

**Xenos Christian Fellowship  
Christian Ministry Unit 1  
Predictive Prophecy  
Week 3 – Revelation & End-Times Events**

**Introduction**

From the book of Daniel and the rest of the Old Testament, we have developed a fairly detailed timeline of historical events. But passages in the New Testament provide an even fuller picture. There is an immense amount of biblical material to correlate, and because of this there is some disagreement on some of the details. We want to get the main picture in this lecture. We won't be able to address every question or show how each prediction fits.

We assume you have done your homework assignment, so we will only allude to (rather than cover) the passages involved in many of these end-times events.

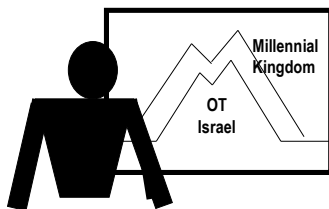
See the Old Testament and New Testament prophecy charts that we have given you. They will help you correlate this material. See also J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come* and John Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key To Prophetic Revelation* for solid Dispensational treatments.

**The Church Age**

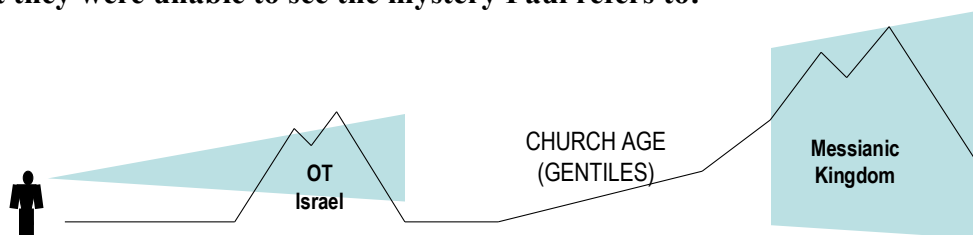
Recall that the Old Testament had very little to say about the gap in time between the first and second coming of the Messiah. Paul calls this period of time a “mystery.”

**(Romans 11:25)** “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.”

**Old Testament believers looked forward to God’s kingdom on earth:**



**But they were unable to see the mystery Paul refers to:**



During the Church Age, the kingdom of God would appear, but not in a way that the Jew’s expected. The Old Testament prophets did not understand that God would temporarily suspend his work through Israel and instead work through the church to bring the news of salvation to all people-groups. Jesus refers to this unforeseen phase of the kingdom as “the mysteries of the kingdom.”

**Matthew 13: Parables that describe the ‘Mysteries of the Kingdom’**

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells series of parables that contrast the Messianic Kingdom that the Jews expected with the “mystery” phase of the kingdom. As Jesus does this, he’s describing what it will be like during the church age. While affirming that the kingdom will come in its fullness as predicted by the Old Testament prophets, Jesus prepares the disciples for this mystery phase of the kingdom.

Instructors: Students have already been exposed to the Kingdom Parables in Matthew 13 in *Introduction to the Bible*. Move through this table quickly.

PARABLE	The "MYSTERY" PHASE OF THE KINGDOM Jesus announced. (Church Age)	The MESSIANIC KINGDOM the Jews hoped for. (Second Coming)
<b>Soils</b> 13:3-9,18-23	The kingdom is spread by communicating the gospel, and people respond to this message in various ways.	The kingdom will come with irresistible force.
<b>Wheat &amp; Tares</b> 13:24-30,36-43	The righteous and the unrighteous live together in the same world.	God will separate the righteous from the unrighteous.
<b>Dragnet</b> 13:47-50	False members will be swept into its sphere of influence.	God will separate all false members from the righteous.
<b>Mustard Seed &amp; Leaven</b> 13:31-33	God's kingdom starts small and grows gradually to become large.	God's kingdom dramatically covers the whole world.
<b>Pearl &amp; Treasure</b> 13:44-46	God's kingdom is inconspicuous, yet of inestimable value.	The surpassing value of God's kingdom will be apparent to everyone.

We live during the Church Age, and if you look carefully at the description of the mystery kingdom in the middle column, it paints an accurate picture of the conditions we minister under today!

**Signs of the end of the church age - Matt. 24:1-31**

The church age won’t last forever. There will be signs that it is coming to an end. Just days before Jesus’ arrest and execution, Jesus and his disciples were in Jerusalem (read 24:1). Herod’s Temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world. If any building seemed permanent and immovable, it was this one. Yet Jesus predicts it will be destroyed (read 24:2).

Later, when they were sitting across the valley from the Temple (still in full view), the disciples ask three questions (read 24:3).

