

Pastor Scott L. Harris
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God's Revelation of the Future Selected Scriptures

Introduction

There are many prophecies in both the Old and New Testament that are still to be fulfilled. These are important for the believer for two reasons. First, prophecy is one of the great evidences that God has spoken. He states in Isaiah 46:9-10, "*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, ¹⁰ 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.' "*

The second is that prophecy is a strong motivator to live in godliness in the present. That is why the apostle Peter summed up the events that will occur in the future and then concluded, "*Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless*" (2 Peter 3:14). It encourages believers in the present by giving them a confident assurance about what will occur in the future. God's promises are our reason for hope.

This is a follow up of last week's message, and before I begin to give a succinct explanation of what we believe the Bible reveals will happen in the future, I want to quickly repeat some cautions I gave last week about eschatology - the study of last things.

First, because there are different ways that people approach the Bible to develop their theology, there are very divergent beliefs concerning what will happen in the future. We follow a grammatical - historical approach that believes that the Bible is God's Word. We believe we can understand God's message to us by examining the Scriptures according to the meaning of the language used set in its historical context. Many people who profess faith in Jesus Christ do not do this and instead try to understand the Bible as allegorical or symbolic which results in a lot of speculation and even some interpretations that are contradictory to what the text actually states. When it is remembered that some professing Christians do not even believe the Bible actually comes from God, you get even more strange interpretations that have little to do with what the Bible actually says. This is particularly true in the area of prophecies about the future.

Second, even if all Christians did properly study the Bible according to its grammatical meaning and historical context there would still be some diversity in interpretation because the details of prophecy can seem vague because they speak of things that have not happened or are very unusual. That leaves a lot of room for speculation, and because theologians seem to have this quest to put everything into neat little boxes of belief, some things get crammed into places they do not really fit. Add to this those who are constantly trying to fit current events into prophecy, or perhaps it is prophecy into current events, there can be a lot of things said about what will happen in the future that are simply not true or cannot be known. One of my seminary professors well said that if you ever lose the tension in your eschatology, then your spring is broken. The point being that there are too many things that are unknown to be able to fit everything into any man made system and properly answer every question.

Personally, I advocate a lot of humility in this area of theology because I believe we have a similar problem the first disciples of Jesus had. Not all prophecies are clear in foresight, but even when they are clear, it is difficult to know how they all fit together. For example, there are several prophecies such as Isaiah 53 that foretold that the Messiah would come as a suffering servant to redeem God's people from their sin. Jesus plainly told His disciples that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer there, be put to death and

rise again on the third day (Matthew 16:21). Yet, the disciples were confused and scared when Jesus was crucified, and they could not comprehend how this fit with the prophecies of the Messiah being a conquering king (Daniel 7). I think the same is true for us as we study the prophecies about the future. There are certain things that are very clear, but we do not necessarily know how all the pieces fit together.

My purpose this morning is to give an overview of Biblical prophecies of the future according to the grammatical-historical method of interpretation and dispensational theological perspective. I will indicate when something has less clarity than desired, otherwise I will simply be pointing to what Scripture states. I have a lot of Bible references which will be included in the print and posted versions of my notes, so check that out on our website for your own further personal study. In all cases, we should be humble and gracious in presenting our perspectives since the goal is to be accurate to the Scriptures and not dogmatic about man made theologies.

The Previous Dispensations

Theologians that use the grammatical - historical method of interpretation of the Bible divide human history into what are called dispensations. God did not reveal all truth at one time. His revelation has come in dispensations which are distinguishable administrations in which God assigns mankind, or certain people, responsibilities in carrying out His program for the world and for which they are accountable to Him. Paul specifically mentioned three dispensations or administrations in his epistles - past (Colossians 1:25-26), present (Ephesians 3:2) and future (Ephesians 1:10).

