

Eschatology : The End Times

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“The final drama”

A very important doctrine

Lesson 1

Introduction

The Christian doctrine about the end times is described in many fancy words. One of them is "eschatology". There is no other word to describe a most exciting drama; on the one hand joy, triumph and glory, on the other, judgement, death and destruction.

A. A definition of the word "eschatology"

The word “eschatology” covers the following events:

1. The signs of Christ's return.
2. The return of Christ.
3. The rapture of the Church.
4. The great tribulation.
5. The millennium kingdom.
6. The final judgements.
7. The new heaven and earth.

We will go through these events in this study.

B. The return of Christ has an important place in Scripture

1. **It is mentioned throughout the Bible.**

This is one of the most mentioned doctrines in the Bible. There are 1496 references to the end times in the Old Testament and 319 in the New Testament.

2. **It is declared by nearly all the Old Testament prophets.**

a) Right from Enoch to Malachi. The most prominent books in the Old Testament on this subject are: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah.

- b) **It is strongly emphasized.**

For every time the first coming of Jesus (to Bethlehem) is mentioned **once**, the second coming is mentioned **8 times**. **That is by the same prophets.**

- c) **It will be exactly and literally fulfilled.**

Remember how exactly and literally the first coming was fulfilled, even down to the smallest details; the donkey, the nails, the 30 pieces of silver, the dividing of and the casting of lots for His garments, etc. Likewise the second coming will be exactly and literally fulfilled.

3. It is declared by Jesus.

Read Matthew 24:30-31

- a) In the whole of chapters 24 and 25, Jesus teaches about the end time and His second coming.

Jesus deals with the subject very often and it is recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. (Mark 13; Luke 17:20-37; 21:5-36 and John 14:3)

- b) Many of the parables of Jesus are devoted to this subject.

4. It is declared by the Apostles.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

The Apostle Paul writes a lot about the end time and so do all the Apostles whom the Spirit used to write the New Testament letters. (2 Peter 3:10-12; Jude 1:14-15)

5. It is declared by the Angels.

Read Acts 1:11

Even the angels (heavenly messengers) proclaim the return of Christ.

Right through the Word of God this doctrine is strongly emphasized!

C. An important doctrine for all true Christians

1. It is our blessed hope.

Read Titus 2:13

The return of Christ is called "our blessed hope".

"Our" – means all living Christians; we have nothing to fear, but can look forward to playing a wonderful role in the mighty drama which will happen in the future and right through eternity. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and 1 John 3:2)

2. It is our comfort in sorrow and bereavement.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13 and 18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

When a Christian dies, we should not grieve, as others do who have no hope. We can comfort one another with the words, "We will all soon meet on the resurrection morning". In this light, death has completely lost its power and victory.

3. **It should bring the right priority into our lives.**

Read Luke 21:34-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6

Both Jesus and the Apostles warn us in the light of His return, to watch and pray and not be weighed down by materialistic and earthbound cares, but to live as pilgrims on our way to a heavenly city. (Luke 17:32)

4. **It should keep us pure and holy.**

Read 2 Peter 3:10-14

The expectation of the coming of the Lord, should really affect our lives in every way – "so that we may be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless".

5. **It should make us active and dedicated to the service of the Lord.**

Read Matthew 24:45-47

If anything should make us active for Jesus, it should be the expectation of His imminent return.

"The time of grace is running out".

Jesus said: "We must do His work while it is day, the night is coming when no one can work". John 9:4

Illustration: If you knew for sure that Jesus would return at the end of this year, how would that affect your life and service for Him? Well.... then you had better let it happen because He could come at any time.

D. Christ's return is an important part of God's eternal plan

Read Acts 1:7 and Acts 3:21

God has exact plans, which no man can interfere with – verse 21 – they are revealed through His Word.

The return of Christ

Lesson 2

Introduction

One of the greatest events in the history of man is still ahead of us, an event that will powerfully affect the whole world: the return of Jesus Christ.

A. A very clear statement

1. **The personal return of Jesus.**

Read John 14:2-3 and Revelation 22:20

Here Jesus Himself declares, both before and after His resurrection, that He will return personally.

2. **The way He will return.**

Read Acts 1:10-11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16

"The Lord Himself will **descend from heaven**".
"He will come back **in the same way** you saw Him go".

B. The two stages of the return of Christ:

The return of Christ is **one event**, but in **two stages**:

1. **Stage one:** Christ coming down to the heavenlies (the air) to call His bride, His living church to Himself.
2. **Stage two:** Christ returning to the earth with His saints to set up His kingdom on earth, "The Millennium Kingdom".

C. The removal of the church (stage one) (See no.2 on diagram)

This event is normally called "The Rapture".

1. **The Rapture was foretold by Jesus.**

Read John 14:3

Jesus clearly states, "I will come back **and take you** to be with Me, for where I am, you shall be also".

2. **The Rapture was described by Jesus.**

Read Luke 17:34-36

- a) The description here indicates that people will be raptured from all over the world – it will be day and night at the same time.
(Two people in bed and two people working in the field.)
- b) It will cut families in half, even separate husband and wife.
(Two people will be in the same bed.)
- c) True believers will be caught up in the midst of their duty.

Illustration/Demonstration:

Have a lot of steel nails mixed with brass nails. When a powerful magnet is brought close to them all the steel nails will be drawn up by the power of the magnet, but the brass nails will remain completely unmoved. **So it will be at the coming of Christ.**

John 3:1-3, Jesus is addressing a highly religious man and He points out to him clearly that it is not the "religious people", but only those who are born by the Spirit of God, who will enter His kingdom.

3. The Rapture is clearly described by the Apostle Paul.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- a) **There will be a heavenly signal.**
See verse 16, "a shout" – "a voice of an archangel" – "a trumpet of God".
- b) **The unbelievers will hear nothing.**
It will be to them "as a thief in the night". (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6)
- c) **The dead in Christ will be raised first.**
See verse 16: That is all believers saved by the blood of Jesus, down through the ages. They will receive new resurrection bodies. (1 Cor.15:51-52)
- d) **The living believers will be changed.**
See verse 17: They will receive the same kind of resurrection body.
(1 Corinthians 15:52)
- e) **We will all be caught up.**
See verse 17: Together, these two groups will be raptured to meet the Lord in the air.
- f) **All this will happen extremely fast.**
The Bible uses these expressions:
"in a flash", "in a twinkling of an eye".

