

THE ORDER OF PROPHETIC EVENTS

CHAPTER ONE

There is one element that sets the Bible apart from all other books and that is, the Bible contains true and accurate prophecy. Most of the Bible, at the time of writing, was prophecy, and even today many of these prophecies are yet to be fulfilled. Yes, there are many, many prophesied events that will take place sometime in the future. Most of these prophetic events will affect every living soul on the face of the earth.

What assurance do we have that these future prophecies are reliable? First of all, every single prophetic event of the past has been literally fulfilled, exactly as the Bible said it would be. Therefore we can look forward with the same certainty of a literal fulfillment of the prophecies in the future.

The reason for this series of messages is to place the major prophetic events in the order in which they will be fulfilled. We would like to call to your attention some of the major events that will take place before earth's history comes to a close. Most Christians are agreed as to what most of the events are; however, there is a vast difference of opinion as to the order in which these events will occur. It is our prayer, as we send these lessons forth, that they will help clear up some of the confusion and misunderstanding that surrounds much of unfulfilled prophecy.

God has a plan and a program that is running on course and on time. Man, with all of his ingenuity, will not alter God's program in any way. Man will not delay God's program, not even for one second.

In this lesson we are going to give a brief outline of the events that will transpire between now and the Kingdom Age. We will be giving these events in the order in which they will occur; then we will discuss each of these events in detail in future lessons.

The first of these future, prophetic, events is an "undated" event and may occur at any moment. This prophetic event is called by different names in the Bible. It is called "the blessed hope," the "purifying hope," and the "comforting hope." It has been called the "translation of the Church." Many refer to this event as "the Second Coming" but it is better known as the "Rapture." The time of this event is known only to God. It is an undated event, and therefore may take place at any moment. This prophetic event is recorded in detail in I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

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 Thessalonians 4:13-18)**

Prophetic event number two follows prophetic event number one immediately, and is also known by different names in the Bible. It is called “The time of Jacob’s trouble,” “The day of the Lord,” and “The day of vengeance of our God.” It is better known by the Bible term, “The Great Tribulation.”

Prophetic event number two will end with prophetic event number three, the battle of Armageddon. Keep in mind the order of these prophecies. (1) The Rapture of the Church. (2) The Tribulation. (3) The battle of Armageddon. The battle of Armageddon will start with the battle between the Antichrist and the kings of the North and the Kings of the South, and will end at the Second Coming of the Lord.

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.” (Daniel 11:40)

The battle of Armageddon will be a time when all nations of the world will be gathered for battle in the middle East, and will be defeated when they gather to invade the land of Palestine, and attack the city of Jerusalem. The battle of Armageddon is described in many passages of Scripture, but most specifically in Revelation, chapters 6 through 19. This battle will end when the Lord Jesus Christ ascends from Heaven with the saints and puts an end to man’s madness.

Prophetic event number four is the public revelation of Jesus Christ. This event is to be distinguished from the translation of the Believers, or Rapture. At the Rapture we meet the Lord in the air. At the public revelation, the literal second coming, the Lord comes all the way to earth, and plants His feet on the Mount of Olives. This prophetic event is recorded in detail in both the Old and New Testament, but specifically in Revelation chapter 19, verses 11 through 21, and Zechariah, chapter 14.

Immediately following prophetic event number four is prophetic event number five, the establishing of the Millennium Kingdom upon the earth. After the battle of Armageddon has been brought to an abrupt end, Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit. It will be at this time that the Lord will set up His Kingdom of righteousness upon the earth, for which the saints have been praying for centuries. This is actually the answer to the prayer of Matthew, chapter 6, verse 10, which says: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.” The fulfillment of this prophetic event will see Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords, and King of kings, sitting upon the throne, and all nations will be subject unto the King. It will be a time of peace and prosperity. There will be no more war. Every realm of creation, including the animal creation, will be at peace.

There will be no more poverty. Sickness will be unknown. There will be no more discrimination, and the gospel will be preached to all men everywhere. All of the resources of the earth will be used for the purpose for which God created them; to be a

blessing for mankind. This prophecy has been foretold for centuries, and it has not been fulfilled.

This prophecy uttered by angels at the first coming of our Lord and Saviour has not been fulfilled. It will be fulfilled immediately following the battle of Armageddon. This event will occupy a period of one thousand years. It is recorded in Revelation, chapter 20.