There are seven generally recognized dispensations. The first is the dispensation of *Innocence* in which the only commands were to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, have dominion over the earth, and tend the garden being allowed to eat any fruit except that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The *Adamic* dispensation began with Adam's fall into sin and the curses that followed including living by the sweat of his brow and the institution of animal sacrifices in order to approach God. The *Noahic* dispensation began at the end of the great flood and added dominion over the animals, the allowance of eating meat, and the institution of capital punishment for the murder of men. The next dispensation came when God made a covenant with *Abraham* and his descendants Isaac and Jacob. A specific family was chosen to be a blessing to all people by representing and proclaiming God to the rest of mankind. The *Mosaic* dispensation further refined this with specific laws concerning the nation of Israel and how they were to live as a people separated unto God and with laws of sacrifice to worship God. The present dispensation is that of *Grace* and is for all people. It was instituted with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the church. Man's relationship with God is now defined by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the penalty of sin on their behalf. The Holy Spirit now indwells the believer and guides him into godliness. The *Millennial* dispensation is still future and will begin when Messiah begins His reign from Jerusalem.

The Times of the Gentiles & The Church Age

It is important at this point to emphasize that the coming of a new dispensation may modify the previous dispensation but it did not end it. In other words, God adds new commands and modifies some of the older commandments He gives to man, but some of those older commands continue on without modification. For example, man is still to have dominion over the earth (Adamic) and capital punishment is still the penalty for murder (Noahic). The Mosaic dispensation has been modified by Grace, but aspects of it are still in effect. Specifically, God will keep His covenants with Abraham and the nation of Israel for they remain His chosen people. The Old Testament prophecies concerning the nation will be fulfilled in their entirety.

Within the Mosaic dispensation are several distinct periods of time. There is the period of the Wilderness Wanderings, the Judges, the United Kingdom, The Divided Kingdom, the Captivity, and the

Second Temple period which lasted until A.D. 70 when it was destroyed by the Roman army thus ending the Mosaic sacrifices. Daniel 9:24-27 is a specific prophecy concerning the nation of Israel that begins during the Mosaic dispensation and continues through the end of the dispensation of Grace.

That passage says, *“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy [place.]”*²⁵ *“So you are to know and discern [that] from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince [there will be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”*²⁶ *“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end [will come] with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”*

It appears the decree referred to here occurred on Nisan 1 (March 5) 444 B.C. when Persian King Artaxerxes gave the edict that the walls of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt (Nehemiah 2:1-8). There is debate about the timing of the end of the sixty-two weeks. Harold Hoehner calculated it to be at the Triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Nisan 10 (March 30) A.D. 33, with the Messiah being cut off when He was crucified on Nisan 14 (March 3).

In Luke 21 Jesus revealed to His disciples what would happen in the near future including the destruction of the temple (Luke 21:6) and Jerusalem saying in verse 24, *“and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”* That occurred in A.D. 70 when Roman General Titus conquered Jerusalem and it continues to the present. Even though the nation of Israel was reestablished in 1948 and it won Jerusalem by battle in 1967, that city is still oppressed by Gentiles. International pressure and fear of more war keep the Jews from controlling Jerusalem otherwise you can be sure the Islamic Dome of the Rock would be gone and a new Jewish Temple would be built. The *“Times of the Gentiles”* and the *“Church age”* and dispensation of Grace run concurrently, though they are not the same things.

Many theologians like to speculate about when the present church age will end and are constantly trying to fit prophecy into current events. While such speculation can be interesting, it is the wrong emphasis. Just before Jesus ascended back to heaven He made it clear to the disciples what should be the proper focus of our lives. Acts 1:6-8 records that the disciples asked, *“Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”* They were referring to the promised reign of the Messiah upon David’s throne in Jerusalem (Isaiah 9:6-7, Jeremiah 23:5,6; Ezekiel 37:24-27; Daniel 7:27, etc.). Jesus’ answer may have shocked them, but it directed them back to the proper purpose of their lives and our own. Jesus said, *“It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;⁸ but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

Jesus makes no correction to their expectation, but neither does He answer their question. He could have answered, “no, not yet,” or “no” with an explanation of when that would happen, but instead he tells them the times and epochs were God’s concern and not theirs. Time, (χρόνος / chronos), is a general reference to either the course or span of time as in “chronology,” the sequencing of events in time, and “chronometer,” the measuring of the span of time. “Epochs” or “seasons,” (καῖρος / kairos), refers to a period encompassing or characterized by related events. Hence the season of Summer is warm and the “Victorian Era” refers to events and characteristics of English society during the reign of Queen Victoria. These ideas are joined together in Acts 1:7 showing that God has by His own authority fixed when the events of the future will take place, what will be the characteristics of future eras, and how long those eras will last. The disciples were to leave those things in God’s hands and keep their focus on the priority at hand of being Jesus’ witnesses to the world. The same is true for us.

