

IN THE
TWINKLING
OF AN
EYE

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.

I think everyone would agree that we are living in unstable times. The world seems to be imploding before our very eyes. Terrorist attacks. Shootings. Economic meltdowns. Chaos in the Middle East. Earthquakes. Tsunamis. Blizzards. Hurricanes. Tornadoes. Wars.

Even a casual reader of the Bible would have to wonder, “Are we living in the last days? Is the world as we know it about to end?”

In light of what Jesus said, these seem to be good questions. He warned that as we get closer and closer to the end of the age we would “hear of wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6). He made clear that “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matthew 24:7). He even predicted that there would be “famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (Matthew 24:7).

You don’t have to be a Bible scholar to realize that these things are happening today. If you read the newspaper or watch the daily news, you are very much aware that all of the things Jesus prophesied are coming to pass. Could these global uprisings and natural disasters have been what the apostle Paul had

in mind when he wrote that “in the last days perilous times will come” (II Timothy 3:1)?

A skeptic might say, “Now wait a second. There have always been wars. There have always been natural disasters. These things are not new.” And he would be correct in saying that.

The question is not whether wars and natural disasters are new. The question is whether or not they are increasing. In speaking of the end times, the apostle Paul compared the created world to a woman about to give birth. He explained that “the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:22, NIV).

What does the created world have in common with a woman who is about to give birth? Well, first of all, both are in pain. Let’s think about an expectant mother for a moment. As the nine months of pregnancy draw to a close, she begins to experience birth pains. The first birth pain doesn’t mean that she is about to give birth. Neither does the second. Nor the third. The birth pains simply mean that she is getting closer to the time when her baby will be born. Any mother will tell you that as her birth pains increased in frequency and intensity she

knew that the actual time of her delivery was near.

So when Paul compared the created world to an expectant mother, he was saying that as the birth pains increase in frequency and intensity you can know that something is about to happen. The expectant mother is about to give birth, and the created world is about to usher in the return of Christ. Paul explained that we “groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23).

Every time there is an earthquake, there is a birth pain. The earth is saying, “Something’s not settled. I’m in pain.” Every time there is a hurricane, there is a birth pain. The ocean is saying, “I’m restless. I’m not at peace. I can’t contain all of this roaring water.”

While it is true that there have always been earthquakes and natural disasters, it is also true that they seem to be increasing in frequency and intensity. Many studies have reported just that. One report said the number of category 4 and 5 hurricanes has increased 80% in the past thirty years.¹ Even in recent years, it seems obvious that hurricanes are getting stronger and stronger.

The same trend seems to be happening with earthquakes, too. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), there has been an increase in the number of earthquakes registering 7.0 or above on the Richter Magnitude Scale.² We have certainly seen reports of many of these earthquakes on the news in recent years.

In addition to an increase in the intensity of hurricanes and earthquakes, there has been an increase in the number of wars as well. Professor Mark Harrison of the University of Warwick stated, “The number of conflicts has been rising on a stable trend.”³

What does this mean? It means that the birth pains are increasing in frequency and intensity. And just like that is a warning sign to an expectant mother, it should be a warning sign to us as well. It is nature’s way of saying, “Something is about to happen. Something is about to change. Get ready. Be prepared. Life as you know it is about to end!”

And that is the purpose of this booklet. For several years, I have wanted to write on the end times. My desire has not been to try to explain every detail of what the Bible teaches about the end of the world. Instead, I have wanted to

paint with a broad stroke and lay out a chronological overview of events yet to come.

My prayer is that this booklet will become a helpful resource for you. In these pages, I address *ten prophetic events* that will one day take place. The best way to learn this material is to simply memorize these events. There is a certain logic to their progression so that memorizing them will not be difficult. God is a God of order, and these prophetic events will take place in an orderly, systematic way. So try your best to memorize them. Use other books, tools, and study Bibles to gather additional information. But let this booklet be the “big-picture resource” that helps you put all the prophetic pieces presented in the Bible in an easy-to-understand format.

The Rapture



The next event on God’s prophetic clock is the rapture of the church. One day, Jesus will step out of heaven and gather His people together to meet Him in the air. The Bible says that His descent from heaven to the air will be accompanied by a heavenly shout, the voice of

an archangel, and the sounding of the trumpet of God. The Bible says that the bodies of those who had received Christ as Savior during their lifetimes will rise from the dead, be reunited with their living souls, and be taken to Jesus. After that happens, those of us who are still alive and who know Jesus personally will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We will be reunited with our loved ones. We will meet believers we had never known. We will see Jesus face to face. And in our new, resurrected bodies we will follow Him into heaven.