4. What kind of body will we have?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:53-54; 35-44

From a corruptible body to an incorruptible body.
From a mortal body to an immortal body.

From dishonour to glory.
From weakness to power.
From a natural body to a spiritual body.

D. What will happen to the church after the Rapture?
(See No. 4 on diagram)

1. Christ will meet His "Bride"; the church.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Ephesians 5:27

Together with all the saints, including our loved ones and all the great Biblical characters, we shall see Jesus face to face. He will present us to the Father in the presence of the multitude of holy angels.

2. We will experience a wonderful transformation.

Read 1 John 3:2 and 1 Corinthians 15:49

We are, at that time, in new resurrection bodies, but an even more powerful transformation will take place – "when we see Him we shall be like Him".

3. It will be a glorious union.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Revelation 19:7-8

Paul tells us that we are now, as a people, engaged to Christ and our perfect union with Him on that day is compared to a heavenly wedding.
(Jesus = The Bridegroom – The Church = The Bride)

Probably before this glorious "wedding", there will be a more solemn event namely:

E. The judgement seat of Christ

1. What kind of judgement will that be?

Read Romans 14:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10

This is a "judgement" of all believers, where our Christian life will be tried, the motives and quality of our works and deeds will be tested.

2. It is not a judgement unto damnation.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

The Greek word used here for judgement is "Bima", the same word that is used for the judging of sports events or art competitions. It means to evaluate the effort.

3. It is a "judgement" where rewards and crowns will be given.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:14 and 2 Timothy 4:8

For unselfish, committed service for Jesus, rewards and crowns will be handed out. Even what is done in secret for Jesus, will on that day be revealed and rewarded. (Luke 14:14 and 1 Peter 5:4)

F. Christ returning to Earth (Stage two) (See No.5 on diagram)

1. Christ returns in power and great glory.

Read Matthew 24:27 and 30

The first stage of His coming was "as a thief". The world saw nothing, only the effect, but now everyone shall see Him come in power and great glory. "It shall be as a lightning flashing from East to West".

2. Where will He touch down?

Read Acts 1:11-12 and Zechariah 14:3-4

Jesus left from Mount Olives outside Jerusalem. According to the Word of God, He will return to the same mountain.

3. Who will accompany Jesus when He returns?

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:7 and 1 Thessalonians 3:13

Scripture indicates that there will be two groups following Jesus on His return.

- a) A host of mighty angels. (Matthew 16:27)
- b) All His saints. (Jude 1:14)
These are called "the armies of heaven, dressed in fine linen".
(Revelation 19:14 when we look at verse 8, we will see who that "army" is – the Bride of Christ, which is all Blood-washed believers.)

G. Why does Jesus have to return to earth?

1. To complete the full plan of God.

After the finished work on Calvary, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, God in His grace waits for people to accept the gospel and escape His coming judgement. This period is called, "**the time of grace**".

When this time is over, Christ will return to earth to complete His work.

2. He will deliver His own.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and Romans 11:25-26

The church will be raptured as we have seen.

The remnant of the people of Israel will be rescued and saved by receiving Christ as their Messiah.

3. He will execute judgement.

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Jesus will be the judge:

- Over Satan and his host.
- Over the sinful world.
- Over everyone who rejects the gospel.

We will deal with these judgements later in this study.

4. To establish His promised reign of justice and peace on earth.

Read Zechariah 14:9

At His return, Jesus will set up His kingdom on earth and reign from Jerusalem for a thousand year period. This is called "The Millennium Kingdom", and we will deal with this in detail in Lesson 6 of this study.

The signs of His coming

Lesson 3

Introduction

Much speculation and calculation has been done to fix the exact time for the return of Christ, and much disappointment and confusion has followed these predictions.

Jesus said, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father has put in His own authority", Acts 1:7. The signs of His coming, given in the Word, are not there for prediction far into the future, but as Jesus said, "**When you see these things happen**, lift your head, because your redemption draws near".

Illustration: If somebody explains how to reach a certain place he may say: "Follow that road and soon you will cross a big river. Further on you will see a mountain on the right side, follow the road around the mountain to a crossroad. Turn to the left and soon you will see a very big tree next to the road. Just continue over the hill and there you will see a red house on the left, that is the place". All these "signs" are only good for those who move forward along the road and see the signs as they pass them. These people will understand that they will soon be there when they have passed all the signs given.

So also with the signs of His coming!

A. What are the signs of His coming? (See No. 1 on diagram)

Read Matthew 24:3

Jesus was asked a question by His disciples in Matthew 24:3, "Tell us, what will be **the** sign of your coming and the end of the age?" Jesus immediately gave them at least 15 signs of His return.

Demonstration: Read Matthew 24:4-42

(As you read let the students point out the signs one by one.)

B. Let us consider some of these signs

1. Wars and rumours of wars.

Read Matthew 24:6

In the last 80 years there have been constant wars somewhere on this earth.

In this period we have seen:

World War I 1914-1918, when ten million people were killed.

World War II 1939-1945, when about 78 million people died.

These were followed by many other major wars:

The war in Korea

The war in Vietnam
The war in Cambodia
The war in the Middle East
The Gulf war
Many African states at war, etc.

2. There will be famines, v.7.

We all know that this is one of the greatest problems in the world today. We are constantly confronted with people living on the bare minimum or even less. Hundreds of thousands die of starvation around the world. And the number will increase dramatically with the population explosion.

3. There will be pestilences, v.7.

Read Luke 21:11

One of the worst pests the world has ever seen has appeared in our time: "Aids". It is busy killing thousands, even millions of people all over the world, and nobody knows how to stop it.