Prophetic event number six, which comes at the end of the one thousand years reign of Christ, is called the battle of Gog and Magog, and is the last great battle of Satan. This battle will last but a short duration. It is also recorded in Revelation, chapter 20.

Then follows prophetic event number seven, the Great White Throne Judgment, where all the unsaved will be judged. This is the last prophetic event related to this world, as we know it today. This is the last prophetic event in regards to all of the civilizations that have occupied the earth. Every human being who ever lived, in all ages, that are unsaved, has a date at this appointed prophetic event. This event is recorded in Revelation, chapter 20:11-15.

Prophetic event number eight is the last prophecy recorded in the Bible; the prophecy of the end of the world, and the new Heaven and the new Earth, recorded in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22.

There are, of course, many other prophetic events recorded which are of great importance, however, we have selected the prophecies that seem to give Christians the most trouble in trying to place them in the order in which they will occur. We feel that an understanding of these prophetic events, in their order, is essential to an understanding of the Bible.

Seeing then, that the next event on God's calendar is an undated event, the Rapture of the Believers, caught up to meet the Lord in the air; it behooves every Christian to be ready and watching. If you are not living for Christ, not doing what you should be doing when He comes, we urge you to make preparation now. **HE MAY COME AT ANY MOMENT!**

When we bring a message of this nature, on the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be those who will scoff, but this is nothing new. The Bible tells us that these things will happen. We read:

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” (II Peter 3:3,4)

The Bible tells us the reason these people scoff. They are willingly ignorant of what the Word of God teaches. They are ignorant of why God, even now, is postponing this tremendous event. There is a reason why Jesus Christ has not returned already. It is recorded in II Peter.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance.” (II Peter 3:9)

Every Bible-believing Christian knows that the only answer to this old world's problems is the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, then, does He delay? If this would solve the world's problems why does not God send His Son now? We know that God is not slack concerning His promises. We find only one reason in the Bible, and that is "God is not willing that any should perish."

If you are not saved, it is possible that you will not have another chance to be saved. Why not, right now, receive Christ as your Saviour?

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:12)

CHAPTER TWO

When it comes to the study of prophecy, there are those who feel that there is no use in studying prophecy because, they say, no one knows what it means. Others claim that we have no way of knowing whether it has been fulfilled or not, and that much of the prophecy is written only in a figurative sense.

We selected eight prophetic events for our study, and have outlined these events in the order in which they will occur. A clear understanding of these prophetic events, and the order in which they occur will be helpful in understanding the Scriptures.

As we undertake this all-important study of these prophetic events, keep in mind the order in which they will occur. (1) The Rapture of the Church. (2) The Great Tribulation. (3) The Battle of Armageddon. (4) The Revelation of Jesus Christ. (5) The Millennial reign of Christ (one thousand years). (6) The Battle of Gog and Magog. (7) The Great White Throne Judgment. (8) The End of the World, and the New Heaven and the New Earth.

How do we know that event number one, the Rapture of the Church will be the next event on God's prophetic calendar? What assurance do we have that the believers will be translated before the Tribulation period?

In these lessons we are not trying to establish the fact of the Rapture of the Church. We are going to assume that you believe that this event is going to happen. There is a basic unity among fundamental Bible believers that there will be a Rapture; however, there is a difference of opinion as to when this event will take place.

There are different shades of belief concerning this subject. We will mention only three. These are the most prominent beliefs held by the majority of professing Christians.

The first and most widely accepted view is that the Church will be translated BEFORE the tribulation. This belief is referred to as the "Pre-Tribulation" Rapture of the Church.

The second belief, held by many, is that only those who are walking in fellowship, or those who, they say, are sanctified will be raptured. The others, the worldly Christians, will be left to go through part, or all of the Great Tribulation.

The third belief is that the Church, or all believers, will go through the Great Tribulation. Possibly, the chief reason why confusion exists on this subject is that the theme is so vast. Scriptures that must be considered are many. However, we can find answers from the Bible to many of our questions on this subject.

The Rapture is going to happen in a two-fold manner. First, there will be the resurrection of the dead, those who have died in Christ; then the transformation of the

living believers. The Rapture will be a surprise to the world (the children of darkness), but believers are not the children of darkness, so we should not be surprised. The Rapture will be only for a certain group of people, those who are “in Christ.” This includes both those who have died “in Christ” and the living believers.