There are some general things that can be known about the future, but very few of the specifics. The secret things belong to God just as they always have (Deuteronomy 29:29). Proverbs 25:2 tells us that *“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.”* So while it is legitimate to try figure things out, if that is being done to the neglect of the priorities that God has already given, then it is wrong. (See: *Commission and Ascension - 9/4/05*)

With that in mind, let us now continue on to mark out what is known about future events.

The Rapture

While there are plenty of signs described in the Scriptures about the end of the present age, there are no Biblical markers about how much longer the present church age will last. Paul’s own expectation in 1 Thessalonians 4 was that he and many of those to whom He was writing would be alive at Jesus’ return. Paul was seeking to comfort the Thessalonian believers concerning some among them that had died whom they feared would therefore miss the Lord’s return. Paul told them starting in verse 15, *“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of [the] archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words”* (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

This event is referred to as the “rapture.” This comes from the Latin word “*rapers*” which was used to translate ὁρπάζω / harpadzo in verse 17 meaning “caught up.” A careful comparison of the various prophecies of the Lord’s return shows that it encompasses at least two events. The first of which includes taking His followers to be with Him in heaven.

There are various ideas about when the rapture will occur and all of them have speculative elements. We teach what is called a “pre-tribulational” position. We believe that the rapture will happen prior to the period of time referred to as the Tribulation, Jacob’s troubles (Jeremiah 30:3-7) or Daniel’s 70th week (Daniel 9:24-27) for two primary reasons.

First, the New Testament is filled with admonishments to be ready and alert for the Lord’s return (Luke 12:39-40 & also Matthew 24:44; 25:1-13) for He is near and at hand (1 Peter 1:13 James 5:8,9), so we should have an eager anticipation of His coming (Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; Hebrews 9:28) keeping in mind that He said He is *“coming quickly”* (Revelation 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 12 & 20) and would return unexpectedly *“like a thief”* (Revelation 3:3; 16:15). This is referred to as the doctrine of imminent return. Jesus can return for His church at anytime for though other prophecies could be fulfilled before that blessed event, none must be fulfilled prior to it.

Second, Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 that Jesus delivers Christians from the wrath to come and added in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 that Christians are not destined for wrath but for obtaining salvation. (This is the wrath of God to come, not the troubles caused by evil people against believers. Other passages make it clear that Christians will suffer that kind of persecution in this life - see Matthew 5:10-12, John 16:33, 1 Peter, 2 Timothy 3:12) In addition, Revelation 3:10 states that the church at Philadelphia would be kept from the *“hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”* And finally, the 70th week of Daniel 9 concerns the nation of Israel and not the church. So there does not seem to be any reason for the church to be present and there are no passages that definitely put the church in the Tribulation period.

Now before I describe the Tribulation period let me add that the timing of the rapture is an area where greater grace should be shown to those with different views. My own study over the years has increased my conviction that the rapture will occur first and that I the official position of this church. I will be explaining details of that when we get into our studies of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. However, I have also become much stronger in the position that the emphasis in Scripture is the eager expectation of the

Lord's return. I have met plenty of people, including prophecy conference speakers, that say that they hold to a pre-tribulation position, yet there was little or nothing to indicate they had an eager expectation of the Lord's return. They were too busy looking for signs of the coming of anti-Christ. At the same time, I have met those that hold to a theological position in which they would be expected to be looking for the anti-Christ, but instead they have an eager expectation of the Lord's return and are motivated by it to holiness. The latter are in a much better position than the former because they are following the priorities the Lord set in Acts 1:7-8.

The Tribulation Period

Daniel 9:27 distinguishes the seven years of the last week of the seventy weeks of years from the rest of the time periods of his prophecy - the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks. It is a period of tribulation, wrath and purging of Israel (Zephaniah 1:15; 3:12-20; Joel 2 & 3; Zechariah 12-14). Some of it is caused by man's sin against one another (Revelation 6:1-8) and all of what occurs against unbelievers is God's wrath in judgment upon them (Revelation 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:7,10, 19; 15:1,7; 16:1, 7, 19; 18:8; 19:2, 11, 15, 20:12,13).