**"Tell us, (1) when will these things happen, and (2) what will be the sign of Your coming, and (3) of the end of the age?"**

They evidently thought that these three things (destruction of the Temple, Jesus' coming, and the end of the age) must occur at the same time. But Jesus reveals that they are separate events, each with its own "sign." Matthew, Mark and Luke record different parts of Jesus' answer--so we have to consult all of them to get the fullest account of his response.

**"When will these things happen?"**

Luke recorded Jesus' answer to the first question in **Luke 21:20-24** (read). The sign that the destruction of the Temple was imminent would be the siege of Jerusalem by foreign armies. This siege would end in the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jewish people for a long period of time.

**Fulfillment:** This prediction was *fulfilled in 70 AD*, when, after a four-year siege, *the Roman army (led by emperor Titus) breached the walls, destroyed the city and Temple, and carried the people away*. You can read about this in Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*. Not until 1967, during the Six Day War, did Jerusalem come back under Jewish control. And, of course, the controversy of this event is very much with us today.

Matthew records Jesus' answer to the last two questions: "What will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" He reverses the order of their questions, because (as we will see) the sign of "the end" comes before the sign of his "coming."

**"What will be the sign of the end of the age?"**

**First, don't be fooled!**

Read **Matthew 24:4-8**. Jesus first answer to this question is: "See to it that you don't get fooled about this." People will come claiming to be Christ. And they will mislead many. Many traumatic things will happen that people will assume are signs of the end--false messiahs, persecutions, wars (including the one that destroys the Temple), natural disasters, and the horrible consequences of these things (like famine). But these traumatic events are not signs of the end. They are significant only in that they are like birth pangs--they are the painful prelude to a wonderful birth (Messiah's kingdom). They will characterize the entire time between

Jesus' two comings--maybe (like birth pangs) increasing in intensity and frequency.

Christians should be cautious about making claims that the end of history has arrived. Jesus specifically said that these events do not mean that the end is near!

Read **Matthew 24:9-13**. The phrases "then" and "at that time" may refer to the end of the Church Age, or perhaps the first half of the Tribulation. This time will be characterized by persecution of Christians, apostasy, false teachers, and societal lawlessness.

### **Fulfillment: Two things that must happened before the end.**

#### *1. The Gospel will be preached to all the nations.*

Read **Matthew 24:14**. When you think about it, this is an amazing prediction. By human odds, this pathetically weak movement should have evaporated like hundreds of other small religious sects. Yet 20 centuries later, the expansion of the world-wide Christian movement is the best kept secret in human history! 1 (CHRISTIANS IN EVERY POLITICAL NATION; GROWING FASTEST IN NON-WHITE, NON-WESTERN WORLD; CHINA AS EXAMPLE IN GROWTH & MISSIONS GOALS<sup>2</sup>; INDIA GOSPEL LEAGUE'S GROWTH).

NOTE: The incredibly accurate fulfillment of Jesus' predictions thus far (destruction of Jerusalem; tenor of world history; expansion of world Christian movement) give us a solid basis for believing that the rest of this prediction will also be fulfilled.

#### *2. The Abomination of Desolation*

Read **Matthew 24:15-22**. The specific event that marks the beginning of the final chapter of history as we know it is "the abomination of desolation" (24:15). Jesus reminds us that this event was predicted by the prophet Daniel, and that it involves someone "standing in the holy place."

Jesus is referring to the emergence of a ruler who will succeed for a short time in actually gaining control over the whole world. We were introduced to him in Daniel's visions as "the little horn," "the prince who is to come," and the "the king" (Dan. 7,9,11). He is known by the New Testament authors as "the antichrist" (1 Jn. 2), "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thes. 2), and "the beast" (Rev. 13).

At the pinnacle of his power and arrogance, he will go into the Temple of God in Jerusalem (not yet rebuilt) and claim to be God--the only object of allegiance for all humanity. Paul describes this same event in straightforward language in 2 Thes. 2:1-4 (read).

This act of monstrous arrogance and blasphemy will result in a short period of unparalleled suffering as this ruler persecutes God's people, others rebel against him, and God begins to judge him and all who follow him. Jesus calls this the "Great Tribulation"--so horrible that all of humanity would be destroyed unless Jesus intervenes to judge this ruler and rescue his own followers (24:21,22). (You can read snap-shots of this period in Rev. 6-18.)

This will be an unmistakable event, and it hasn't happened yet (in part because the Temple has not been rebuilt since it was destroyed in 70 AD). When it happens, the "end of the age" (Great Tribulation) will break out, and will be terminated shortly thereafter by Jesus' return . . .