4. There will be earthquakes in various places, v.7.

Watch how the earthquakes have increased:

In the fifteenth century	:	115 major earthquakes
In the sixteenth century	:	253 major earthquakes
In the seventeenth century	:	378 major earthquakes
In the eighteenth century	:	640 major earthquakes
In the nineteenth century	:	2119 major earthquakes

In 1906 the great city of San Francisco was destroyed.

In 1908 there was the Messina quake in which 75,000 people were killed.

In 1920 in China 180,000 were killed.

In the Tokyo quake 132,000 were killed.

Today we constantly hear about major earthquakes.

5. Lawlessness will abound, v.12.

This is a terrible fact, which does not need much explanation.

Crime today is increasing to sky-high proportions.

The newspapers contain one story after another of lawlessness.

6. As in the days of Noah, v.37-38.

Evil abounded. People had the attitude: "We don't care".

"They were eating and drinking": a generation of drinkers like today.

"They were taking and giving wives". Some say that the verse here indicates many wives in succession; marry, divorce, remarry, divorce, etc. That fits in very well with the situation today.

C. Let us pick up signs from other biblical references

1. "As in the days of Lot".

Read Luke 17:28

When we read in Genesis 19 of the evil of Lot's days, we see in verse 5-9 that it was lust, particularly a strong homosexual lust, which prevailed. This has also spread like wildfire around the world today.

2. The increase of knowledge.

Read Daniel 12:4

In previous centuries, knowledge increased very slowly. Our grandfathers travelled in carriages very much in the same way as Pharaoh did 3500 years ago.

The last 100 years have given us cars, telephones, electricity, radio, television, aeroplanes and much more.

Today knowledge increases so fast that we can hardly keep up.

3. Israel would return to their land, even to Jerusalem.

Read Zechariah 8:7-9 and Isaiah 11:11-12

In 1948 the Jews received their country back after they had been scattered all over the world for 1900 years. Today they are flocking back to Israel. They have also got Jerusalem back. (Amos 9:14-15)

4. The parable of the fig tree.

Read Mark 13:28-31

It is commonly accepted that it is a parable of the nation of Israel. When the re-gathered nation takes form and develops, you will know that the time is near.

Jesus said, "This generation shall not pass away, until it is all fulfilled". What generation? The generation that sees the re-born nation of Israel taking form.

D. A ten state union in Europe

1. Read Daniel 2:31-45.

"**Daniel's great image**" is clearly interpreted to be the four great world empires of the past: the Babylonian, the Medes-Persian, the Greek and the Roman Empire, which divided into two; the Eastern and the Western (the two legs of the image). The Roman Empire was never conquered, it just disappeared, and it will reappear in the end times, in ten strong and weak nations; joined together in a union. (The ten toes of clay and iron.) God will smash the last kingdom to pieces and He will set up His kingdom (the millennium kingdom) verse 34-35 and 44.

2. Read Daniel 7:1-14.

"The vision of the four beasts".

These four beasts have exactly the same interpretation as the "great image", the last beast with the ten horns, which is just before God sets up His kingdom.

3. Read Revelation 13:1-7.

"The beast of the sea".

This beast is a further description of the last kingdom on earth, before God sets up His kingdom. It has ten horns (that is ten nations or kings joined together). One of the horns (leaders) will assume power over the others and rule the world. (Anti-Christ, the coming world ruler.)

The Bible describes how the Anti-Christ will force everybody to take his mark on their forehead or on their right hand, Revelation 13:16-18, in order to be able to buy or sell.

4. "Possible fulfilment".

Today in Europe they are busy joining strong and weak nations together in what they call "the Common Market" built on the Treaty of Rome. It has become much more than a commercial union; it is now a powerful political force, which will soon rule the world under the Anti-Christ's leadership.

The mark on the right hand or the forehead is being tested at the moment, to be used instead of the old money or card systems.

Things are getting ready for the Anti-Christ – **but also for the return of Jesus Christ!**

E. Many more signs in the Word

Many more signs are mentioned in the Word of God, but those mentioned in this lesson should be enough to make us understand that we are very close to the return of Christ.

Advice to the Teacher:

Please handle this lesson with great wisdom and draw out and comment only on the signs that can be clearly understood by your students, according to their maturity and Bible knowledge. Don't leave them in confusion, especially when it comes to the last point **D**.

The great tribulation

Lesson 4

Introduction

Most Christians know phrases like: The great tribulation, Antichrist, the beast, the false prophet, the number of the beast, 666, Armageddon, etc., but where all these things belong and how they fit together is another complicated mystery. Let us look at these: (See No.6 on the diagram)

A. What is the great tribulation?

1. **A terrible time of trouble, worse than anything the world has ever seen.**

Read Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21-22

When the Antichrist gets control of the world, he will turn out to be a tough dictator who will rule with terror: "it will be a time of great tribulation, such as the world has never seen".

God will use this time to bring judgement on a fallen world, as described in the book of Revelation.

2. **The tribulation will cover, and involve, all the nations of the world.**

Read Revelation 3:10; 9:18-21

Jesus says, "....the hour of testing which will come upon **the whole world**...."

The whole of mankind will be powerfully affected and millions will die.

3. **Israel will be a special target for the Antichrist's terror.**

Read Matthew 24:15-21 and Jeremiah 30:7

The prophet Jeremiah calls this period "**the time of Jacob's trouble**" (Jacob stands for Israel). Jesus confirms that time of trouble in Matthew 24.

4. **How long will the great tribulation last?**

Read Revelation 11:2-3

The tribulation period is **seven years altogether**. It is often recorded in two times three and a half years.

In this scripture we have:

- a) The one half of 1260 days = 3,5 years
- b) The other half of 42 months = 3,5 years

In other places it is described as: "times, time and a half time".
(Revelation 12:14 and Daniel 7:25)

5. Daniel's 70 weeks.

Read Daniel 9:24-27

The Angel Gabriel told Daniel that 70 weeks were determined upon his people and the holy city (Jerusalem). That is 70 "heptads" meaning **weeks of seven years each**. Sixty-nine of those weeks (483 years) passed from the time that the decree of Emperor Cyrus went out to rebuild Jerusalem, until Jesus was crucified (483 years later that was fulfilled exactly).