The apostle Paul described this event with these words: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

While the word “rapture” does not occur in our English Bibles, it is found in the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible. The Latin word for rapture is “rapturo.” It is translated in our English Bibles as “caught up”

(I Thessalonians 4:17). The word “rapture” simply means “to be caught up” or “to be taken away.” One day, Christians will be “taken away” from the earth. We will be “caught up” into the presence of God to be with Him forever.

It is interesting to me that the apostle Paul expected to be living when the rapture took place. He said, “Then **we** who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thessalonians 4:17, emphasis mine). Paul knew that he was living in the last days. And he knew that the rapture could take place at any moment.

That leads to an interesting question. What does the phrase “last days” in the Bible refer to? The phrase “last days” refers to the period of time that began with the *birth* of Christ and that will climax with the *return* of Christ. Keep in mind that prophecies had been made about Christ’s birth for hundreds of years before He was born in Bethlehem. The birth of Christ signaled the beginning of the last days. The period of the patriarchs, judges, and Old Testament prophets was over. A new day had dawned. The Bible says it this way: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke

in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has **in these last days** spoken to us by *His Son*” (Hebrews 1:1-2, emphasis mine).

Think about it. The “last days” began over 2,000 years ago. That must mean we are living in the last hours now! The rapture could take place at any moment. And when it does, it will happen quickly.

Paul gave us additional insight into this event in I Corinthians 15. He said, “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

The rapture will take place “in the twinkling of an eye” (I Corinthians 15:52). Do you know how long a twinkle is? Well, the simple answer is: “Not very long.” The scientific answer, though, is much more interesting.

Let’s think about a blink and a twinkle. A blink is a reflex action of the eye. A twinkle is when your eye reflects a particle of light. A blink lasts somewhere between 300 and 400 milliseconds. A twinkle occurs in approximately

a billionth of a second. And some say that a twinkle is even faster than a twink!⁴ The point is that the rapture will take place quickly. Before your eyes can even reflect a particle of light, the rapture will be over. The bodies of Christians who have died will be out of the ground and in the air. And those of us alive at that time will join them in the air to be with the Lord forever.

Someone may read this and say, “I’m confused. I thought Christians went to heaven as soon as they died. What does the Bible mean when it talks about the dead rising?”

That is an excellent question. When a Christian dies, he or she does indeed go to heaven immediately. The Bible says that when we are “absent from the body” we are “present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8). When we die, our souls leave our bodies and go immediately into the presence of God in heaven. But our bodies are dead. They are buried. We are in heaven, but our bodies are in the ground.

I have four grandparents who are already in heaven. That makes me wonder, “What do they look like now?” Obviously they don’t have their resurrected bodies yet. That won’t

happen until the rapture. So are their souls just floating around in heaven like ghosts? No. They may not have their *resurrected bodies* yet, but they have some kind of *recognizable bodies*. We learn this from a story Jesus told in Luke 16:19-31. In this story, Jesus made it clear that Abraham has a recognizable body in heaven. Abraham's physical body was buried long ago. One day, it will be resurrected. But in the meantime, he has a recognizable, heavenly body of some kind. The same is true of my grandparents and of all Christians who have already died physically.

At the rapture, Jesus will raise their dead bodies, reunite those bodies with their living, recognizable souls, and give them their new, resurrected bodies. Then, those of us who are still alive will be transformed into our new, perfect bodies. It will be a miracle of epic proportions. It will be the happiest day of our lives!

And it will result in utter chaos on the earth. Millions of Christians will instantly disappear. Many cars will have no drivers. Many planes will have no pilots. Many classrooms will have no teachers...and a lot less students. And those who are still here will be trying to figure out what in the world just happened.

What will have happened will be the rapture of the church! It is the next event on God's prophetic clock. And it is the first of ten events that you are supposed to memorize!

The Judgment Seat of Christ



Imagine the scene. All believers of all ages are together in heaven. We have met the Lord in the air, and He has taken us to heaven. We are in our new bodies. We are in the presence of Jesus. We are forever liberated from the power of sin. Revelation 4 and 5 describe the setting beautifully. It is a time of worship. It is a time of singing. It is a time to lay our "crowns before the throne" of God (Revelation 4:10). But wait a second. Where did the crowns come from?