Daniel 9:27 records the angel Gabriel saying, "*And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations [will come] one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.*"

This seven year period begins with a covenant made by the leader of what will be a revived Roman empire (the prince who is to come - vs. 26) with the nation of Israel. This man will turn out to be the anti-Christ who is described in detail in Daniel 7:19-27; 8:9-14, 23-26; 11:36-45. The judgments begin with the breaking of the seals which result in war (Revelation 6:3-4), famine (Revelation 6:5-6) and death from the sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts killing 1/4 of the earth's population (Revelation 7-8). Many, if not most, of those who become believers during this time will become martyrs (Revelation 6:9-11). The second half of this period "*will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall*" (Matthew 24:21).

The second half begins with the Abomination of Desolation described in Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15 in which the anti-Christ stops the sacrifices that had resumed in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and desecrates it. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 describes this saying of him that he "*exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*" This is the ultimate blasphemy.

There are signs in the heavens with the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12-17) with the Sun being darkened, the moon becoming like blood and stars falling from the sky. These may correspond with the prophecies of Matthew 24 and Joel 2 that follow the Abomination of Desolation.

God's wrath proceeds with the Trumpet judgments in which 1/3 of all vegetation and 1/3 of sea life will be destroyed (Revelation 8:1-9). One third of all fresh water will become wormwood resulting in many men dying, and 1/3 of the Sun, moon and stars will be affected so that they will be darkened (Revelation 8:10-13). Then strange creatures with bodies like locusts, faces like a man, hair like a woman, teeth like a lion and tails like scorpions will be released from the bottomless pit, and for five months they will torment but not kill all men that do not have the seal of God on their forehead (Revelation 8:1-11). This is followed by an army of two hundred million (200,000,000) which is released and it kills 1/3 of mankind, yet those surviving do not repent of their false worship (Revelation 9:13-21).

During this time there will be 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each tribe, that will be sealed by God as His bond-servants (Revelation 7:3-8; 14:1-5). (None of them are from the Jehovah's Witnesses cult). There will also be two witnesses of God that will prophesy for 1,260 days (3 ½ years). No one can harm them during this time, but they will be killed at the end of it, then rise from the dead 3 ½ days later and be taken to heaven before a watching world (Revelation 11:1-13).

There is an intense persecution of the Jews (Revelation 12:13-17) which is part of God's purging of His people. The bowl or vial judgments begin which are worse than what had occurred before. Those who take the mark of the beast, which becomes required in order to conduct business, will be struck with loathsome and malignant sores (Revelation 13:17; 16:2). The sea will be turned to blood and everything in it will die and then all rivers and springs will also become blood (Revelation 16:3-4). The Sun will be made to scorch men with fierce heat which will then be followed by a darkness that causes pain, but men will still blaspheme God in response (Revelation 16:8-11). Then the way will be prepared for the kings of the East and the armies of the world to gather at a place in Israel called Armageddon for the war of the great day of God (Revelation 16:13-16). Zechariah 13 & 14 indicates that Israel will be conquered and Jerusalem captured with about 2/3 of the people being killed. It is at this point that God will intervene with the seventh bowl of wrath. There will be lighting, thunder and a great earthquake that will split Jerusalem into three parts, cause the cities of the nations to fall, every island to disappear and the mountains to fall. There will also be hailstones of about 100 pounds weight for which men will continue to blaspheme God (Revelation 16:17-21).

While all of these things are happening on earth, there are also events occurring in heaven including the judgment seat of Christ in which there is no condemnation (John 5:24; Romans 8:1), but rather the works of believers will be judged to determine the proper reward (Romans 2:5; 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). There will also be the marriage of the Lamb which is a metaphor for believers coming into final union with Christ (Revelation 19:7-9).