Will the Rapture take place before the Great Tribulation? Are there promises in the Word of God that excludes Christians from the Tribulation? We will find the answers in the Word of God. Every injunction in the Bible tells us to watch for the return of the Lord. It tells us to “be ready” for His return. There is not one Scripture that teaches us to watch for, or be on guard for the Tribulation. Warning Believers to prepare for the Tribulation would not be “comforting words.” **“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (I Thessalonians 4:18)**

The Church is not destined for the Tribulation. The Tribulation is known as “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” The hundred and forty four thousand that are sealed, and that go through this time of sorrow, are all from specific tribes of the nation of Israel.

We find in the scriptures that the Church is not appointed unto the wrath of God, but unto salvation.

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Thessalonians 5:9)

In the book of Revelation we find the Church spoken of in the first three chapters, but the Church is not referred to again until chapter nineteen. The Church is not found on earth during the Tribulation. Furthermore, it is not even mentioned. Since the Tribulation is to come upon Israel and the world, the Church, not being of the world, has no part in this judgment.

In many passages of Scripture dealing with the subject of the Second Coming of Christ, we find Christ either coming FOR the saints, or coming WITH the saints.

“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.” (I Thessalonians 4:16,17)

“...Behold, the Lord cometh WITH ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed...” (Jude 1:14b, 15a)

The Lord cannot come WITH His saints until He has come FOR His saints. This indicates that the Church will be taken away, and then brought back when He comes to set up His Kingdom.

In the Old Testament there are many “types” of the Church age. These “types” and “foreshadows” indicate that the Church will be taken out of this world BEFORE the time of judgment. The first illustration we have of this is found in the book of Genesis. Enoch was translated BEFORE the flood came upon the earth. Lot was delivered out of

Sodom BEFORE the judgment of God fell. The angels told Lot that they could not destroy Sodom until he was out of that city. Joseph, a type of Christ, received a Gentile bride BEFORE the seven years of tribulation came upon Israel when they were in Egypt. Moses, also a type of Christ, received a Gentile bride before the period of tribulation in Egypt.

We have every reason to believe that we, (the Christians) are the restraining force that is keeping the Antichrist from being revealed.

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” (II Thessalonians 2: 7,8)

This “restraining force” must be removed before the Antichrist can come on the scene. The tribulation cannot happen before the Antichrist comes on the scene, for he is one of the major characters in this time of judgment from Almighty God.

Christians are told to “watch and pray” that we may escape that day. (Luke 21:36) Our Lord would never tell us to pray for something that He did not intend to answer. The Scripture also tells us:

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” (II Peter 2:9)

These verses definitely indicate that God is going to deliver the believers from this time of Tribulation. We are told that we are the “children of light,” rather than darkness. Darkness is a type of night; the darkness of the Tribulation.

The Lord has definitely committed Himself to keeping the Church out of the Tribulation. This is a definite promise.

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” (Revelation 3:10)

This, of course, is speaking of the Tribulation time, and He promises that He will keep us from that specific hour. If there was no other Scripture in the Bible that dealt with this subject, this one should be enough.

The Rapture

Now some would have us believe that only a few believers are going in the Rapture; but the Lord Jesus is not coming for just a part of His bride. He is not going to take His bride in pieces. The bride of Christ is going to be a complete body. “For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven.”

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which

have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

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. (I Thessalonians 4:13-17)

At the Rapture the Lord is not coming all the way to earth. Please notice carefully, Jesus does not come all the way to earth, as is the case in the latter part of Revelation, but He stops in mid-air. It is important that this fact be recognized.

The next thing that happens is Jesus shouts, the archangel speaks, and the trumpet is blown. "The Lord Himself descends with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God." The "shout" is a call to the waiting Church here below. At this shout of the Lord, the saints who are "asleep in Jesus" rise from the dead, and living believers are instantaneously changed into glorified beings.

We notice that the archangel also speaks. The archangel in Scripture is the archangel Michael, God's protector of the nation of Israel. In every instance where the archangel Michael is mentioned in Scripture, he is presented to us in the roll as defender of the nation of Israel against her persecutors.