### **"What will be the sign of your coming?"**

Read **Matthew 24:26,27**--although the Antichrist comes to power by stealth and secrecy, Jesus' second coming will be anything but secret.

**Fulfillment:** *The "sign of his coming" will be absolutely unmistakable (like lightning that lights up the whole sky).* Read **24:29**--the entire natural order will be displaced. Read **24:30,31**--all of humanity will literally see Jesus returning to gather his followers, defeat his enemy and establish God's kingdom over all the earth.

### **How should this affect our lives?"**

Read **Matt. 24:42**. Precisely because we do know that Jesus is coming and because do not know when he is coming, we should keep watch (be ready) at all times. We should be on the alert so that whether he comes sooner or later than we expect, we will be ready.

Discussion: **What does it look like to "be ready?"**

- Matt. 25:14-30 - using all the resources God has entrusted to you to advance his kingdom during his absence
- Acts 1:6-8 being Jesus' witness throughout the whole world (cf. Matt. 28:19,20)
- Rom. 13:11-14 - being committed to a lifestyle of love instead of selfish sensuality
- 1 Cor. 7:29-31 - keeping a light hold on material possessions (cf. Phil. 3:18-21)

- 1 Pet. 4:7-11 - being prayerful and committed to hospitality and ministry
- 2 Pet. 3:9-13 - sharing Christ with others and pursuing sanctification (cf. 1 Jn. 2:28-3:3)
- 1 Thess. 5:1-11 - being alert and sober, hopeful and loving/building up one another
- 1 Cor. 15:58 - being steadfast and immovable, and abounding in God's work
- Eph. 5:14-21 - being wise, making the most of the opportunity, understanding what God's will is, being filled with the Spirit
- 1 Pet. 1:13 - girding minds for action, being sober in spirit, fixing hope completely on the grace that will be given when Jesus returns

### **The Regathering of Israel & Jewish Revival**

Did you notice in Matt. 24:15-20 that Jesus assumes that the Temple will be rebuilt (vs 15)? He also suggests that the Jews will be in Judea practicing some form of Old Testament observance (vs 16,20). **This is one of many Old and New Testament passages that predict the dispersion of the Jewish nation for their sins – and their future regathering as a precursor to the end of the age.**

- 1. Israel will be dispersed and then regathered as a nation as a precursor to the end of the age and the Messianic kingdom (Deut. 28:58-68; 30:1-6; Ezek. 38:8).**

*Fulfillment: Israel was dispersed in 70 AD and (against all odds) became a nation again in 1948.*

- 2. Jerusalem will be back in the hands of the Jews (Zech. 12,14; Lk. 21:24).**

(Luke 21:24) They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

*Fulfillment: This occurred in 1967 as a result of the 6 Day War.*

- 3. The Jewish temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices resumed by the mid-point of the Tribulation. (Dan. 9:27\*; Matt. 24:15).**

(2 Thess. 2:4) He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

*Fulfillment: not yet*

- 4. The Jews will be regathered while still in an unregenerate state (Ezek. 37:1-14).**

*There are evidently two great movements of the Jews to Christ during the tribulation.*

Some time, probably early in the tribulation, 144,000 Jews come to Christ. God supernaturally protects them and enables them to carry on a fruitful evangelistic ministry (Rev. 7:3-9; 14:3-5,14-16?).

Toward the end of the tribulational period, approximately one-third of the Jewish people evidently realize that Jesus was their Messiah and turn to him (Zech. 12:10-13:9).

**Fulfillment:** *not yet*

## The Rapture

Popular books about end-times have much to say about the rapture—an event where God removes Christians from the Earth to be with him. But the Bible gives us very little information about when the rapture will occur. Here are a few passages that describe what will happen.

**(1 Thess. 4:16,17) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.**

**(1 Cor. 15:50-53) I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. (51) Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--(52) in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (53) For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.**

### What will happen?

*Christ will descend from heaven to catch up all living and dead believers to meet him in the air.* They receive their resurrected bodies at this point. Therefore, some Christians will never experience physical death. Instead, they will be instantly translated like Enoch and Elijah in the Old Testament.

### Why is it called the “Rapture?”

The term “rapture” comes from the Latin verb *raptus*, used in the Latin Vulgate and translated “caught up” in 1 Thess. 4:17.

## When will it occur?

None of the Rapture passages directly speaks about the timing of the Rapture in relation to the Second Advent. Its timing must therefore be inferred from other eschatological passages. The key issue here is how one understands God's commitment to Israel, and (therefore) how one interprets the Old Testament unfulfilled prophecies.