The Second Coming

After the marriage of the Lamb, the Lord returns to the earth with His heavenly armies. He will come visibly on the clouds of heaven so that every eye will see Him (Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7) and His feet will touch down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:3) from where He departed for heaven (Acts 1:9-12). He will fight against the nations that had gathered and destroy them (Isaiah 66:15-17, 24; Daniel 2:44; Joel 3:1-2, 9-15; Zechariah 14:1-3; Revelation 19:11-21). His angels will gather the wicked for judgment and the righteous for rewards (Matthew 13:38-41; 25:31-46), and the remnant of the Jews will mourn and repent and will be saved (Isaiah 59:20-21; Joel 3:16-21; Zechariah 12:10f, Romans 11:25-27). The anti-Christ, the beast, and the false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

The Millennium

The Lord will then establish His kingdom and rule from David's throne in Jerusalem in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-13). Nearly all of the Old Testament prophets spoke about Israel being chastised and then having a permanent restoration to the land accompanied by prosperity. For example, Joel 2:18 says, *"And it will come about in that day That the mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the Lord, To water the valley of Shittim,"* and that *"Judah will be inhabited forever, And Jerusalem for all generations"* (vs. 20), *"for the LORD dwells in Zion"* (vs. 21). Amos 9:13-15 describes it, *"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will drip sweet wine, And all the hills will be dissolved."*¹⁴ *"Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live [in them], They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit."*¹⁵ *"I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them," Says the Lord your God.*

Many of these prophecies also include the detail that the Messiah will rule from there (Isaiah 65-66; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 37:24-28; Daniel 7:9-14; Joel 2:18-3:21; Micah 4; Zephaniah 3:12-20; Zechariah 12-14). For example, Daniel 7:13-14 states, *"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented*

before Him. ¹⁴ “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and [men of every] language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”

Jesus Himself said that He would return and sit on His glorious throne with the apostles sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). It is the apostle John in Revelation 20 that tells that the length of this reign will be 1,000 years, a millennium, using that term six times in just seven verses. Satan would be bound for one thousand years (vs. 2) and would not be able to deceive the nations until the thousand years were completed (vs. 3). The tribulation martyrs would reign with Christ for a thousand years (vs. 4). The rest of the dead would not come back to life until the thousand years were ended (vs. 5). Those who were part of the first resurrection were blessed and would reign with Christ for a thousand years (vs. 6). When the thousand years ended Satan would be released (vs. 7). Those who deny the millennial reign of Christ have to do some incredible interpretive gymnastics to explain away the plain meaning of Revelation 20, but then they are also the same ones that deny all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the future of the nation of Israel. That is a serious error because it denies the faithfulness of God to keep His promises.

At the end of the Millennium, Satan is released and he quickly deceives the nations and brings about a rebellion (Revelation 20:7-8). Man's problem is internal, not external. Though the Millennial reign of Christ is unbelievably prosperous with a perfect government, man's rebellious heart will reject that to join an effort to overthrow authority and be autonomous. The rebels surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city (Jerusalem), but God destroys them with fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9).

Final Judgment

The destruction of this final rebellion brings about the final judgment. First, the devil is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:9). Then the dead will be brought before the Lord on His great white throne where they are judged according to two books. The first book contains all the deeds of their life. This will be a book of condemnation for even man's righteous deeds are filthy before our holy God (Isaiah 64:6). The second book is the book of life. Anyone whose name is not in the book of life will be thrown in the lake of fire which is the second death (Revelation 20:11-15). Death and Hades will also be thrown into the lake of fire.

Eternity

Peter tells us that heavens and earth will pass away with a roar and be destroyed by intense heat in which the very elements will melt (2 Peter 3:10-12). This may happen at the time of the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11). This prepares the way for the creation of a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). Revelation 21 & 22 describe it and the new Jerusalem in incredible terms. Righteous man will dwell with God and there will no longer be any mourning, crying, pain or death (Revelation 21:3-4).

The New Jerusalem will be huge, about 1,500 miles in length, width and height. That is roughly the size of the United States west of the Mississippi river and 1,500 miles high. It will appear as made of crystal-clear jasper with foundations adorned with every kind of precious stone (Revelation 21:11-20). There will be three gates on each side with each one made from a single pearl and the streets will be made of gold that is transparent like glass (Revelation 21:12-13, 21). But the most amazing thing will be that there will be no need for the Sun, moon or a lamp because the glory of God will illumine it (Revelation 21:23).

Coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb will be a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, running down the middle of the street, and the tree of life will be on either side of the river bearing its twelve different fruits in their season (Revelation 22:1-2). There is no longer any curse and only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be there. No wonder John concluded this book, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

Conclusions

There are only two questions left this morning. The first, *“is your name written in the Lamb’s book of life.”* The invitation is open for it to be written there. It is simply a matter of turning from your sin and self-righteousness to place your faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and receive the forgiveness He offers to His followers.

