

THE LAST DAYS

What is the next great event on God's calendar? It is the Second Coming of Christ! It seems very probable He will return in our lifetime. He said, "...in such an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." (Matt.24:44)

PROMISE OF HIS COMING

Acts. 1:11 says: "*Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" Jesus told His disciples to "occupy till I come". In the final chapter of Revelation, He repeats, "*Behold, I come quickly:*" (Rev. 22:7) Yes, Jesus Christ has promised to return - and He will!

EVENTS TO TAKE PLACE AT HIS RETURN

I Thess. 4:15-18 says: "*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*"

I Cor. 15:51-54 says: "*Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*"

G. Campbell Morgan said, "To me, the Second Coming is the perpetual light on the path which makes the present bearable." D. L. Moody said, "I've felt like working three times as hard since I came to understand my Lord is coming again."

1. The trumpet will sound.
2. The Archangel will shout.
3. The Lord will bodily descend.
4. The bodies of the saved will be joined to their soul and spirit.
5. Living Christians will rise to meet the Lord in the air.
6. Both will immediately receive their glorified bodies.
7. The saved will go to heaven with Jesus.

This "Second Coming" of the Lord is divided into two parts:

He is coming for His saints (to go to heaven)
He is coming with his saints (seven years. later - to go to earth)

Our new bodies will be received at His coming for the saints. These glorified bodies (discussed in I Cor. 15) will be like Jesus' body. He was able to walk through a wall without using a door after the resurrection (John 20:26). He ate fish and the disciples recognized Him. He was able to go back and forth from heaven and earth. What a powerful body it will be? Many call this event the Rapture.

Charles Spurgeon once received Andrew Bonar's commentary on Leviticus and asked him to autograph it and paste his picture in it. Bonar sent the book to Spurgeon, writing: "Here's the book with my picture. If you'd been willing to wait a season you could have had a better picture. When I see Christ, I shall be like him."

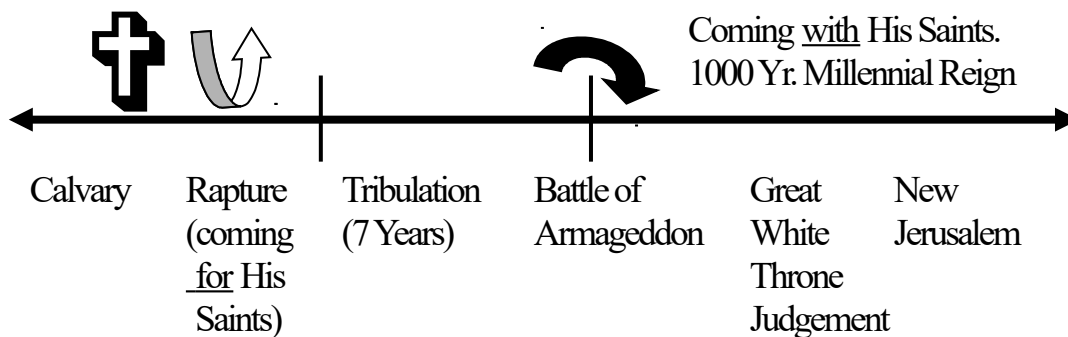
I John 3:2 says: "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*"

BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SECOND COMING

It is referred to as "a thief in the night" (Matt 24:23-24). The Lord's coming will be unexpected by many. It will be like a groom coming for his bride. In the New Testament days, the bride knew approximately when the groom's wedding procession would be at her house, so she had to always be ready. It is like a pregnant woman waiting on her time to deliver her child. "Signs" show she is expecting but no one knows the exact moment the child will be born until it happens!

The Second Coming is called our "blessed hope". It makes our day brighter just thinking about it.

GOD'S TIME TABLE



Though the coming of Christ for the Saints is next on God's calendar, it is not mentioned a lot in Scripture. Most Scriptures that mention the Second Coming are referring to His coming at the end of the tribulation with His Saints. Chapters such as Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are chapters describing the tribulation period before Christ's coming with His Saints. Most of the book of Revelation is detailing the tribulation. It is extremely important to understand this fact. Christians do not need any more signs to take place before Christ returns.

REVELATION

The book of Revelation is possibly the most misunderstood book in the Bible. It breaks into three divisions:

Chapter 1	The things which were (past)
Chapters 2-3	The things which are (present)
Chapters 4-22	The things which are to come (future)

“Revelation” simply means “a revealing”. Revelation reveals Jesus as Judge and coming King. Much of it is given in signs or symbols. The angel signified it to John. When symbolism is used, the words “like” and “as” are used. Chapters 2-3 describe New Testament churches. Chapter 4 describes the “Rapture”.