**Covenantalists: Because Covenantalists see the Church replacing Israel, they see the Rapture as the first event of the Second Coming (POST-TRIBULATIONAL VIEW).**

**Dispensationalists: Because Dispensationalists see the Church as a parenthesis in God's working through Israel, they see the Rapture as a distinct event separated by a period of time (PRE- or MID-TRIBULATIONAL VIEWS). If the Dispensational hermeneutic is accepted, there is ample additional support for the Rapture as an event which precedes the Second Coming by a significant period of time.**

## Why do we think the rapture is different from the Second Coming?

Rapture	Second Coming
Believers meet Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:17)	Believers meet Christ on the ground (Zech. 14:4,5)
Believers involved become immortal (1 Cor. 15:51-53)	Believers involved remain mortal (Is. 65:20; Rev. 19:18)
Believers involved go immediately to heaven (1 Thess. 4:17)	Believers involved stay on earth to populate the Millennial Kingdom (Mt. 25:31-34; Zech. 14:9ff)

**Note:** The desire to believe in a pre-tribulational Rapture because it means deliverance from suffering is suspect and unhealthy. The New Testament predicts that *all* committed Christians will be persecuted to some extent (2 Tim. 3:12), and the majority of Christians in the world today are experiencing this. Do you hold this view because you don't want to suffer—or because it makes the most sense? For more information on when the rapture may occur, see the appendix.

## Application:

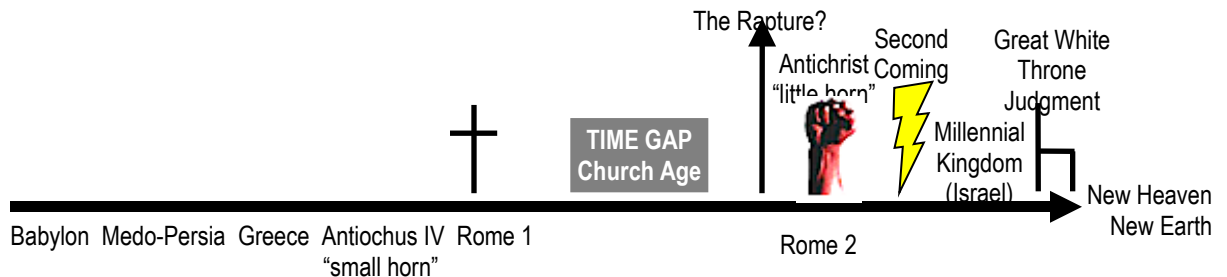
**(1 Thess. 4:13,18) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope . . . (18) Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

- *We should not grieve hopelessly about Christian friends and family who die, because we'll see them again on that day.*

**(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.**

- *We should keep abounding in ministry because this work has eternal impact.*

See the appendix for why we hold to a pretribulational rapture. On our timeline...



## Revelation

Like the book of Daniel, in the book of Revelation, God gives **a series of visions about future events.**

- **Vision 1: The glorified Jesus & his message to the 7 churches (ch. 1-3).**
- **Vision 2: God’s judging & saving activity at the end of the age (ch. 4-16).**
- **Vision 3: God’s judgment on “Babylon” & the victorious return of Jesus to establish God’s kingdom (ch. 17-20).**
- **Vision 4: The “New Jerusalem” (ch. 21-22).**

Even though both books look into the future, they had an important message for their original readers: God has everything under control. They may be difficult to understand, but God promises to bless those who hear and keep what they teach (Rev. 1:3).

**Purpose:** *To strengthen Christians to be faithful witnesses in a hostile world by describing Jesus’ authority over human history.*

We can’t review the entire book, but let’s focus on aspects of the last three visions.

**Vision 2: God’s judging & saving activity at the end of the age (ch. 4-16)**

### Revelation 4 & 5: The Courtroom Scene in Heaven

**Main Theme:** *God on his THRONE.*

The throne (8 times) emphasizes God's authority to rule.

The phenomena surrounding the throne emphasize God's unique majesty.

### **Why does God have the right to rule?**

Reason #1: *God is the only morally perfect Ruler in the universe*

**(Revelation 4:8) "Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.'"**

Reason #2: *God is the Creator & he cares for his creation*

**(Revelation 4:9-11) "...They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.'"**

Reason #3: *God has already paid the ultimate price to save humanity.*

**(Revelation 5:11-12) "...Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders...In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!'..."**

### **Will you embrace God's rule over your own life?**

Have you chosen to give your whole life for his service?