The crowns are God's rewards to His faithful people. Several crowns are mentioned in the Bible. There is "the crown of righteousness" that Jesus will give to everyone who longed to see His face (II Timothy 4:8). There is "the crown of life" that will be given to everyone who truly loves Jesus and stayed faithful to Him during the trials of life (James

1:12; Revelation 2:10). There is “the crown of glory” that will be given to the faithful ministers of God (I Peter 5:4). We will receive these crowns from Jesus, and we will lay them at His feet as an act of worship. Think about it. Jesus, who once wore *a crown of thorns* will receive from us the very crowns He has given us...*crowns of righteousness, crowns of life, and crowns of glory*. But when exactly will we receive these crowns?

We will receive our crowns, along with any other rewards the Lord may have for us, at what the Bible calls *The Judgment Seat of Christ* (see II Corinthians 5:10). This event will take place in heaven...after the rapture.

There are millions of people in heaven right now. But they haven't received their rewards yet. Why not? Because the influence of their lives continues on. God will judge us based on our faithfulness to Him and our impact for Him. But our influence for good or for evil will outlive us. For that reason, the judgment of believers must wait until the end of the age.

At *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, all believers will stand before Jesus. Let me be clear. This is not a judgment of our sins. Our sins were judged by God when Jesus carried

them to the cross (see II Corinthians 5:21). Jesus was punished for our sins. Jesus died for our sins. And we will never be judged for them. Praise God! The judgment of sins has already taken place!

The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a judgment of sin. Instead, it is a judgment of our service to God. Paul said, “For we must all appear before *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10, emphasis mine). The word “appear” literally means “be revealed.” At *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, our motives will be revealed. Our thoughts will be revealed. Our desires will be revealed. On that day, we will be rewarded not only for *what* we did but also for *why* we did what we did.

The Bible says that each one’s work will become clear “because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is” (I Corinthians 3:13). The work we did for God with improper motives and impure desires will be destroyed. We will receive no reward for that. The work we did for God with proper motives and pure hearts will be rewarded.

To be completely honest, this judgment frightens me a little bit. It convicts me. It makes me stop and think about the motives behind my ministry. Are they pure? Are they pleasing to God? Is my heart right?

I'm not the only person to be frightened by the thought of being completely revealed before God. The apostle Paul was, too. In fact, in the very next verse after talking about this judgment, Paul used the phrase, "the terror of the Lord" (II Corinthians 5:11).

The Judgment Seat of Christ should cause us to ask God to search our hearts. We should ask Him to reveal any improper motives or impure desires that could taint our service to Him. And as He reveals things, let's deal with them. Let's repent. Let's get our hearts right with God. Let's do whatever we need to do so that we can do well at this judgment. Not that we might boast of our rewards, but that we could gratefully lay them at Jesus' feet...as our way of saying to Him, "Thank You for letting me serve You in the first place."

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb



After *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, believers will enjoy *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*. This meal, of course, will take place in heaven. After we have received our rewards at *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, we will sit down to dine with Christ, our Savior, Lord, and King.

The Scripture says, “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7). We are described in this passage as the bride of Christ. And we have prepared ourselves for this event by being cleansed by His precious blood (see I Peter 1:18-19 & I John 1:7). We could never earn our salvation. We receive it as a gift (see Romans 6:23).

The passage goes on to say that “to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Revelation 19:8). Although our salvation is based upon our faith in Jesus Christ, our rewards will be dependent upon the way in which we have lived our lives. Our

rewards will be received at *The Judgment Seat of Christ*. The crowns we receive will be laid at Jesus' feet in worship. The additional rewards we receive will be worn by us throughout eternity. And this imagery is portrayed at *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*.

Immediately after *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb* in heaven will be *The Second Coming of Christ* to earth. But before we deal with that event, we must consider what will be happening on the earth while *The Judgment Seat of Christ* and *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb* are taking place in heaven. And what will be happening on the earth will be awful. We know it as *The Great Tribulation*. And the Bible has a lot to say about it.

The Great Tribulation



While believers will be receiving rewards in heaven and enjoying *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*, sheer pandemonium will be taking place on the earth. Immediately after the rapture of the church, a period of unparalleled suffering will begin to take place on the earth. We know from a rather complicated passage of

Scripture found in Daniel 9:24-27 that this period of suffering and judgment will last for seven years. Theologians commonly refer to this dispensation of time as *The Great Tribulation*. Jesus Himself talked about it in Matthew 24:15-28 and in Mark 13:14-23. It is described in great detail in Revelation 6-19.