The second question comes from 2 Peter 3. After describing the destruction of the current heavens and earth in preparation for the new heaven and earth Peter asks, *“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God?”* How you answer that question and live out its truth will demonstrate what you really believe.

Sermon Notes

GOD'S REVELATION OF THE FUTURE - Selected Scriptures

INTRODUCTION

Importance of Prophecy

Cautions

The Previous Dispensations

Dispensation = a distinguishable administration in which God assigns mankind or certain people responsibilities in carrying out God's program for the world and for which they are accountable to Him

The dispensations include: Innocence; Adamic; Noahic; Abrahamic, _____, Grace & _____

The Times of the Gentiles & The Church Age

A new dispensation may modify the previous dispensation, but it did not end it.

Daniel 9:24-27

Acts 1:6-8 Times & epochs

The Rapture - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

From "*rapers*" the Latin translation of ἄρπάζω / harpadzo meaning to being "caught up"

Imminent Return

Believers & wrath

The Tribulation Period

A focus on Israel

Daniel 9:27 - its beginning

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Its Basis

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Eternity

The present heavens & earth

The new heavens and earth

The New Jerusalem

Those who will be there

KIDS KORNER – Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. Young Children – draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. Older Children – Do one or more of the following: 1) Count how many times judgment is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about God's judgments and how you can avoid His condemnation.

THINK ABOUT IT – Questions to consider in understanding the sermon and its application. Why is study of prophecy of future events important? Why are there so many different ideas about what will happen in the future? Why is the method of Bible interpretation critical to proper understanding of prophecy? Why is humility important when studying eschatology? What is a dispensation? What were the previous dispensations? What is the present one? What is still to come? Study Daniel 9:24-27. What are the seventy weeks? When did they start? When was Messiah cut off? What marks the beginning of the 70th week? Read Acts 1:6-8. What did the disciples want to know? What did Jesus tell them? How does that apply to us? What is the Rapture? What is the doctrine of imminence? From what wrath is the church delivered? What are the strongest arguments for the pre, mid or post tribulational positions? What is more important than the timing of the Rapture? What judgment occurs with the breaking of each seal in Revelation 6? What is the Abomination of Desolation and when does it occur? What happens with each Trumpet judgment? Who are the 144,000 in Revelation 7? Who are the two witnesses in Revelation 11? What happens in each bowl / vial judgment? What distinguishes the Lord's second coming from the Rapture? What is the Millennium and why is it important? What occurs during it? What will Israel be like during that period? What happens at the end of it? What is basis of the final judgment of the Great White Throne in Revelation 20. Who / what is cast into the Lake of Fire? What happens to the present heavens and earth? What will the new heavens and earth be like? What will the new Jerusalem be like? Will you spend eternity in heaven? If so, on what basis? If not, where will you spend eternity? What do you need to do to change your eternal destiny?

Sermon Notes

GOD'S REVELATION OF THE FUTURE - Selected Scriptures

INTRODUCTION

Prophecy is one of the great evidences that it is _____ that has spoken - Isaiah 46:9-10

Prophecy of the future is a strong motivator to living in _____ in the present - 2 Peter 3:14

Caution 1: Wrong approaches to the Bible develop wrong _____

Caution 2: Even with correct hermeneutics there will still be _____ because not everything is known

We need to be _____ in eschatology because we don't know how all the pieces fit together

The Previous Dispensations

Dispensation = a distinguishable administration in which God assigns mankind or certain people

_____ in carrying out God's program for the world and for which they are accountable to Him

The dispensations include: _____; Adamic; Noahic; Abrahamic, _____, Grace & _____

The Times of the Gentiles & The Church Age

The coming of a new dispensation may _____ the previous dispensation but it did not end it.