One week of seven years is left.

Remember, this is a prophecy of God's dealings with the Jews. After they rejected Christ they were put aside during the church period. Romans 11:25-26. After this period the last week of seven years will take place. It is called the tribulation period. You even see in verse 27 that this seven-year period will be divided into two halves. In the first half Israel will have a covenant with the "prince" (Antichrist) but in the middle he will break it, and the last half will be a really tough tribulation period for Israel, ending in the battle at Armageddon.

B. Who is the Antichrist?

1. The coming world ruler.

Read Revelation 13:1-10 and Daniel 7:7-8 and 15-27

It seems that a last worldly empire will rise as a result of ten European nations joining together (the ten toes and the ten horns in the book of Daniel). The Antichrist will be a demonically inspired person, who will rise up and be the leader of this union, and he will soon dominate the world. (Revelation 17:12-13)

2. Another "beast" called "the false prophet" will appear.

Read Revelation 13:11-18

This is a religious movement headed by a strong leader, "the false Prophet". He will promote the Antichrist and cause people to worship him.

We see here "the satanic trinity" consisting of **Satan, the Antichrist and the false Prophet**. Satan, in his pride, always tries to copy God. (Revelation 13:4 and 11)

3. They will enforce a new "monetary system".

Read Revelation 13:15-17

There will be no money and no plastic credit cards at that time, but a three times six digit number by which each person will be registered and recognised in a computer system. The number will not be on a plastic card, but on the right hand or the forehead of each person. It will probably be by means of a "microchip" injected under the skin from where the computer in the shops, etc., will receive the number signal. We can say this with some confidence because there are already advanced experiments with this system.

4. The Antichrist will use the false, politicised church for his purpose.

Read Revelation 17:1-6

The religious fallen church is called:

"The great harlot" – "The great Babylon"

The "church" which is left behind at the time of the rapture, will be deeply involved in politics – "Riding on the beast", "committed adultery with the kings of the earth".

Mixing the true word of God with idolatry – persecuting the true saints: "Drunk with the blood of the saints".

C. The Antichrist and Israel

1. The Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel.

Read Daniel 9:27 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

When the Antichrist appears he will seem to be the one who can lead the world out of its trouble. Even Israel will make a covenant with him, but he will soon show his evil character. He will even set himself up in the temple and demand to be worshipped. That is when Israel will reject him and that will be the start of severe persecution for them.

Jesus foretold this: "When you see the abomination that causes desolation standing in the holy place, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains". (Matthew 24:15-21)

2. Satan will now use all his power to destroy Israel.

Read Revelation 12:13-16

The "woman" spoken of here is the nation of Israel. The dragon that persecutes her is Satan and his forces, but God protects her for three and a half years – verse 14.

Then the Antichrist will gather the nations to war against Israel. This leads up to the Armageddon war.

3. The battle of Armageddon.

Read Revelation 16:14 and 16 and Zechariah 14:2

Armageddon is the valley (a plain) behind Jerusalem. Armies from all nations, under the leadership of the Antichrist, will gather here to destroy Israel.

4. A victorious end to the tribulation.

Although the Antichrist thinks he is in charge, God is completely in control of the whole situation, using "kings", the Antichrist, even Satan, the powers of nature and the universe to bring judgement upon those who have turned against Him. **There will be a dramatic, victorious end to the tribulation period.**

The great tribulation (continued)

Lesson 5

Introduction

We will start this lesson with a question, which has given cause for much speculation and also disagreement, but it seems that Scripture speaks quite clearly regarding this matter.

A. Will the church go through the tribulation period?

1. When will the church be removed?

At least three different opinions are held:

- i) The church will be removed before the tribulation.
- ii) The church will be removed in the middle of the tribulation.
- iii) The church will be removed after the tribulation.

In order not to create confusion let us concentrate on the opinion that has the greatest support in Scripture:

a) Indicated in the teaching of Jesus.

Read Luke 21:36 and Revelation 3:10

Jesus uses expressions like this: "I will keep you from the hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole world".

Jesus also says that at His coming it shall be as in the days of Lot and Noah, and both these two righteous families were saved from the judgement over the world. (Luke 17:28-29 and Matthew 24:37)

b) Indicated in the teaching of Paul.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7

Here Paul teaches that the Antichrist will first be revealed when he who restrains him (keeps him back) is **taken out of the way**.

The question is: "Who is the one who restrains the evil one?" Well – Jesus gave His authority to **the church**. (Matthew 16:19 and Luke 10:19)

c) The proof from the book of Revelation.

Chapters 1 and 3 in Revelation give a prophetic picture of the full church history, from the early church, to the end-time church (the Laodicean church). Chapter 4:1 begins with, "**I saw a door standing open in heaven**" and the voice of Jesus saying, "**Come up here**".

This is believed by many to be the time of the Rapture of the church. After this verse the word "church" is not mentioned on earth any more.

2. Who is gathered together here?

Read Matthew 24:29-31

These verses seem to indicate that the "rapture" is after the great tribulation, right at the time of the return of Christ to earth. From v.15-28 Jesus concentrates on the part of the tribulation that concerns the Jews. We see from many other places in Scripture (as we will see later) that Jesus Christ will return to rescue them, gather them and set up the kingdom for Israel. Verse 31 is believed to be the final gathering of the Jews from all over the world.

Read Matthew 24:36-42

Again Jesus is speaking about the timing of His return, and He uses the "sign of Noah" (remember Noah was saved from the flood). So v.40-41 is a true description of the rapture of the believers.

The "Tribulation Saints" are people won for Jesus in that period; see point 'B'.

B. There are also some good things happening on earth in the tribulation period

Two Spirit-filled witnesses will come forth.

