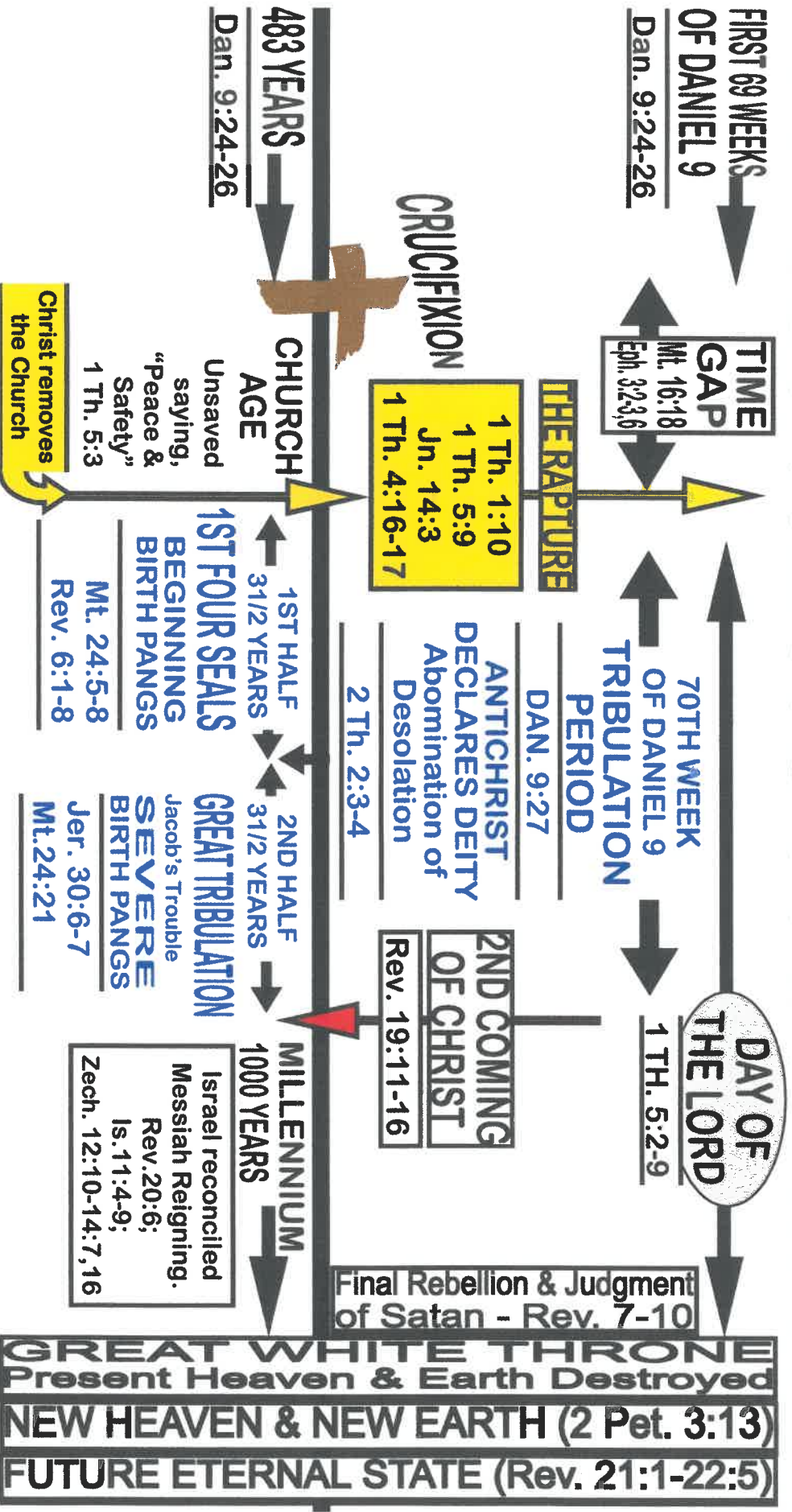
PRE-WRATH RAPTURE



PRETRIBULATIONISM



A PROPHETIC PANORAMA



THE BOOK OF REVELATION

CONDITIONS OF THE CHURCH AGE CHAPTERS 1-3	EVENTS OF THE 70TH WEEK CHAPTERS 4-18	EVENTS FROM 2ND COMING TO THE FUTURE ETERNAL STATE CHAPTERS 19-22
3 REFERENCES TO ISRAEL 19 REFERENCES TO THE CHURCH	26 REF. TO ISRAEL 0 REF. TO CHURCH	1 REFERENCE TO ISRAEL 6 REFERENCES TO THE CHURCH