John describes it in Rev. 4:1-2:

1. A door opened in heaven
2. A voice
3. A trumpet
4. “come up hither”
5. Immediately
6. I was in the Spirit

John is describing I Cor. 15:51-54 and I Thess. 4:15-18! In the remainder of Revelation (Chapters 4-22) the church is not mentioned again! Why? All Christians go to heaven in Rev. 4! The rest of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 describe what Christians will be doing in heaven during the seven-year tribulation. (See also Matthew 22). Chapters 6-19 describe earth activities during the seven-year tribulation.

TRIBULATION

“Tribulation” means, “time of trouble”. It is also called the Wrath of the Lamb, and Jacob's time of trouble. It is God's judgement on earth for sin. Revelation gives people a glimpse of God's hatred for sin and how awful hell will be. Tribulation will be an awful time of death by war, disease, hunger, wild animals, famine, earthquakes and meteorites. There will be hail and fire mingled with blood, horrendous locusts, sea turned to blood, death of fish, darkness, smoke, murders, sorcery, fornication, thefts, grievous sores, scorching of the sun, hailstones weighting 114 pounds.

THE ANTICHRIST

Just as God has His Trinity (The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), the devil will have his trinity in the tribulation (the devil, the antichrist, and the false prophet). Who is this antichrist?

He is called the beast. (Dan. 7:3-7)

He will be a human possessed by the devil himself.

He will be an intellectual genius. (Dan. 8:23)

He will be a great orator - much like a Hitler. (Dan. 11:36)

He will be a wonder at commerce.

(Dan. 11:43; Rev. 13:16-17)

He will be a military fighter. (Rev. 6:2, 13:4)

He will mix religion and politics - much like Constantine. (Rev. 13:8)

He will be great at politics. (Rev. 17:11-12)

II Thess. 2:3-11 calls him “the man of sin”. How could an unknown political figure rise to world power overnight? Alexander the Great was unknown and four years later ruled the world.

What will the antichrist do?

He will have a seven-year peace treaty with Israel. (Dan. 9:27)

He will have a false peace program. (Dan. 8:25)

He will be very deceitful. (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9;

Rev. 13:14)

Halfway through the seven year tribulation the antichrist will set himself up as God and reinstitute Old Testament Jewish sacrifice (Dan. 11:36-37). This is called the abomination of desolation. Many people will be required to get a mark on their forehead or palm showing allegiance in order to trade or purchase food. He will have a P.R. man - the false prophet (Rev. 13:16-18). He will direct worship to the antichrist. The devil will give them so much power that people will be required to worship a statue or image of the beast (antichrist). The statue will seem “alive”. The antichrist will tell the world that he is the long awaited Messiah for which the Jews, Moslems, and the rest of the world have been waiting. He will try to unite all mankind in a one-world monetary system, and a one-world religious (ecumenical) system. In the last days, people will have “itching ears” for false doctrine.

What items is the devil using today to unify Christian and non-Christian churches? He is using modern-version Bibles, “Christian Rock” music, and tongues. Let us lay aside our differences and “worship together”, they say. How can you worship with someone who is not sure the Bible is true? The religion the antichrist will work through to gain power is described in detail in Rev. 17:7-15. Only one city is called the city of seven hills - Rome. This passage is describing the Roman Catholic Church. Nimrod in Babylon began this false religion. It included mother-son worship (which Jeremiah preached against when people worshipped “the queen of heaven”) and idol worship (fornication). History shows this religion mothered many false-works religions and martyred over 50 million Christians.

THE TWO WITNESSES

Since all the saved will be in heaven, God's grace must send a witness - and He will. Two men will preach (prophecy) the first three and half years of the tribulation (Rev. 11:1-7). Because of the similarity of the miracles they do, it is possible that they will be Moses and Elijah. The antichrist will kill them. The hatred will be so great for these two that people will not allow them to be buried. Their bodies will lie in the street. People will celebrate (like Christmas), sending gifts to each other. But after three days their bodies will be internationally televised. As they rise, 144,000 Jewish men will get saved! (See Rev. 14:3,-4; 11:13; 7:4-8) They will become mighty soulwinners preaching the gospel across the world.

ARMAGEDDON

"Armageddon" means, "mount of slaughter". Over two hundred major battles have been fought in the Valley of Megiddo where this battle will take place. Armageddon will take place at the end of the seven-year tribulation. Who is involved? An army of 200,000,000! Rev. 9:16 says: "*And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.*" Kings of the east will also be involved (Rev. 16:12). Why will it take place? Greed and hatred. Surrounding nations will want to cash in on Israel's wealth and Arab nations will want to destroy Israel because of ongoing hatred. Rev. 16:12 says the Euphrates River will dry up, allowing the armies to cross. (See also Isa. 63:1-5; Zech. 12:8-9) Ezek. 38:1- 39:2 describes Russia's forces, too!

