

Foundations - Things to come

Introduction: Many are desirous to know what God has on the agenda for the future. What should we expect? Is it true He is coming again? Are there signs of His coming? Does the Bible give us clear insight into what is going to happen and when? This lesson will be a simple lesson on Eschatology, or in other words, God's future plan.

- I. There are different theological views of things to come. We shall discuss three main views briefly, but will spend the majority of the time on the Pre-Millennial view.
- II. A. A-Millennial view: Simply stated, there is no coming of Christ, and consequently, no rapture or millennial reign of Christ.
- III. B. Post-Millennial view: Everything has already happened. The book of Revelation has been fulfilled in the first century and everything about future happening is not true.
- IV. C. Pre-Millennial view: Christ is coming again. The church will be removed before the tribulation happens. Satan will rule the earth for 7 years and "all hell will break loose". Christ will return at the Battle of Armageddon and will defeat Satan. He will rule and reign for 1000 years. Satan will be loosed for a short season to gather together the disobedient and rebellious for one more battle against Christ. Jesus wins. There is a Great White throne of judgment where the lost of eternity will be gathered together to face Christ. They will be cast into the lake of fire for eternity. There will be a new heaven and a new earth with Christ in charge. Everything will be perfect.
- V. **The Rapture:** Rapture is not a Biblical word. It simply means, a snatching out or a taking away. It is based upon I Thessalonians 4 and I Corinthians 15. It is also eluded to in Revelation 4. It is the doctrinal view that Christ will come back to the clouds, blow a trumpet, and remove His bride. From a human standpoint, it is the concept that before a king wages war on a foreign country, he first removes his citizens from the country. In this view, Christ will remove His bride, the church, and there will be a 7 year wedding feast and marriage in heaven. While this is occurring, Satan, without the influence of the church, will be turned loose to impose his will upon the earth and its' inhabitants.
- VI. **The Wedding Feast of the Lamb:** Revelation 19:7-9 speaks of the Marriage feast of the Lamb. The Lamb is Christ. The bride is the Church (Ephesians 5). The custom of the time was that the wedding feast longevity was based upon the importance of the participants in the ceremony. Most theologians believe that this feast will go on for 7 years. A dowry would have to be paid for the purchase of the bride. The price that was paid was the life of Christ. Before a bridegroom could marry his bride, he would first have to build her a suitable dwelling. Christ stated this in John 14. After the dwelling was prepared, the bride would be invited to the wedding feast where she would be betrothed to her husband. This would be the rapture.

- VII. **The Tribulation:** Revelation 4-18 would be a description of the period theologians call the tribulation. It is a time such as the world has never before seen. It is the worst of existence of human history concentrated into a 7 year period. Over 2/3 of the worlds population will die during this period on earth. There are pestilences, wars, murder, starvation, natural disasters, and a myriad of other supernatural phenomenon that will simultaneously released upon the earth. As you read the book of Revelation, it is stunning in its description of things to come.
- VIII. **The 144,000:** These are Jews who have the privilege of being witnesses for Christ during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. They are hated by the Anti-Christ, but they are protected by Christ. They go about the face of the earth witnessing to people about Jesus. A multitude which no man can number will be saved through their witness. Most who trust Christ during this period will be martyred by beheading. Christ will return in the middle of the tribulation to the Mount of Olives and the 144,000 will be gathered together to meet Him there. They will be removed at this juncture.
- IX. **The 2 witnesses:** In the middle of the tribulation, 2 witnesses will be sent back to the earth and will be killed by the anti-Christ. I believe these 2 witnesses are Enoch and Elijah because they are the only 2 people recorded in Scripture who never died. Most believe it is Moses and Elijah. Things will look like Satan is in full control until the two come back to life. Their resurrection will be broadcast live all around the world. Then they will be removed. The impact will be devastating to the reign of evil.
- X. **The witnessing angels:** 2 angels will fly around the world for the remaining days of the tribulation proclaiming Christ to all. Some will be saved, but most will remain loyal followers of the anti-Christ because of his power to control all things that affect their lives.
- XI. **666:** This is referred to as the mark of the beast. During the tribulation, the anti-Christ will control everything economic with this mark. Without the mark, one can't buy or sell, and consequently millions will die of starvation and other factors related.
- XII. **The time of Jacob's trouble:** The primary purpose of the tribulation period is the salvation of the Jewish people. The Jews rejected Christ as their Messiah because they did not believe He could be the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, a covenant that stated that a descendent of David would rule and reign forever. Because Christ died and went away, they could not rectify the requirements of the Messiah with the person of Christ. However, during the tribulation period, there will be events that will occur that will make them realize that Jesus was indeed the Christ, and all Israel will be saved. At this juncture, the anti-Christ will unleash all his power and influence against Israel. He will have them holed up in the valley of Megiddo for his final onslaught against them. It is at this juncture that Christ will come to their defense.

- XIII. **The Battle of Armageddon:** At the end of the marriage feast, Christ will gather together His bride and the armies of heaven and will return on white horses to defeat the anti-Christ and his forces who are preparing the final destruction of the Jews. Christ wins. Satan loses. The beast and the false prophet (cohorts of the anti-Christ) will be cast into the lake of fire forever. The anti-Christ (Satan) will be thrown into a bottomless pit for 1000 years.
- XIV. **The Millennial Reign of Christ:** Christ will set up His throne on the earth for 1000 years. During this period, all things will return to the pre-fall state. The results of the fall will be reversed and the earth will be restored to the original paradise state. Those who survive the Battle of Armageddon will live under Christ's rule. Some will still reject Him and refuse to follow Him as Lord and Savior.
- XV. **The Short Season Battle:** The anti-Christ will be released from the bottomless pit for a short season. He will go around the world and gather to himself all those who refuse Christ. There will be another battle. Jesus wins. He loses.
- XVI. **Satan cast into the lake of fire:** He no longer will be a threat or influence again.
- XVII. **The Great White Throne of Judgment:** Eternity will give up all the souls and bodies of those who refused Christ while they were alive. They will be gathered together to stand before Christ at the Great White Throne. There they will be judged by two criteria. 1. Whether name is written in the book. 2. By their works. All will be cast into the lake of fire. *Footnote:* Right now, if a person dies without Christ, their souls will go to hell (hades). It is fire, brimstone, and suffering. However, it is temporary, somewhat like jail. It is the waiting place until the accused stands before the judge. At the judgment, they will be sent to the lake of fire (gehenna) where they will spend eternity.
- XVIII. **New Heaven and New Earth:** No more death, suffering, diseases, pain, sorrow, or the sort. Everything is made new and everything is happily ever after.