**(1 Corinthians 6:19,20) "... You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."**

### **Revelation 6-16: The Great Tribulation and the Beast**

**(Revelation 7:14) "... These are they who have come out of the great**

**tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”**

**(Matthew 24:21,22) “. . . for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved . . .”**

**Main theme:** *God’s JUDGING & SAVING (redemptive) activity.*

**God’s judging activity:**

- **7 “Seal” Judgments (6:1-17; 8:1)**
- **7 “Trumpet” Judgments (8:2-9:21; 11:15-19)**
- **7 “Bowl” Judgments (15:5-16:21)**

How does God judge?

- *ACTIVE/DIRECT JUDGMENT* - God judges actively to destroy his enemies in order to rescue his creation (e.g. Rev. 6:12-17).
- *PASSIVE/INDIRECT JUDGMENT* - God judges passively (1) to demonstrate the folly of rebellion, & (2) to polarize humanity so that as many as possible will turn to Him (e.g. Rev. 6:1-11).

Most of the Tribulation judgments are God’s passive/indirect judgment

**God’s redemptive activity:**

This is the other reason why so many turn to God during this time...

- The Martyrs (6:9-11).
- The 144,000 (7:4-10).
- The 2 Witnesses (11:3-12).
- The Angel (14:6,7).

**The Beast – Revelation 13:1-18**

In Revelation 13, the beast refers to the Anti-Christ. John provides

us with additional detail on this important figure in the end-times.

- **He will emerge from a revived form of the Roman Empire**

**(Revelation 13:1,2) “...And I saw a *beast* coming out of the sea. He had *ten horns* and seven heads, with *ten crowns on his horns* . . . The beast I saw resembled a *leopard*, but had feet like those of a *bear* and a mouth like that of a *lion* . . .”**

- **He will receive his authority & power from Satan (13:1,2).**
- **He will gain world-wide dominion for a short time (13:3,5,7).**
- **‘Validated’ by miracles (13:3, 14).**
- **Possesses great military power (13:3).**
- **Controls everyone’s economic activity (13:16,17).**
- **He will blaspheme the God of the Bible (13:1, 5, 6).**
- **He may permit religious “freedom”—as long as people vow their ultimate allegiance to him.**
- **He will commit the “abomination of desolation” (2 Thess. 2:4) Recall this from Daniel.**
- **He will persecute & kill many followers of Jesus (13:7-10).**

Discussion:

- How would you be able to tell if the Antichrist was here? Will he be obviously evil?
- Could it be that there will be many appealing things about him?
- Is it possible that at first the Antichrist will seem like a great leader—even the return of Jesus?
- Why would people surrender control of their lives to the Antichrist?
- What will people say about Christians who refuse to follow the Antichrist?

### **Vision 3: The victorious return of Jesus to establish God’s kingdom (17-20)**

#### **Jesus’ return to earth (19:11-16)**

- *World-wide & unmistakable (Matt. 24:26,27,30).*
- *Physical (Acts 1:11; Zech 4:5).*

- *Accompanied by awesome cosmic events (Matt. 24:29,30).*

### **What happens?**

- *He will slay all non-believers when he returns (Zech. 14:12; Rev. 19:18,21)*
- *He will cast the Antichrist and the false prophet into hell (Rev. 19:19,20).*
- *He will rescue all believers who are alive (Matt. 24:13, 22, 31).*

### **Jesus' 1000 Year Reign (20:1-10)**

- **Begins with Satan being bound (20:1-3).**
- **Jesus reigns from Jerusalem with his resurrected followers (20:4-6; Obadiah 1:12-20; Zech. 14:16).** Gentiles come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (Zech. 14:16-21). Jews have a new temple and offer commemorative sacrifices there (Ezek. 40-48).
- **Who lives in this Kingdom?** *Mortal believers who are still alive at the Second Coming enter the Millennial Kingdom. They still die, though after a longer life (Isa. 65:20,21), therefore they have mortal bodies. They are evidently still fallen, as inferred from various judgments and the fact that they die. They have children (Isa. 65:23) and repopulate the earth (inferred from Rev. 20:8).*
- **There will be true social justice & lasting world peace (Isaiah 2:4; 29:19-21).**
- **The curse over nature will be substantially removed (Isaiah 4:2; 11:6-8; 35:1,2).**
- **All inhabitants will celebrate with great joy (Isaiah 25:6-9; Revelation 19:9).**
- **Ends with Satan's release, his rebellion, and his eternal damnation (20:7-10).** This evidently demonstrates that the problem with humans is not environmental, but moral and spiritual. Even in a perfect environment and a perfectly just government, humans still revolt. It is also probably the final piece of evidence for Satan's condemnation.