What is the purpose of *The Great Tribulation*? As I understand the Bible, the purpose of this time of suffering and judgment will be to give unbelievers living at that time a final chance to repent and receive Christ as Savior and Lord. And that is exactly what will happen. In Revelation 7, we read that 144,000 Jewish people will be saved as well as “a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9).

God, in His mercy, will give the unbelieving world one final chance to repent of their sins and receive Christ. He will reveal to those living on the earth at that time how awful life is when Christ is rejected. The judgments of God during *The Great Tribulation* will serve two purposes. First, they will be judgments on sin. Second, they will serve as “wake up calls” for those who have rejected Christ as Savior.

Many will be saved. And sadly, many others won't.

There will be three categories of judgments during this seven-year period. They are known as *The Seal Judgments*, *The Trumpet Judgments*, and *The Bowl Judgments* (see Revelation 6-16). Within each category, there will be seven actual judgments...each one getting progressively worse. There will be war, poverty, widespread death, and cosmic disturbances never before seen by man. There will be the destruction of vegetation. There will be locusts, sores, and the destruction of the oceans and rivers. There will be fires, darkness, pain, and an earthquake unlike anything the world has ever known. There will be a massive hailstorm. You would think that God would have everyone's attention. You would think that everyone would turn to Him for mercy. But sadly, the Bible teaches that there will be many who do "not repent and give Him glory" (Revelation 16:9). Instead of turning to God for salvation and deliverance, many will curse God. It is almost impossible to fathom such hard-heartedness. Like Pharaoh in Old Testament times, the hearts of many will become harder and harder.

The world will be in such a state of disarray that people will be utterly desperate for peace. They will follow anyone who promises to help them. And this is how the Anti-Christ will rise to power. The Bible says that he will deceive those on the earth at that time (see Revelation 13:13-14).

As we put together the biblical pieces from Daniel 9, Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Revelation 6-19, we learn that the Anti-Christ will make a covenant of peace with Israel. He will allow the Jewish people to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and to reinstitute animal sacrifice. Remember, the Jewish people haven't had a temple since the Romans destroyed it in 70 A.D., and they are anxious to once again have one. In fact, the furnishings for the yet-to-be-built temple are already stored away in a secure location in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem. Several years ago, when I saw these furnishings, I was reminded of how very close we must be living to the end of the age. After the rapture, when the Anti-Christ rises to power, he will allow the Jewish people to rebuild their temple. The Jews will initially think that the Anti-Christ, who will present himself as a world political leader, is on their side. He will be intelligent, charismatic, and

winsome. He would have to be to deceive so many people.

Midway through the tribulation, however, he will set himself on the throne of the temple and demand to be worshipped. His hatred for Israel will be revealed as he will violently turn on them. In the midst of Israel's persecution, the Bible says that God will protect the Jewish people. He has prepared a place of refuge for His chosen people (see Revelation 12:6). Many theologians believe the location is in Petra, Jordan. I have been there and must confess that the argument for this location is compelling. Regardless of the exact spot of protection, though, the important thing is that God will not abandon His chosen people...not even during *The Great Tribulation*. He will keep them in the palm of His hand.

The Anti-Christ will cause everyone who wants to buy and sell "to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads" (Revelation 13:16). This mark is known as the mark of the beast (see Revelation 13:17). The mark of the beast is the number of the beast which is 666. The number 7 is the number of perfection. The number 6 is the number of imperfection. The number 3 is the number of completion. So three sixes represent complete

imperfection. And that is exactly what the Anti-Christ will be...completely imperfect.

Those who receive this mark will do so to their own destruction. They may be able to buy and sell, but there is nothing in the Bible that would lead us to believe that they may repent and be saved after receiving the mark of the beast. At that point, they will have made their decision, pledged their allegiance, and literally sold their souls to the devil. For the remainder of *The Great Tribulation*, their lives may be a little easier, but the eternal price they will pay will be beyond their worst imagination. Rejecting Christ is costly.

The Second Coming of Christ



At the end of *The Great Tribulation*, Jesus will return to the earth. Remember, at the rapture Jesus will come to the air and then return to heaven. But at His *Second Coming*, He will actually come to the earth. The Bible says that “in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives” (Zechariah 14:4).