After the Church is gone, Israel's greatest persecution will begin. It will be a time of "Jacob's Trouble." The Lord, therefore, sends Michael, the archangel, to assure the faithful remnant of Israel that they will be delivered through this time of tribulation.

After the dead in Christ are raised, and the living believers are transformed and have received glorified bodies, the next thing that will happen is the reunion of the resurrected saints with the living and changed believers. Even before we meet the Lord in the air, we will meet those who have fallen asleep in Christ. As Paul stated, "... 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..."

Paul wrote this epistle to comfort those who had loved ones that had died. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (I Thessalonians 4:18) We will meet our loves ones, who have died in Christ, before we meet the Lord. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

I trust that you have caught this wonderful teaching in the Word of God. Don't miss it! "We shall be caught up together!" First we are brought together; then we rise to meet the Lord, together. What a wonderful, comforting thought!

The next thing that will happen is that we will meet HIM! Yes, Him, the ONE who died in our stead. The ONE who has so freely given us salvation; A FREE GIFT to all who will receive it!

The Great Tribulation

What is meant by the term “Great Tribulation?” From the viewpoint of man, the tribulation period is a time of intense rebellion against God. It will be a time of worldly prosperity under the leadership of the Antichrist, and a revolt against the sovereign God of the universe.

We cannot fully understand the tribulation period until we see it from God’s viewpoint. Until we see that the tribulation period (a period of seven years) is a time in which God is punishing and destroying the ungodly nations of the earth, we cannot fully understand this theme. This time of sorrow is recorded in the Bible, in the book of Revelation, chapters 6 through 19. The chief passages dealing with the characteristic tribulation period, found in Revelation 6: 15-17, gives an vivid picture of only a small part of God’s judgment that is coming upon this earth.

**“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;
And said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:
For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:15-17)**

This will be a time of suffering such as this old earth has never known. There is only one way of escape and that is to be “in Christ.” If the next event on God’s calendar, the Rapture of the Church, was to happen right now, and you do not have Christ as your Saviour, you will be left to go through this terrible time of the wrath of Almighty God. If you have not already done so, now would be the time to receive the FREE GIFT of Eternal Life.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12)

**“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10: 9,10)**

CHAPTER THREE

The order in which the eight prophetic events will occur are: (1) The Rapture of the Church. (2) The Great Tribulation. (3) The Battle of Armageddon. (4) The Second Coming of Jesus Christ. (5) The Messianic Kingdom. (6) The Battle of Gog and Magog. (7) The Great White Throne Judgment, and (8) The End of the World, and the New Heaven and the New Earth.

The Great Tribulation follows the Rapture of the Church. This event is clearly divided into two parts; each part being three and one-half years in duration. The first half, or the first three and one-half years, is referred to as “the tribulation.” The last three and one-half years is called “the great tribulation.” The first half includes the breaking of the seven seals, and the blowing of the first six trumpets. (Revelation chapters 6 through 10) Then follows three chapters describing the chief characters in this Great Tribulation period.

The devil’s two allies in the Great Tribulation are the two beasts of Revelation, chapter 13; the beast out of the sea, the political head of the anti-Christian federation of nations, and the beast out of the land, the religious leader. The first is believed to be the head of the restored Roman Empire. The second one is the Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition.

Let us note the principle characters of this time of sorrow. They are called the unholy, or the satanic trinity. The dragon is presented as anti-God, the Father; the beast as the Antichrist, and the false prophet as the anti-Holy Spirit. This is seen by contrasting the persons of the Godly trinity with the persons of the anti-God trinity.

First, the dragon as opposed to God the Father. Each has his own angels, his own children, and his own particular king that he has appointed and endued with power. God, the Father is the God of Heaven. Satan, the dragon, is the god of this world.

The contrast between Christ and the Antichrist is most interesting. This contrast is easily followed throughout Scripture. One is the Christ from above (John 6:38). The other is the Antichrist from below (Revelation 11:7). Christ came to do His Father’s will. The Antichrist will come to do his own will. Christ is the Son of God. The Antichrist is the son of perdition. Christ is the Holy One. The Antichrist is the lawless one. Christ is the Truth. The Antichrist is the lie. Christ is the mystery of godliness. The Antichrist is the mystery of iniquity. Christ will sit upon His throne and have His Kingdom. The Antichrist will have a kingdom and a throne and power over all kindred, tongues, and nations.