### **The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)**

#### **Who is judged at the judgment?**

*This judgment is evidently for all unsaved people of all times.*

#### **Why are the people condemned?**

*Their names do not appear in the book of life. That is, they did not respond to God's offer of forgiveness through Christ. Their works reveal that they deserve God's judgment, because they fall short of God's standard of moral perfection.*

### **What is their fate?**

The unsaved dead are then sentenced to the lake of fire (also called "hell," "Gehenna," "the outer darkness," "eternal fire," etc.). This is a figurative description of a literal reality. "The lake of fire" "weeping and gnashing of teeth" and "outer darkness" conveys the anguish of being removed from God's presence and undergoing his wrath.

**(2 Thess. 1:9)** And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power . . .

Hell is a place of eternal, conscious alienation from God and condemnation (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thes. 1:9; Rev. 14:9-11; Jude 1:7). The Bible does not support the idea that the unsaved are eventually annihilated after being punished for a period of time (conditional immortality).

There are evidently degrees of punishment in hell. People will be punished differently according to how much they knew of God's will (see Mark 12:40; Lk. 20:46-48).

### **“The books” and “The book of life”**

- **“The books”** – *contain a record of our deeds in light of God's perfect righteousness (see Romans 3:23).*
- **“The book of life”** – *contains a record of those who are exempt from hell through faith in Jesus (see John 5:24).*

### **Vision 4: The “New Jerusalem” (21, 22)**

**Our culture today: “What matters in life is the journey - not the destination.”**

Discussion: Ask students if they've heard people say this... what do people mean when they emphasize the importance of the journey over the destination? How would you critique this point of view?

This quote reflects our post-modern culture's reluctance to actually land on a truth claim and embrace it. It's more important to be a seeker than to find something. But we would argue that knowing the truth, knowing where our future is ultimately headed, gives our lives meaning and purpose. Knowing we will spend an eternity with God and the people he loves should effect every step of the journey we are on today. In other words...

**The Bible's point of view: "The destination is what makes the journey meaningful!"**

### **Common Misconceptions about Heaven**

- "Everyone will be disembodied."
- "Heaven will be static/boring."
- "There will be no freedom of choice in heaven."
- "Everyone in heaven will be the exactly the same."

### **What will it be like?**

**(Revelation 21:1) "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea."**

Instructors note: "*No longer any sea*"—this is almost certainly figurative. In previous visions, the sea symbolized the nations of the world in perennial conflict with one another (Rev. 13:1; 17:15). In God's eternal kingdom, peace and serenity between its inhabitants will reign.

- *An entirely new (or fully renovated) physical universe.*

**(Revelation 21:2,3) "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and he shall dwell among them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be among them.'"**

- "*A holy city*"—*full of people interacting with one another.*
- "*A bride*"—*the consummation of loving union with God.*
- "*A tabernacle*"—*God's people experiencing God's full presence together.*
- Its essence is *perfect community between God & his*

*people.*

- It will be *completely absent of sin & its results*. There will be no more curse, pain, sadness, death, danger from enemies, or spiritual deception.

## **The Judgment-Seat of Christ (Bema)**

The Judgment Seat of Christ is also difficult to pin down on a timeline. But it will be one of the most significant experiences we ever have in our relationship with Christ.

**(1 Cor. 3:10-15\*\*)** According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. **(11)** For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **(12)** Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **(13)** each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. **(14)** If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. **(15)** If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

**(2 Corinthians 4:17)** For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** *while* we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

### **What is the purpose of this judgment?**

- *This judgment evaluates the SERVICE Christians rendered to Christ in this life.*

Paul makes it clear that Christians could receive no reward, yet still be saved (1 Cor. 3:15).

- *Furthermore, Christ will be perfectly fair in his evaluation.*

He will take into account all the differences in our gifting, opportunities, etc.—and he will evaluate us by what we did with what he has entrusted us (Matt. 25:14-23).

**When will it occur?** *Not clear...*

### **What is the reward?**

- *The satisfaction of seeing the true significance of our work for Christ.*

**(1 Corinthians 3:13) ...each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.**

- *God's praise for faithful service.*

**(1 Corinthians 4:5) Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**

**(Matthew 25:20-23) “And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’” (21) “His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’” (22) “The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.’” (23) “His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”**

- *Roles of rulership in God's eternal kingdom.*

**(Luke 19:17-19) “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.’ (18) And the second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’ (19) And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’”**

**How can we accumulate this reward?**

- *Bring people to Christ.*

**(Daniel 12:3) “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”**

**(1 Thes. 2:19,20) For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? (20) For you are our glory and joy.**

- *Help Christians grow in Christ.*

**(1 Pet. 5:2-4) . . . shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; (3) nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. (4) And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