Read Revelation 11:3-8 and 11-12

These two will minister among the Jews during the first part of the tribulation period (1260 days). They will conclusively win for the Lord, and seal with the Spirit, 144000 of the people of Israel. (Revelation 7:4)

These 144000 saved and anointed Jews will probably be the instruments who will win for the Lord the great multitude no one could number out of the great tribulation. (Revelation 7:13-17)

The two witnesses will be martyred by the Antichrist, and so will the great multitude.

C. What will happen when Christ returns to earth with the armies of heaven?

Let us picture the situation:

It is towards the end of the seven-year tribulation period. The Antichrist and all his allies are gathered for war to wipe out Israel. The battle of Armageddon is at its peak. Israel is about to be crushed, when suddenly the sky over Jerusalem breaks open in a flash of light and Jesus Christ arrives with the armies of heaven. (See No.5 on diagram)

1. Christ will defeat the Antichrist with His army.

Read Revelation 19:11-21 and Zechariah 14:1-4

Christ will destroy the enemy by the breath of His mouth and the splendour of His coming. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

- a) **The Antichrist and the false prophet will be captured.**

Read Revelation 19:20-21 (See No.7 on diagram)

These two will be thrown into the lake of fire.
Their followers will be killed in the battle.

- b) **Satan will be captured. (See No.8 on diagram)**

Read Revelation 20:1-3

Satan will be bound for a thousand years – he will be cast into the bottomless pit. The mighty angel will shut him up and set a seal on him.

- 2. Christ will rescue the remnant of Israel.**

Read Jeremiah 30:7-11 and Zechariah 12:3-9

Here Jeremiah describes how Israel will be rescued out of the great tribulation ("Jacob's trouble") and how God will raise up "David" as their king. (The greater "David" is Christ.)

- 3. The people of Israel accept Jesus as their Messiah.**

Read Romans 11:25-26 and Zechariah 12:10-14 + 13:1, 6

Israel was rejected when they rejected Christ but, when the "Deliverer" (Jesus) comes, they will accept Him and be saved by His blood. Zechariah powerfully describes how they will look upon the scars of His wounds and understand that the Jesus whom they rejected is their Messiah. They will mourn and repent.

- 4. A nation will be born in a day.**

Read Isaiah 66:6-9 and Romans 11:15-26

Yes, indeed, the remnant of the nation of Israel will be born again that day, when they see and accept Jesus as their Messiah.

Paul explains in Romans 11 how Israel was broken off the "olive tree" because of their unbelief, but also how God one day will graft them back in. See verses 12, 15 and 23.

- 5. The judgement of the nations. (See No.9 on diagram)**

The Bible indicates that there will be a judgement of the nations at the end of the seven-year tribulation period. Christ will judge the nations in the valley of

Jehoshaphat (behind Jerusalem). It can be that the judgement is the actual outcome of the battle of Armageddon, where so many evil nations who followed the Antichrist will be killed and sent to eternal punishment.

- a) **The nations will be gathered for judgement.**

Read Joel 3:1 and Daniel 7:25-27

Both these scriptures declare that the Lord will enter into a judgement in connection with that last war.

- b) **The "sheep" and the "goats" will be separated.**

Read Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus declares: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory – He shall sit on the throne of His glory and all nations will be gathered before Him".

This is when evil, anti-God nations will be separated and sent to eternal punishment. They will not be allowed into the Millennium Kingdom where Christ will reign with His saints.

The Millennium Kingdom

Lesson 6

Introduction

There is a prayer that has been prayed millions of times and it goes like this, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Jesus taught us to pray like this and this prayer is surely going to be fulfilled on earth, during the millennium kingdom.
(See No.10 on diagram)

A. What is the millennium kingdom?

1. A "kingdom" lasting a thousand years.

Read Revelation 20:6

We speak of this time as being the Millennium because millennium means a thousand years.

2. The King of Kings (Jesus Christ) will reign over all the earth.

Read Zechariah 14:9 and Daniel 7:13-14

In that time Christ's reign will be established over every part of the earth.
(Psalm 72:8)

3. All His saints will reign with Him.

Read 2 Timothy 2:12 and Revelation 5:10

The redeemed out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation – "He made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on earth". (Revelation 20:6)

4. It will be a literal Kingdom on planet earth.

Read Daniel 2:36-44

It is not only a spiritual Kingdom, but evident to all our senses. In Daniel 2 we see that this Millennium Kingdom will be the last in a line of real historical kingdoms: Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman, so surely this kingdom that God sets up will be a literal kingdom on earth.

5. Jesus will reign from Jerusalem.

Read Isaiah 2:1-4 and Zechariah 8:3

It is very clearly stated that Jerusalem will be the capital of the world at that time, from where Jesus will reign. Micah 4:1-3.

6. **An everlasting Kingdom.**

Read Daniel 2:44 and Daniel 7:14

Here we are told that this Kingdom is **an everlasting Kingdom**, and not just for a thousand years.

How can that be explained?

After the thousand-year reign of Christ on this present planet earth, there will be a short rebellion, which will change the scene of the new earth, but the reign of Christ will not be stopped or broken in that period. So it can be said: **"His kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom"**.

B. When will Christ set up His kingdom on earth?

1. Right at the end of the seven-year tribulation period.

Read Zechariah 14:1-9

- a) **Verses 1-2:** Here the battle of Armageddon is described. (Revelation 19:11-21)
- b) **Verses 3-6:** Then the Lord will come with His saints to defeat the Antichrist and Satan will be imprisoned. (Revelation 20:1-3)
- c) **Verses 7-9:** **"On that day"** – This is clearly the time when the Lord will establish His reign over all the earth. (Revelation 20:4-6)

2. The mistake of the eleven Apostles.

Read Acts 1:6

They thought that Jesus would establish His kingdom on earth right after His resurrection.

Many people throughout history have made the same mistake of proclaiming His earthly kingdom now.

3. God's timing.

Read Daniel 2:44

"In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up His kingdom".

Those kings are the ten kings reigning together with the Antichrist. God's Word shows us in many places that His millennium reign will come after the seven-year tribulation period and Armageddon.