We call it His *Second Coming* to the earth, because His *First Coming* has already taken place. His *First Coming* was in Bethlehem. The first time Jesus came to the earth, He came as a baby. The second time Jesus comes to the earth, He will come as a King. He came the first time to be the Savior. He's coming the second time to be the Judge. He came the first time in great humility. He's coming the second time in great glory. He came the first time to serve. He's coming the second time to reign. At His *First Coming*, many people failed to recognize Him for who He is. But at His *Second Coming*, there will be no question. Jesus is coming back as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16)!

The Battle of Armageddon



The Second Coming of Christ will begin with a war that will end all wars. It is known as *The Battle of Armageddon*.

Let's review. For the seven years immediately following the rapture, Christians will be in heaven. During these seven years, we will appear before *The Judgment Seat of*

Christ, and we will celebrate *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*. While that is happening for believers in heaven, those living on the earth will be enduring *The Great Tribulation*.

At the end of the tribulation period, the Anti-Christ will try his best to destroy the Jewish people. He will pursue them as they flee from Jerusalem to the place God has prepared to protect them. In his pursuit, the Bible predicts that “news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many...yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him” (Daniel 11:44-45). The news that will trouble him will be from the northern part of Israel. It is all part of God’s plan to bring the Anti-Christ to Megiddo, in the Jezreel Valley, where *The Battle of Armageddon* will take place. God will use the wicked kings of the day to set the Anti-Christ up for his ultimate doom.

In the New Testament, the Bible says that there will be “spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:14). The Bible goes on to declare that these evil spirits will gather the armies of the world

“together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Revelation 16:16).

The name “Armageddon” simply means “Mount Megiddo.” Megiddo is the dominant city in the Jezreel Valley. The Jezreel Valley is also called the Valley of Armageddon. In Bible times, it was the crossroads of the world. Whoever controlled Megiddo controlled the land, the trade, and the commerce of that day.

Historians tell us that more battles have been fought in this valley than in any other place in the entire world. Napoleon described it as “the world’s greatest natural battlefield.” Having been there many times myself, I can see why. Armies coming from the north, south, east, and west would naturally fight it out in this valley as they sought to control the region.

God has chosen this to be the site of the world’s final battle. The Anti-Christ and the armies of the world will be there trying to control the world. And at just the right time, heaven will open and Jesus will descend. The apostle John had a vision of this future event and described it this way: “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True,

and in righteousness He judges and makes war” (Revelation 19:11).

Imagine that. Jesus is coming back to the earth on a white horse. And He’s not coming alone. The Bible says that “the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses” (Revelation 19:14). Perhaps you are wondering who makes up the armies of heaven. Who are all these people following Jesus on white horses? Friend, this army is comprised of all the people who have ever been saved and taken to heaven. I will be in this army. My family will be in this army. I hope that you will be in this army. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, and Isaiah will be in this army. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will be in this army. Peter and Paul will be in this army. We will all be following Jesus on our white horses. This is one horse ride you don’t want to miss!

And the great thing about this war is that we don’t have to fight. Jesus will fight this battle for us. It seems appropriate actually. He has always wanted to fight our battles for us.

The Bible says that “out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations” (Revelation 19:15). Elsewhere in

Scripture we are told that “the sword of the Spirit...is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). My understanding is that Jesus will simply speak, and the armies of the world will be destroyed. Satan’s number is 666. Complete imperfection. We could say that Jesus’ number is 777. Complete perfection. At *The Battle of Armageddon*, 777 will obliterate 666!

According to Scripture, the Anti-Christ, also known as “the beast,” will be captured along with the false prophet (Revelation 19:20). “These two,” the Bible says, will be “cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20). Everyone else who had gathered in the Jezreel Valley for this war will be “killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse” (Revelation 19:21).

The carnage from this war will be extensive. The Bible teaches that the bloodshed from this battle will come “up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs” (Revelation 14:20). That literally means that for one hundred eighty four miles there will be a four-foot river of blood flowing from northern Israel to southern Israel. This will truly be the war to end all wars.

I never will forget an experience I had in the Jezreel Valley many years ago. Our tour guide was explaining how *The Battle of Armageddon* would one day be fought on the very ground upon which we were standing. Perhaps for the first time in my life I was able to actually imagine what it would be like. I looked up into the sky and imagined that glorious day when heaven itself would open and Jesus would return. I could see Him, in my mind's eye, on His white horse. And then I began to imagine how many other believers would be on their white horses...following Jesus into battle.