What will be the result? Blood of God's enemies will flow to the horses' bridles (Rev. 14:19-20) for 200 miles! Jesus will be the victor (Jude 14-15; Rev. 19:11-16).

He will defend Israel as troops surround her. Afterwards will be the supper of our great God. The fowls will devour all the dead bodies. (Rev. 19:9, 17-18; Ezek. 39:4-22; Matt. 24:28) The USA Today (Aug. 5-7, 1988), in its articles on "Europe in the 1990's Will be a Power" said, "The train is on the track tower, a unified Europe that will become a political economic power after 1992," says the leader of it's number one industrial power. He is talking about the future of the 12-nation European Economic Community that grew out of the 1957 Common Market. "After 1992, barriers between the countries - trade, laws, taxes, currency - end." The Bible talks of a ten-nation alliance. It is getting close!

THE MILLENNIAL

This is when Jesus returns with His Saints to rule and reign on earth for 1,000 years (Isa. 11:6-10; Rev. 20:4-6). Proceeding His reign, the devil will be cast into the bottomless pit. Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4,8). Creation will be restored as it was in the Garden of Eden (Isa. 65:17-25). The Millennial is called the World to Come, Kingdom of Heaven, Kingdom of God, Last Day, Regeneration, Times of Refreshing, Restitution of All Things, and the Day of Christ.

JUDGEMENT

There are two judgements that will take place. The first is the Judgement Seat of Christ

(II Cor. 5), which will include all Christians. Christ will judge works and motives and then reward for each. It will take place in Heaven during the Tribulation. Crowns will be given out and opportunity to lay them at the Lamb's feet. Christians will not be judged for sin or to see if they go to Heaven. That was all settled at salvation.

The second judgement is the Great White Throne Judgement, and will take place after the millennial reign. It will be for all the unsaved (Rev. 20:11-15), and it will determine the degree of punishment in hell the person will receive. Jesus will be the Judge (John 5:22). All the dead bodies will join with their souls (Rev. 20:5; Dan. 7:10-14). No mention of love, atonement, mercy, or grace will be there. It will be too late. The books will be opened: The Bible (John 12:48), The Book of Remembrance (Mal. 3:16; Matt. 12:36) where every word, deed, and motive is recorded, and the Book of Life (Rev. 20:12). The awful end of the unsaved is hard to imagine (Matt. 5:29-30; Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 21:8).

PURGING OF THE EARTH

II Pet. 3:7 says: *“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”* The surface of the earth will then be burned to remove all trace of sin.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

At that time the heavenly city, as described in Rev. 21-22, will descend from Heaven to earth. It will be 1500 miles square and 1500 miles high. That is a cube measuring 1,125,000,000 square miles! The city is now in the preparing stages according to John 14:1-6. God is preparing a place for Christians where there will be no such things as time - only eternity.

APPLICATION

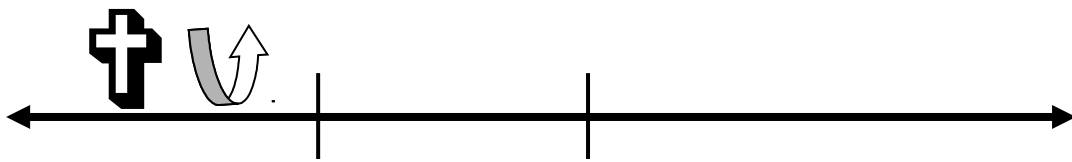
1. Live as if you will see Christ today.
2. Pray for Him to return (“Thy Kingdom come”).
3. Only engage in activities that you would want to be doing when Jesus returns.
4. Carry your burdens and heartaches daily with the Second Coming in mind.

REVIEW THE LAST DAYS - STEP 41

1. Give one Scriptural reference promising Christ's coming _____

2. List the order of the events to take place at Christ's coming for His saints:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
 - g. _____
3. Describe the two parts of Christ's Second Coming:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
4. "Glorified" bodies are found in what chapter? _____
5. Give one Bible illustration of what the Second Coming will be like:

6. Label this timeline:



7. What part of the Second Coming is mentioned most in the Scriptures? For or with His _____ Saints?

8. "Revelation" means: _____
9. When symbolism is used, the words _____ and _____ are used.
10. Which chapter in Revelation describes the Rapture? _____
11. Which chapter in Revelation mentions what Christians will be doing the

tribulation? _____

12. Describe some of the horrors on earth during the tribulation:

13. Who is the antichrist? _____

14. Who is the false prophet? _____

15. When will the antichrist say he is God? _____

16. What is the battle of Armageddon?

17. Describe the Millennial Reign: _____

18. Who will be at each judgement? _____

19. Would there be anything you could change in your life if you knew Christ was returning today? If so, what? _____