C. What will life be like in this Kingdom?

1. Satan's influence will be removed.

Read Revelation 20:1-3

- a) Two things are needed for the millennium kingdom to be possible:
 - i) The presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii) The absence of the devil.
- b) This is exactly what will happen. Christ will come to reign on the earth.
- c) Satan and his evil host will be locked up in the abyss for the entire thousand years. His demonic power and influence for evil will be removed from the earth.

2. It will be a time of peace.

Read Isaiah 2:2-4

- a) In the heart where Jesus is reigning there is peace. (John 14:27)
- b) The peace of Christ will be demonstrated in the earth, because the Prince of Peace will be reigning. Isaiah 9:6-7.
- c) There will be no more wars, nor fighting among people. Micah 4:1-5. Verse 4 – therefore nations will no longer need an army but will be involved in peaceful pursuits. (Isaiah 11:9)

3. The curse over the human race will be lifted.

Read Isaiah 35:3-6

- a) There will be a glorious divine healing as the sick and martyred people, who survived the tribulation, enter the kingdom.
- b) Remember, there will be two types of human beings:
 - i) Those who returned with Christ; they will have new resurrected bodies, which can never die or grow old or deteriorate in any way.
 - ii) The people who come in from the tribulation time. They will have normal human bodies, will also experience that the curse is lifted and their lives will be greatly prolonged. Isaiah 65:20.

4. The curse over the realm of nature will be lifted.

Read Isaiah 35:1-7 and Romans 8:21-22

- a) Paul tells us that the whole of creation longs to be delivered from the bondage it is under now.
- b) That deliverance will come when Christ reigns on earth. The prophets tell us,

"That the desert shall blossom as the rose", there shall be an abundance of grain and fruit on the earth. (Psalm 72:16)

5. The curse will be lifted over the animal world.

Read Isaiah 11:6-8 and Hosea 2:18

- a) In this present time even the animal kingdom is affected by evil, but in the Millennium, "the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the lion and the calf together".
- b) No animals will kill each other; they will all eat grass, verse 7.
- c) Even the creeping things will not be a curse at this time.

6. There will be a worldwide revival.

Read Isaiah 11:10 and Isaiah 66:19

- a) That nations enter the millennium kingdom; does not mean that the blood of Jesus saves them.
- b) The Jewish people: remember they received Christ at His return to the Mount of Olives and were born again by His Spirit. They will now, according to Isaiah 66, be sent to the nations and declare His glory among the gentiles.
- c) Jesus ("the root of Jesse", Isaiah 11:1-2) shall stand as a banner for the people, **for the people will seek Him.**
- d) The nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts. Zechariah 14:16 and Isaiah 2:1-3

Conclusion:

Prophecies about this glorious period are found all over the Bible, scattered like beautiful flowers on the mountainside. Now that you know what to look for, you will find them everywhere.

The Judgements of God

Lesson 7

Introduction

The end time period is also God's judgement time. Everyone will have to appear before God's judgement: those in high positions as well as the lowly, both rich and poor, including Satan and his evil host. The Bible describes **seven end-time judgements**. In this lesson we will go through them one by one.

Some of these judgements have already been discussed in the previous lessons and will only be briefly mentioned here.

A. The "judgement" of the believers

"Judgement begins with the house of God" (see No.3 on diagram)

Read 1 Peter 4:17 and Romans 14:10-12

This "judgement" will happen after the Rapture of the church. Every believer will have to appear before Christ to have his/her Christian life and work tested.

It is not a "judgement" to damnation because we are saved by grace not by works. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

It is a testing for rewards and crowns.

(For a full study of this "judgement" see Lesson 2, point E)

B. The judgement of the fallen apostate church

1. The "church" which supports the Antichrist's rule.

Read Revelation 17:1-6

- a) This fallen church is called "The great Babylon" or "The great harlot". It is a "church" deeply involved in politics – “she is riding on the beast (Antichrist), she has committed adultery with the kings of the earth”.

Adultery also stands for a "church" that has mixed the truth with idolatry.

- b) This "church" will be severely judged. Verse 1: "Come I will show you the judgement of the great harlot...."

2. Read Revelation 18:1-8.

- a) Here, especially in verse 8, we see how God completely destroys her, "....and she will be utterly burned with fire...."

- b) This judgement will take place in the second half of the great tribulation.

C. The judgement of the financial/political system (See No.6 on diagram)

Read Revelation 18:15-19

When "Babylon" is judged, the financial world collapses.

With the return of Christ, the whole political system, built around the Antichrist, will be destroyed. Revelation 19:15-21.

D. The judgement of the Antichrist and the false prophet (See No.7 on diagram)

Read Revelation 19:20-21

The Antichrist and the false prophet are captured and cast into "the lake of fire". These two are the first to be cast into the lake of fire, which is an eternal, final state.

This will happen right at the end of the seven-year tribulation period.

E. The judgement of Satan (the devil) (see Nos.8 and 11 on diagram)

1. Read Revelation 20:1-3.

Just after the tribulation period, before the Millennium starts, the first part of Satan's judgement is executed. He is sentenced to a thousand years imprisonment.

2. Satan will be released for a short while.

Read Revelation 20:7-10

Why is Satan released?

- a) To test people and nations to see if there is a true commitment to Christ, who at this time has been reigning over them for a thousand years. No one will be allowed to come into the new world unless he is truly born again.
- b) He is still the great deceiver and a great multitude will again follow him in rebellion against the Lord.
- c) Satan is now captured for the second time and thrown into the lake of fire and there the satanic trinity will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
- d) This is the final state – **there is no way out. Notice in verse 10** that the Antichrist and the false prophet have at this stage already been there for a thousand years.

F. The judgement of the worldly nations (see Nos.9 and 12 on diagram)

1. This judgement will also fall into two parts.

Read Matthew 25:31-32 and Revelation 20:9

- a) The first part (see No.9 on diagram) called the judgement of the nations, happens just after the tribulation period. (For a fuller study of that part, see Lesson 5, C, Point 5.)
- b) The second part will be after the Millennium (see No.12 on diagram) where fire will fall from heaven and devour the people and nations who followed Satan.