We hesitate to make this next comparison, but let the Word of God speak for itself. The third part of the unholy trinity is the false prophet. One is the Spirit of Christ; the other is the spirit of the Antichrist. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; the false prophet is the spirit of error. The Holy Spirit was successor to Christ, and does His work on behalf of Christ. The false prophet shall succeed the Antichrist and he exercises all of the power over the first beast before him, and “caused the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast.” (Revelation 13:12) These, the dragon, the Antichrist, and the false prophet, are the chief characters, from Satan’s standpoint, in the Great Tribulation.

Our first introduction to this time of sorrow is found in Revelation, chapter 6, verses 1 through 8. With the breaking of the first seal the tribulation begins. With the breaking of this seal, John sees issuing forth a white horse and rider.

“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” (Revelation 6:2)

The horse and rider is a symbol of peace and victory. The rider upon the horse is the Antichrist, the false Messiah; not to be confused with the rider on the white horse

found in Revelation, chapter 19: verse 11, who is the Lord Jesus Christ coming to end the battle of Armageddon. The rider on this horse is the false Christ, the Antichrist, who will seek to imitate the true Christ; therefore, he comes on a white horse.

The Antichrist comes promising peace. For a brief period of time there will be peace when the nations of the world will federate to end all wars. There will be a kind of super United Nations. The churches that are left behind will unite under one Laodicean system. It will be an easy task because there will be no opposition from the fundamental crack-pots, or the religious fanatics, because the born again ones will have been raptured BEFORE this takes place.

There will be a period of false peace, a mock millennium. Then the Antichrist, who has deceived the whole world into thinking the golden age of peace has come, will unloose his fury and plunge the world into war.

“And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.” (Revelation 6:3,4)

The rider upon the red horse is, no doubt, the same as the rider upon the white horse, but now he reveals his true identity. This rider is not the Prince of Peace, whom he claims to be, but the old enemy, the Devil incarnate, the man of sin.

When the third seal is opened we see a black horse. We read in verses 5 and 6:

“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” (Revelation 6:5,6)

We have no trouble identifying the black horse and its rider. This horse typifies what always follows and accompanies war. It is the black horse of famine and inflation. The rider upon the black horse has a balance in his hand which indicates that everything must be weighed.

After the Church has been translated there will be a short, mock millennium, which will be followed by a great war, and then the greatest famine of history, where a measure of wheat will sell for a penny.

A measure of wheat is approximately a quart. We are told that a penny was a day's wages for the average laborer in those days. This, then, would mean that the entire daily wage of the working man will be required to buy one quart of wheat. At today's wages this would mean that wheat would be very expensive indeed. Only the very rich will have enough to sustain themselves. This is the meaning of the phrase “hurt not the oil and the wine.”

Following the black horse of famine comes the pale horse of pestilence and disease.

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” (Revelation 6:7,8)

As a result of this war, twenty-five percent of the world’s population will die from famine and pestilence. Hundreds of millions of people will die as a result of this awful war. From these facts we have some idea of why it is called the Great Tribulation. We understand why Christians are able to rejoice in the fact that they shall escape this terrible day. They will be translated before this time comes upon the earth.

Yes, the spiritual, economical, and political conditions of this time are clearly defined in the Bible. Fourteen chapters of the last book of the Bible are given to this specific period of time. Spiritually, the nations will be at their lowest spiritual ebb in the history of mankind.

The gospel will be preached, and a number will be saved; but for the most part it will be a time when mankind will defy and blaspheme God. We read in Revelation, chapter 16:

“And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.” (Revelation 16:11)

As we have seen before, economically the first part of the Tribulation will be a time of prosperity and plenty. The Antichrist will have deceived apostate religion into believing that the Kingdom age is here; however, this will not last long. The world will soon be plunged into war, followed by inflation and famine. We have seen where inflation will reach the point where it will take a day’s wages to buy a quart of wheat. The famine and scourge following this war will be of such magnitude that it will claim the lives of twenty-five percent of the world’s population. We realize this is not a pleasant picture, but it is as sure to happen as night follows day.

Politically, it will be the darkest hour this earth has ever known. The atrocities committed by the dictators of the past; Nero, Stalin, Hitler, and all others, will be like a Sunday school picnic compared to the ones who will rule during the Great Tribulation. Only the intervention of God Himself will stop man from completely annihilating himself.