And then I began to imagine where my horse and I might be. As I thought about all the great believers from Old Testament times, all the great Christians from New Testament times, and all the faithful followers of Christ in the history of the church, I was just overwhelmed by the fact that one day, by the grace of God, I will be in that great army of heaven. And I prayed a prayer that day that I never have forgotten. This was the heart of it. I said, "Jesus, thank You that I'm saved. Thank You that one day I'll be in that heavenly army. Thank You that You have a white horse for me to ride. But, Lord, in Your army, I'm not a general. I'm not a captain. I'm not a sergeant. I'm just a private. I'm not an Abraham. I'm

not a Moses. I'm not a David. I'm not a Paul. I'm not a Martin Luther. I'm not a John Wesley. I'm not a Billy Graham. I'm just a private. But, Jesus, if it could be possible, I pray that on that great day when we follow You out of heaven and down to the Jezreel Valley for the great *Battle of Armageddon*...I pray that my horse could be next to Your horse."

You may think that was a silly or even a selfish prayer. That's okay. I realize that the important thing is not really the placement of our horses but the fact that we're in God's army at all. But to be perfectly honest, I'm just like so many of you who are reading this booklet. I love Jesus. And I want to be as close to Him as I possibly can...in life, in death, in heaven, and on that great day when He wages and wins *The Battle of Armageddon!*

The Millennium



After Jesus' decisive victory over the Anti-Christ and the armies of the world in the Jezreel Valley, we will enter into a thousand year period of peace on the earth. Remember, by this time we will have followed Jesus out of

heaven, into the Jezreel Valley, and we will now be following Him to Jerusalem where He will set up His millennial kingdom.

The word “millennium” is not in our English Bibles. It is a Latin word that literally means “a thousand years.” And the phrase “a thousand years” appears repeatedly in Revelation 20 to describe this age of peace under the leadership of Jesus. There are two primary reasons why there will be such peace during this thousand year period. First, Satan won’t be here. Immediately after *The Battle of Armageddon*, an angel will chain him and “cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him” (Revelation 20:3). Satan will be confined to a bottomless pit for a thousand years (see Revelation 20:1-3). With the Anti-Christ and the false prophet already in hell and with Satan in the bottomless pit, the world will be a much better place. They won’t be here to deceive people. They won’t be here to tempt people. The world will be free from their evil influence.

The second reason there will be such peace during this golden age is because Jesus Himself will be ruling the world “with a rod of iron” (Revelation 19:15). The “Prince of Peace” will have a kingdom of peace, and these will be the

greatest thousand years the world has ever known (Isaiah 9:6).

We have to try our best to put all the biblical pieces pertaining to the millennium together. Let's keep it simple. Jesus will win *The Battle of Armageddon* in the Jezreel Valley in northern Israel. He will then travel to Jerusalem in southern Israel to set up His millennial kingdom. Isaiah 2, Isaiah 11, Isaiah 35, Ezekiel 44, and Ezekiel 47 make it clear that the Messiah will set up His millennial kingdom in Jerusalem.

So how will Jesus travel the approximately seventy miles from Megiddo to Jerusalem? Well, remember, He will be on a horse. And so will we. We will presumably ride (or fly!) on horseback from the Jezreel Valley to Jerusalem. I like to think of it as a seventy mile victory ride! Upon arrival, Jesus will dismount His horse, and "His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east" (Zechariah 14:4). He will then lead us down the Kidron Valley, perhaps along the same *Palm Sunday Trail* He traveled five days before His crucifixion. He will then lead us up the other side of the Kidron Valley, through the Eastern Gate, and into the city of Jerusalem. At last there will be peace in the Middle East!

Think about what life will be like on earth at this time. There will be no war. The Bible says, “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4). Even the animal kingdom will be at peace. The Bible says, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat” (Isaiah 11:6). The Bible says that during these years “the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1).

One of the most fascinating things that will happen during the millennium is that the Dead Sea will come to life. If you have been to Israel, you know that the Dead Sea is appropriately named. There is no life in it whatsoever. No fish. No dolphins. No whales. No life. The mineral content is so high that nothing can live in it. The Dead Sea is dead!