- *Undergo training to become a more effective servant for Christ.*

**(1 Cor. 9:24-27) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. (25) And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (26) Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; (27) but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.**

**(2 Peter 1:5-7,11) Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; (6) and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; (7) and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love...(11) for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

- *Endure suffering in order to advance Christ's purposes ( Mk. 10:29,30).*

**(Jas. 1:12) Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

- *Minister to the poor and needy.*

**(Luke 14:12-14) And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. (13) "But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, (14) and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."**

- *Generously give money and material resources to advance God's work.*

**(1 Tim 6:18,19) Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, (19) storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."**

**How should looking forward to this judgment affect us?**

- *We should persevere in ministry (2 Cor. 4:17; 5:11; Rom. 8:18).*

**(2 Tim. 4:1, 5, 8) I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom . . . fulfill your ministry . . . (8) in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

- *We should focus on fulfilling God's plan rather than pleasing others.*

**(1 Cor. 4:3-5) But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. (4) For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. (5) Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**

- *We should not waste our Christian life on fleshly pursuits.*

**(1 Cor. 3:10b,15) According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it . . . (15) If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.**

- *We should suspend full judgment on other Christian workers until that time*

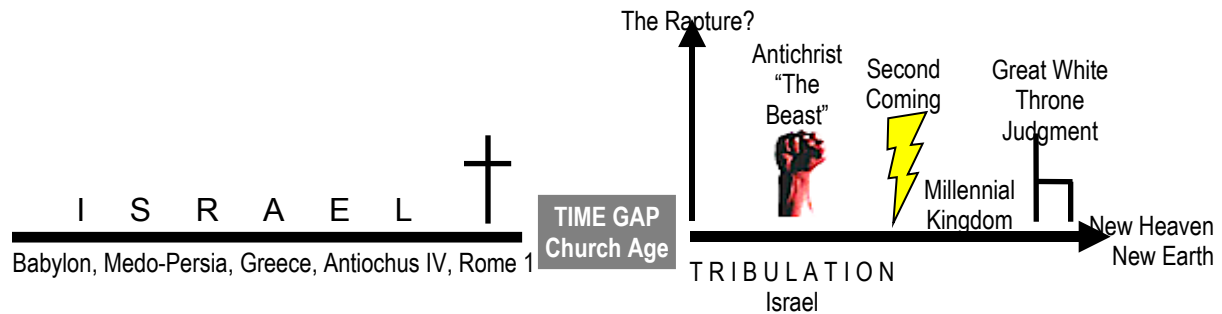
**(Rom. 14:10-12) But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. (11) For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." (12) So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.**

Along with gratitude for what God has given us in Christ, this is the driving

motivation for Christian service. Do you believe that this will happen? Are you focused on this reality?

## Conclusion

Factoring in everything we've covered over the last three weeks, we now have a fairly detailed picture of what to expect during the end-times:



**For Exam, know these events, in this order and be able to give a brief description each one.**

- *Church Age* – the period between the 1st and 2nd comings of Christ.
- *Rapture* – when Jesus comes and takes the church out of this world to be with Him.
- *Tribulation* – the 7 year period in which God returns to work with Israel and is dominated by the Antichrist.
- *Second Coming* – when Jesus physically returns to earth to set up His kingdom.
- *Millennial Kingdom* – the 1000 year reign of Jesus on earth.
- *Great White Throne Judgment* – the judgment of non-believers.
- *New Heavens & New Earth* – the after-life or heaven.

## Memory Verses

**Matthew 24:1-31\*\*** - The Olivet Discourse—Jesus' description of the signs of the end of the age, including the Church Age, Tribulation, and Second Coming.

**1 Corinthians 3:10-15\*\*** - Christ's judgment and reward of Christians.

**Revelation 19:11-21:8\*\*** – the chronology of events from the second coming to the new heavens and new earth.

## Assignment

- **Study for the exam.**

## Appendix: Rapture Views

Christians are divided on when the rapture occurs. Some say it will happen before the tribulation (pre-tribulational view), others say it will happen in the middle of the tribulation (mid-tribulational view), and still others say it will occur after the tribulation (post-tribulational view).

None of the verses that describe this event state directly when it takes place. Opinions on when the rapture occurs are instead based on inferences made by comparing several passages AND one's millennial view. That it will happen is more important than when it happens.

Dispensationalists typically hold to a pre- or mid- tribulational view. Covenantalists usually see the rapture and second coming as one event that occurs after the tribulation.