This time will end with the third prophetic event, the Battle of Armageddon. The Battle of Armageddon will be man’s last great battle. The word “Armageddon” means “the valley of slaughter.”

Many Christians are concerned as to what nations will have a part in this great battle. The following verses in Revelation, chapter 16, give us some idea.

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth

**of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.
For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.
Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.
And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” (Revelation 16:12-16)**

Three spirits will go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world. In this total global conflict the outcome is never in doubt. This is recorded in Revelation, chapter 19.

**“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.
And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.
And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” (Revelation 19:11-16)**

**“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.
And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.
And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” (Revelation 19:19-21)**

This ends one of the greatest battles this old earth will ever experience. Unless a person goes in the Rapture, they will be left to face one of the greatest trials and time of sorrow that this earth has ever known.

There is a way of escape. If you find yourself in eternity, unsaved and lost, you will have no one to blame but yourself. Today you have an opportunity to be saved. God is trying to convince you now, by revealing to you what is coming upon the earth, of your need of the Saviour.

Seeing all these things are coming to pass, don't you think that it is time to make preparation? One of the reasons that this has been recorded in the Bible is to show us what lies ahead. If you have not done so, why not, right now, receive Christ as your Saviour? Then, if the Lord was to come today to translate the Believers, you would go to be with Him, and you would escape this time of sorrow.

CHAPTER FOUR

For a well- balanced order of Bible study, there are three things that, if we keep in mind, will be of help. First, we need a good understanding of the seven dispensations; from creation through the Kingdom age. There are many good charts available that will help in this matter.

Second, we must be able to separate, or distinguish between Israel and the Church.

The third thing, of utmost importance, would be to know the order of the great prophetic events of the future. Most Christians know something about some of these events. They know, for instance, that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. They know that there will be a resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved. Most know that there will be a time of judgment for this old earth, called the Great Tribulation. They know too, that there will be a great battle called the battle of Armageddon. They know that the earth will be purged by fire, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. But other than the end of the world and the new heaven and the new earth many Christians know little, or nothing, about the order in which these prophetic events will take place. This is the reason for these lessons on "The Order of Prophetic Events."

In the first three lessons we covered the first three of these events, and the order in which they will occur. They were the Rapture of the Church, the Tribulation, and the battle of Armageddon.

Now we come to prophetic event number four, the literal Second Coming of Christ. This subject has caused much confusion among believers. There are many different opinions concerning this subject. There are those who say that Pentecost was the Second Coming. Others teach that the Second Coming of Christ comes at death, and there are others that believe that the Rapture of the Church is the Second Coming.

What we mean by the literal Second Coming of Jesus Christ is when every eye shall see Him. Now this is to be distinguished from the Rapture. The Rapture is only one phase of His coming. The Second Coming is when every eye shall see Him. Revelation, chapter 19 gives a vivid description. It says:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.” (Revelation 19:11,12)

We also read in Jude, verses 14 and 15.

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these,

saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” (Jude 1:14,15)

An easy way to distinguish between the Rapture of the Church and the literal Second Coming is, the Rapture of the Church is spoken of as a time of blessing and comfort, while the Second Coming is spoken of as a time of dire judgment. We read of the Second Coming:

**“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”
(II Thessalonians 1:8,9)**

At His first coming there is little known about the Lord’s physical appearance. Isaiah tells us just about all we know about it. In Isaiah, chapter 53, he says that, “He is a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” but no mention is made of His physical appearance. The pictures that appear in Bible stories are but a product of the artist’s imagination.

When it comes to the Second Coming of Christ, we are given complete details. In Revelation, chapter 1, John gives this graphic picture. Starting with verse 13, we read:

**“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.
His head and hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire.
And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.
And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” (Revelation 1:13-16)**

His first coming was in lowliness and humility, but His Second Coming will be in power and great glory. Every description given of the Second Coming, in the Bible, portrays it as one of the most glorious events ever to take place on this earth.