Within the Mosaic Dispensation are the periods of the Wilderness Wanderings, the _____, the United Kingdom, The Divided Kingdom, the _____, and the Second Temple period

Daniel 9:24-27 - The decree of Artaxerxes on March 5 _____ B.C. The 62 weeks conclude March 30 A.D. _____

Jerusalem has been "*trampled underfoot by the _____*" since A.D. 70. This is the *Times of the _____*

The times and epochs were _____ concern and not theirs - Acts 1:6-8. Keep the right focus & _____

We know some _____ things about the future, but few specifics. Deuteronomy 29:29

The Rapture - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

From the Latin word "*rapers*" referring to being "_____ " to be with the Lord

There are varying ideas about the _____ of this event. We believe it to be _____ the Tribulation period

We are to be ready & _____ for the Lord's return for He is near & at hand. We should have an _____ anticipation of His coming keeping in mind that He is "*coming _____*" "*like a thief.*"

Believers are not destined for the _____ to come but are delivered from it, kept from the hour of _____

The Scriptural emphasis is _____ anticipation of the Lord's return and not exact timing

The Tribulation Period

A seven year period of tribulation, wrath and _____ of Israel (Zeph. 1:15; 3:12-20; Joel 2 & 3; Zech. 12-14).

This period begins with a _____ made by anti-Christ with the nation of Israel - Daniel 9:27

The seal judgments include _____, famine and the death of _____ of the earth's population

The Abomination of Desolation occurs at the _____ with the Anti-Christ proclaiming himself _____

The sixth seal judgment seems to coordinate Matthew 24 and come _____ the Abomination of Desolation

The Trumpet judgments include: _____ of all vegetation & _____ of sea life destroyed. _____ of fresh water becomes wormwood, & _____ of the Sun, moon & stars affected so that they are partially darkened, strange creatures that torment men for _____ months, and a 200,000,000 army that kill _____ of mankind.

There are 12,000 _____ from each tribe (144,000 total) that God seals as His bond servants.

There are two witness that cannot be killed for 3 ½ years, but then are killed & _____ 3 ½ days later
The bowl judgments include: malignant _____ on those who have the mark of the beast, the _____ becoming
blood and everything in it dying, the rivers and springs becoming _____, The Sun scorching men with
intense heat, _____ that cause pain, and the armies of the world gathering at Armageddon.

Israel is conquered and Jerusalem captured with about _____ of the people being killed.

The 7th bowl brings _____, thunder, an _____ that splits Jerusalem 3 ways, causes the cities of the
nations to fall, the _____ to disappear and mountains to fall, and hailstones of _____.

In Heaven, the works of believers are judged for _____ and the Marriage of the _____ takes place.

The Second Coming

The Lord _____ returns with His heavenly armies. _____ eye will see Him.

He _____ the armies that had gathered to fight Him and _____ the remnant of the Jews

His angels gather the wicked for _____ & the righteous for their _____.

The anti-Christ (the Beast) and the false prophet are thrown into the _____

The Millennium

The Lord will establish His kingdom and rule from _____ in Jerusalem (Daniel 7:13 & 14, etc.)

Israel is permanently restored to the _____ and is prosperous (Joel 2:18; Amos 3:13-15)

Jesus reigns with His disciples sitting on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of _____ (Matthew 19:28)

Revelation 20 specifically mentions a _____ year period six times: Satan is _____ for a thousand years;

The tribulation martyrs reign with _____ for 1,000 years; the rest remain dead for 1,000 years. Those who
are part of the first resurrection reign with _____ for 1,000 years. _____ is released after 1,000 years

Those that deny the millennium usually also deny the prophecies concerning the future of _____

Satan's release results in the _____ of the nations and a worldwide _____

The rebels surround the camp of the saints & the Jerusalem, but _____ destroys them with fire from heaven

Final Judgment

The _____ is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone

God judges the dead according to their _____ - which condemns them. Those not written in the book of
_____ are cast into the Lake of Fire - along with death and Hades

Eternity

The present heavens and earth are destroyed by intense heat that melts the _____ - 2 Peter 3:10-12

A _____ heaven, earth and Jerusalem are created.

Righteous man will dwell with _____ and there will no longer be any mourning, crying, pain or _____

The New Jerusalem will be about _____ long, wide and high. It will be made of crystal-clear jasper with
foundations adorned with every kind of precious stone. Twelve gates made from one _____ each. Streets of
_____ that is transparent like glass. No Sun, moon or lamps - the _____ of God illumines it.

A river of the water of _____ flows from God's throne, the tree of _____ bearing its 12 fruits in their season

There is no longer any _____ and only those written in the Lamb's book of _____ will be there.