### The Pre-Tribulational View

1. Contrasts between the Second Advent and the Rapture:
  - a. **Rapture** - Believers meet Christ in the *air* (1 Thess. 4:17)  
**Second Advent** - Believers meet Christ on the *ground* (Zech. 14:4,5).
  - b. **Rapture** - Believers involved become *immortal* (1 Cor. 15:51-53).  
**Second Advent** - Believers involved remain *mortal* (Is. 65:20; Rev. 19:18).
  - c. **Rapture** - Believers involved *go immediately to heaven* (1 Thess. 4:17).  
**Second Advent** - Believers involved *stay on earth* to populate the Millennial Kingdom (Mt. 25:31-34; Zech. 14:9ff).
2. Scriptural account of the Tribulation
  - a. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament depict it as Jewish (Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:15-20; Rev. 4-19).
  - b. Scripture never mentions the church in the Tribulation.
3. The contrast between the "day of Christ" and the "day of the Lord."
  - a. The "day of Christ" is for the church and is looked forward to (1 Cor. 1:8; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6).
  - b. The "day of the Lord" is for Israel and unbelievers and is feared as a time of God's judgment (Is. 13:6,9 Is. 34:8; Ezek. 30:3; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:7-13; 1 Thess. 5:2; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 2:2).
4. The fact that the Church Age is depicted in scripture as a "parenthesis" militates for a pre-tribulational Rapture.
  - a. Lk. 21:24 and Rom. 11:25 both speak of the church as a parenthesis.
  - b. There is a clearly implied "gap" between the 69th and 70th weeks of Dan. 9:26,27.
  - c. 1 Cor. 15:51 describes the Rapture as a "mystery"--unrevealed in the Old Testament or by Christ. Thus, it is probably the concluding event of the "mystery" portion of the Kingdom (Mt. 13)--the Church Age.

5. If the Rapture occurred at the end of Tribulation, there would be no need for the "sheep and goats" judgment (Mt. 24:31-34), yet the passage clearly states that this occurs immediately after the Second Advent and before the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.
6. Intervening events between the Rapture and Second Advent require time:
  - a. There must be enough time for people to get saved, because mortal believers inhabit the Millennial Kingdom (Is. 65:20).
  - b. Rev. 20:4 and Dan. 12:2 imply that there must be enough time for some of the above believers to die.
7. Some passages seem to promise that the church will be delivered from the Tribulation. Rev. 3:10; 1 Thess 1:10; 1 Thess. 5:9 all promise deliverance from "wrath," which, in context, seems to refer to the end times. Compare this to Rev. 6:17, which describes the Tribulational period as the time of God's wrath.

### **The Mid-Tribulational View**

1. The last trumpet in 1 Cor. 15:52 is connected with the trumpet judgements in Rev. 8. A chronology is adduced to show that this means the middle of the Tribulation is intended.
  - a. However, the chronology of Revelations is very uncertain at this point. There is no adequate evidence for basing anything on it. It would seem that the seventh trumpet of Revelation goes to the end of the Tribulation.
  - b. The last trumpet could instead refer to the trumpets that were sounded when Israel would break camp during the Exodus period. The last one was the signal to move (Num. 10:1-6).
2. Mid-Tribulationists assert that only the last 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation is called the "Great Tribulation" (Mt. 24:21). They suggest that this is the only period that stands solely for judgment.

### **The Post-Tribulational View**

1. The word *parousia* ("coming"), which is repeatedly used to refer to the second coming of Christ, has a special meaning in some cases. When a general staged a triumphal entry into a city, the citizens would go out to meet him, and immediately return in company with him and his army and/or captives. This could be the intended meaning of the word when it is used in passages like 1 Thess. 4:15; 1 Cor.15:23.
  - a. On the other hand, *parousia* is also used frequently in the more common sense of "coming" throughout the New Testament. The burden of proof lies with those who feel that it is being used in a technical sense.

2. 2 Thess. 2:1-3 is cited to prove that Paul must have believed in a post-tribulational rapture. "It will not come . . ." is said to refer to "our gathering together to him" (i.e. the Rapture).
  - a. However, the pronoun reference ("it" in vs 3) is referring to "the day of the Lord" (probably the Tribulation), not to the Rapture. Besides, if Paul taught a post-tribulational view of the Rapture, how could the Thessalonians think that it had already occurred? This would mean that they thought the millennium had already begun, whereas they were actually under persecution.
3. The major reason for holding this view is to harmonize with Amillennial eschatology. For more on Amillennialism, see Christian Ministry Unit 1, module 3, week 1.