Geographically, the Second Coming will be in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This is plainly noted in the prophecies of Zechariah, and further confirmed in Revelation, chapter 19, verses 11 through 21, where He comes to judge the armies who are gathered in Palestine for the battle of Armageddon. Events that will transpire are clearly set forth in these same Scriptures. To get a clear picture of the literal Second Coming of Christ, we turn now to Revelation, chapter 19.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness

he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” (Revelation 19:11-21)

If we take this literally we have no trouble with the interpretation; however, when we start to spiritualize, one guess would be just as good as another.

The first thing that we see is that heaven opens and the Lord appears. John gives a vivid description of a horse and rider, followed by a mighty army of the redeemed. Their identity is revealed in the fact of the clothing; “Clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” We are taught, in other portions of Scripture, that this fine linen is the “righteousness of the saints.”

We call your attention once more to the fact that a distinction must be made between the rider of the white horse, in this chapter, (Rev. 19) and the rider of the white horse in Revelation chapter 6.

The second thing that happens is that the beast, the false prophet, and their followers are cast into a lake of fire. We read in verse 20:

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” (Revelation 19:20)

The third thing that happens is the destruction of the remaining kings of the earth. Verse 21 of Revelation chapter 19 says:

“And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” (Revelation 19:21)

The fourth thing that happens is that Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit, and the pit is sealed for one thousand years.

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” (Revelation 20:2,3)

The reason for the binding of Satan is so that he will not be able to deceive the nations during the Kingdom age. Following the binding of Satan is the judgment of the nations, as described in Matthew, chapter 25, verses 31 and 32. This judgment is to be distinguished from the Great White Throne judgment. We see in Matthew, chapter 25, that this is an earthly scene. Here the nations, rather than the people, are involved. This judgment will determine what nations will enter the Kingdom age.

Then follows prophetic event number five, the beginning of the age of peace, or the “Millennium.” The word “millennium” simply means “one thousand.” This will be the duration of the Millennium Kingdom, Christ’s Kingdom on earth. Much is said about this time in the Scriptures. It will be a time when nature will be at rest. The animal kingdom will be tame. It will be a time of prosperity and plenty for all. It will be a time of peace, when there will be no more war.

At the close of the Kingdom age, Satan will be loosed and will go out to the four corners of the earth to deceive the nations.

This brings us to prophetic event number six, the battle of Gog and Magog. Yes, after one thousand years of a perfect society, under a perfect Leader, man will still be a sinner. He will rise up in rebellion against God, at the first opportunity offered; but it will be man’s last rebellion.

Prophetic event number seven is the Great White Throne judgment. Here all of the unsaved of all ages will be judged. This is not a judgment to determine whether a person is saved or lost, but a judgment to determine the degrees of punishment throughout eternity. The more light one has, and rejected, the greater will be the judgment.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

**And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11-15)**

You see, what determines a person’s entrance into Eternal Life is their name written in the Book of Life. There will be no saved people at this judgment. This judgment will be for those who have rejected God’s plan of salvation. If your name is in the Lamb’s book of life, you will not be at this judgment.

Heaven contains many books. The Bible says, “and the books were opened.” Every idle word that is spoken, every deed committed, and every thought is recorded in Heaven. Unless these are forgiven, and placed under the blood of Christ, they will one day be shouted from the housetops.

Our primary purpose for these lessons is, first, that you will hear and believe, and have your sins forgiven. Then, of course, our teaching ministry is to encourage the saints in the Word of God, to help them in their every day Christian life.

If your name is in the Lamb’s book of Life, you will have a part in the eighth prophetic event, the new Heaven and the new Earth.

We are literally living on a bomb, both beneath and above. We are sitting on the crust of this earth, while beneath us is molten lava. There are places on this earth where this has broken through from time to time in volcanoes.

Above us, in the air, there are elements which only have to be triggered and they will explode. The Scriptures tell us:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” (II Peter 3:10)

Peter tells us that this earth is “stored” with fire, waiting for God’s time to purge this old earth.

“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.” (II Peter 3:7)

One day this old earth, this old sin-stained earth, will be purged by fire, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth, “and the former things will be remembered no more.” We will then enter Eternity!

To have a part in this New Heaven and New Earth your name must be in the Lamb’s Book of Life. To be in the Lamb’s Book of Life, you MUST have Christ as your Saviour. “He that hath the Son hath life...” (I John 5:12)

To have Life, the Lord Jesus Christ, you MUST receive Him.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become

the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12)

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9,10)

If you have not already done so, we trust that you will receive Christ as your Saviour today.