2. This fire will completely dissolve the earth and the "universe".

Read 2 Peter 3:10-13

- a) This dramatic description of how the earth and heaven will melt and disappear is fully in line with the words of Jesus when He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away...." Matthew 24:35.
- b) They will pass away to make room for something new and far better. Revelation 21:1.
- c) When the Bible speaks about heaven and earth passing away, the heaven spoken about here is the universe and probably only the part of the universe related to the earth. It has, of course, nothing to do with the heaven where God's throne is.

Hebrews 12:26-28 tells us that heaven and earth shall be shaken and removed so that the things which cannot be shaken will remain – **"....and we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken"**.

G. The judgement of the ungodly (see No.13 on diagram)

1. The judgement at the Great White Throne.

Read Revelation 20:11-15

- a) This is the final judgement, which will take place in heaven. All unbelieving (unregenerate) people who died throughout all of human history will be resurrected and will have to appear before the Great White Throne.
- b) God keeps a record of each person's life – "Books were opened and the dead were judged according to the things written in the books".
- c) **Why is "the book of life" opened at the last judgement?**

Is it not the judgement of all the unsaved (unregenerate) people?

The reason that this book is opened could be that, during the Millennium Kingdom, many got saved. Although they grew very old, they eventually died. The Bible states that every man has to appear before God's judgement. Therefore, these appear before God only to be told that their names were written in the book of life – and they could, with great joy, walk into the new world.

- d) Only those saved by the blood of Jesus have their names written in the "book of life" – so all the unregenerate people will fail God's test and they will be cast into the lake of fire.
- e) They will join the satanic trinity there. Jesus warned us again and again that this is the final everlasting state for anyone who is not saved by His blood.

There is no way out for all eternity! "Everlasting fire" – Matthew 18:8.

2. Death and Hades will be cast into the lake of fire.

Read Revelation 20:14

In the new world, there will be no more death, so there will be no need for a Hades (the kingdom of death).

The new heaven and earth

Lesson 8

Introduction

At the end of the last lesson we saw that heaven and earth passed away, but in the very next sentence in 2 Peter 3:13 the Apostle Peter triumphantly declares, "...but according to His promise we look for new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells".
(See No.14 on diagram)

A. The restoration of all things

God's plan for complete restoration:

Read Acts 3:21

It is God's plan, in Christ Jesus, to redeem and restore everything to its original pattern, which God intended before Satan destroyed it.

The fulfilment of this restoration will be when Christ returns and sets up His eternal reign. Matthew 19:28.

It will be partly fulfilled in the Millennium Kingdom, but not to its full and eternal extent.

B. The seven new promises

A glorious description:

Read Revelation 21:1-27 and 22:1-5

These two scriptures give us the most complete description of the wonderful state of the new eternal world.

It is not possible to describe the splendour and glory in human terms, so these chapters are full of pictures and illustrations to give us some understanding of our eternal future.

The seven new promises revealed here:

1. The new heaven
2. The new earth
3. The new Jerusalem (spiritual)
4. The new Jerusalem (physical)
5. The new temple
6. The new light
7. The new paradise

We will go through these promises in this lesson:

1. The new heaven.

Read Revelation 21:1

- a) The former heaven had passed away, probably because it had been the "home" for Satan and his demonic forces.
- b) At this present time – "...our struggle is against principalities and powers, against spiritual forces of evil **in the heavenly realms**". Ephesians 6:12.
- c) We are not told what the new heaven will be like, but it will surely be glorious, full of life and splendour.

2. The new earth.

Read Revelation 21:1 and 2 Peter 3:13

- a) It will be a new planet with absolutely no evil or curse of any kind.
- b) It will be a well-structured society, with nations and kings, **see Revelation 21:24-26**. In eternity we will not be "spirits floating in the air", but people with new eternal bodies, living with God in a perfectly structured society. **This is heaven – heaven on earth – a wonderful new earth.**
- c) There will be no sea on this new planet – why not?
 - i) The sea divides and keeps people apart.
 - ii) The sea can be violent and dangerous.
 - iii) The sea covers two thirds of the surface of the earth at this present time.
- d) The new planet will probably be much bigger. There must be room for a lot of people.

3. The New Jerusalem (Spiritual).

We are given two pictures of the New Jerusalem; one spiritual and one physical.

Read Revelation 21:2 and 21:9-10

- a) The first picture (the spiritual New Jerusalem) could be the inhabitants of the city, the New Jerusalem.
- b) This is the bride of Christ: all the redeemed, blood-washed saints, from Adam to the return of Christ. All these will probably inhabit the New Jerusalem.
- c) The nations going to Jerusalem could be the millions of people born during the Millennium Kingdom. (Remember people will be living a very long time and there will be no sickness and untimely death during that period, so the population will greatly increase.) Revelation 21:24-26.

4. **The New Jerusalem (Physical).**

Read Revelation 21:15-21

- a) The physical Jerusalem will surely be the capital city of the new world.
- b) **It will be a very great city in size.** According to the measure given here, it will cover five million square kilometres. Of course it must be big to be able to hold all the wonderful things described in the Word.
- c) **It will be a city of great glory.** The Apostle John described this city with the most precious material we know of: "It shone with the glory of God" – verse 11.

5. **The new Temple.**

Read Revelation 21:22 and 21:3-4

- a) The "Temple" will not be a building but the glorious presence of the Lord, which will be the all-dominating feature of that city.
- b) It will comfort and bless men beyond imagination.
- c) This will be the focus of all our attention and worship.

6. **The new light.**

Read Revelation 21:23 and 22:5

- a) The city does not need the sun and moon to shine. There will be no darkness, no night.
- b) The glory of God and of the Lamb (Jesus) will shine with heavenly brightness.
- c) In the most holy place in the Tabernacle of Moses, there was no physical light either, but the glory of God filled the place with light, so much so that the face of Moses shone when he came out.

These will be the glorious conditions of the New Jerusalem!

7. **The new paradise.**

Read Revelation 22:1-4 and 2:7

- a) The first paradise was spoiled because man gave in to Satan. In the restoration, in the new world, paradise is restored in an even greater glory.
- b) Verse 1: The throne of God and of Jesus Christ will be there in the midst of the city in all its splendour and glory. (One throne – not two.)

- c) Verse 2: The river of living water will flow from the throne, right down the middle of the city. It will bring life and freshness.
- d) This surely illustrates the Holy Spirit – so here we see, in the midst of His people, the Triune God: **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**. (John 7:37-39)
- e) There is now free access to the Tree of Life, which will give life and strength to the nations.
- f) Verse 3: Nothing will be under a curse; everything will be perfect. We think creation is perfect and beautiful today, even though the Bible tells us that creation is under bondage and a curse now! However, when it is all restored, it will be indescribably glorious.
- g) Verse 4: "We shall see Him face to face. His name shall be on our foreheads" – that speaks about deep, deep fellowship. We will be His people forever.

C. Perfect activity in eternity

We will be involved in a fulfilling and satisfying activity.

Read Revelation 22:3 and 5

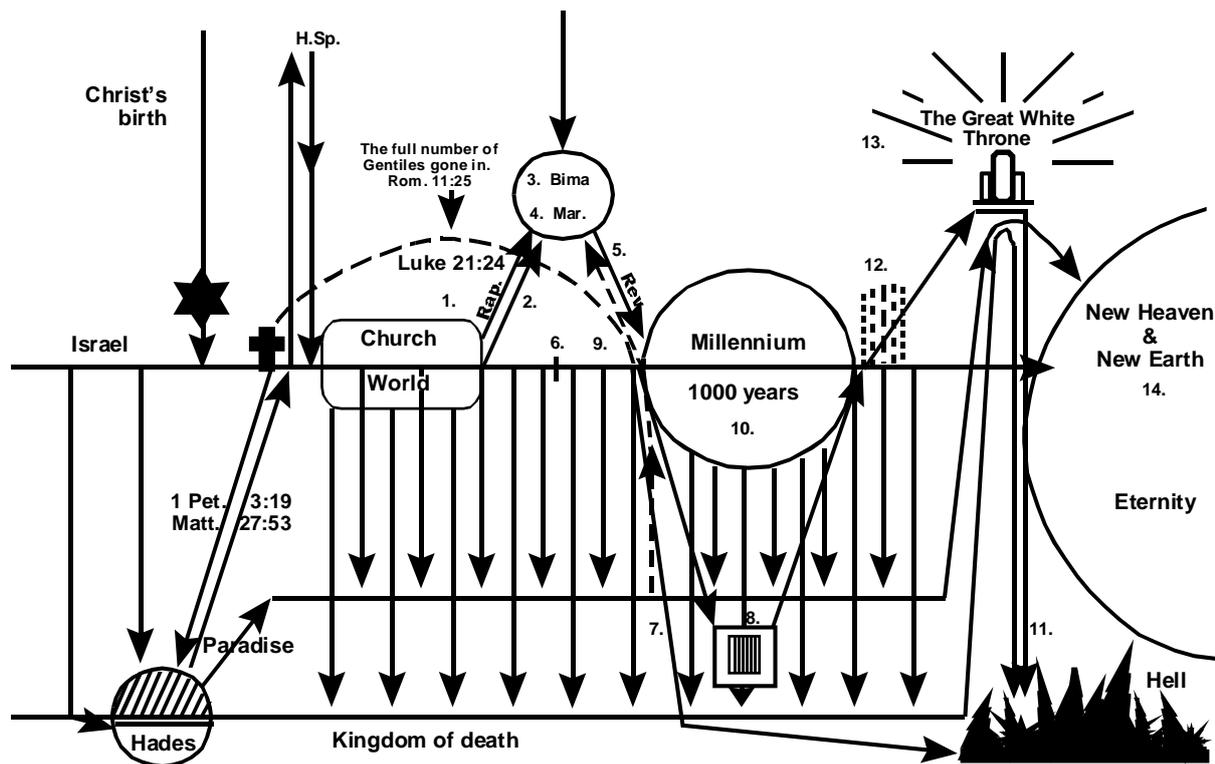
1. "We shall serve Him" with perfect attitudes and motives. That will also mean serving one another.
2. We shall reign with Him forever and ever in a perfect society.
3. We shall explore the fullness of God and even eternity will not be long enough.

Conclusion

In the book of Revelation the Apostle John tries to describe, in limited human language, the glory and majesty of the things to come. To this end, he uses pictures and illustrations, but one day we will see and experience the reality, which will be far beyond description.

Study Advice

Carefully study the following diagram of God's plan through the times, which starts just before the birth of Christ and continues into eternity. When teaching this subject put this plan up in front of your students because reference will be made to this diagram right throughout the study book. Follow the numbers 1 to 14.



Key to the Plan:

The line in the middle is the line of time, from the Old Testament (Israel) into Eternity. The two lines underneath are the dead believers (Paradise) and the unbelievers (Kingdom of death)). The half circle from the Cross to the end of the Tribulation, is Israel cut off until the full number of Gentiles have gone in.

- No. 1. The sign of Christ's coming intensifies.
- No. 2. The Rapture of the resurrected and changed believers.
- No. 3. The Judgement Seat of Christ (Bima).
- No. 4. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
- No. 5. The Revelation, where Christ returns to the earth with His saints.
- No. 6. The Great Tribulation (a seven year period).
- No. 7. The anti-christ and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire.
- No. 8. Satan is imprisoned for a thousand years.
- No. 9. Armageddon and the judgement of the nations.
- No. 10. The Millennium (the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth).
- No. 11. The final judgement of Satan.
- No. 12. The destruction of the earth.
- No. 13. The judgement of all unsaved people, from all time (The Great White Throne).
- No. 14. The New Heaven and the New Earth (Eternity).