But during the millennium, that will change. The Dead Sea will come to life! Water will begin to flow from underneath the millennial temple in Jerusalem (see Ezekiel 47:1). The flow of water will turn into a river of water. When this river of fresh water finally reaches the Dead Sea, the Bible says that its “waters are healed” (Ezekiel 47:8). The Bible goes on to explain, “There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they

will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many” (Ezekiel 47:9-10).

Wherever Jesus is, there is life. And when He comes back, He will change everything. There will be life instead of death. There will be peace instead of war. There will be love instead of hate. There will be purity instead of sin. And best of all, we will reign “with Christ for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4). He will give us assignments. We will have responsibilities. And we will enjoy His presence as we serve Him joyfully!

Satan Sentenced to Hell



What will happen after these thousand years have ended? The Bible clearly tells us. “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations” (Revelation 20:7-8). Satan will rally the unsaved forces of the day to

attack the people of God. Have you noticed that Satan is always stirring up trouble? He is always involved in a fight of some kind. Jesus brings peace. Satan brings strife.

The obvious question is, “Who will Satan deceive?” Well, think for a moment. He certainly won’t deceive those of us who followed Jesus out of heaven on our white horses. We will be in our new, resurrected bodies. Satan and sin can’t touch us then. So who will he deceive?

He will deceive the people who will be born during the millennium. Remember, at *The Battle of Armageddon* not everyone on the earth will be killed. The only people who will be killed in that battle will be the people who fought in it. Unsaved people in other countries and regions of the world won’t be killed at that time. They will live on. And they will eventually die. But before they do, many of them will have children. And their children will have children. And so on. So when Satan is released from the bottomless pit, he will deceive the people living on the earth who have never received Christ. During the millennium these people will have been obedient to Christ outwardly, but they will have failed to receive Him as their Savior and Lord. Their hearts

were never changed. They were never saved. They lived in an age of peace. But they never embraced the Prince of Peace. And after the millennium, Satan, following his release from the bottomless pit, will entice them to follow him.

Once Satan gathers his rebellious followers for one last attack on the people of God, the Bible teaches that fire will come down from God out of heaven and destroy them (see Revelation 20:9). This Satanic rebellion will be quickly crushed. God will defeat Satan once and for all.

And after He does, the Bible says that Satan, the great deceiver, will be “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). And that is how Satan’s rebellion against God will end...in hell.

That is why it is so important that we follow the right person. Satan promises fun. But his promises are lies, and they lead to hell. Jesus promises life. His promises are true, and they lead to heaven. Be very careful who you follow.

The Great White Throne Judgment



Those who rejected Christ during their lifetimes will end up at *The Great White Throne Judgment*. This is the final judgment for all who were never saved. They will be judged for their sins, and they will be sentenced to hell.

It is interesting to note that when unbelievers die, they do not go immediately to hell. Strictly speaking, hell is not open yet. The first people to go to hell will be the Anti-Christ and the false prophet. And that won't happen until after *The Battle of Armageddon*.

So what happens when unbelievers die? Where do they go? The Bible teaches that they go to a place called "Hades." In Luke 16:19-31, in the story that Jesus told of the rich man who died and the poor man who died, He explained that the poor man went to heaven...not because he was poor but because he was saved. He then explained that the rich man went to a place called "Hades"...not because he was rich but because he was unsaved.

Jesus described “Hades” as a place of agony, torment, and suffering. “Hades” is the place where unbelievers go immediately after they die. Perhaps it would be helpful to think of “Hades” as a holding tank...kind of like a county jail. Hell itself is like the state penitentiary. In “Hades,” unbelievers will be awaiting their eternal sentences to hell. And that is what they will receive at *The Great White Throne Judgment*.

Those of us who have been saved will not appear at *The Great White Throne Judgment*. Our sins have already been judged by God at the cross of Jesus Christ. Our sins have been dealt with, but the unsaved people’s sins haven’t. They rejected Christ’s death on the cross as the payment for their sins, and now their sins must be paid for.

Remember this: Everyone’s sins will be paid for. They will either be paid for by Jesus on the cross or people can pay for their own sins in hell, but everyone’s sins will be paid for. God is holy. And His holiness demands the full payment for our sins. You may think that God will somehow overlook your sins or deal lightly with your sins. Friend, if God was ever going to be easy on sin it would have been when Jesus was bearing our sins on the cross.

But God wasn't easy with Jesus. God required Jesus to die an agonizing death to pay for our sins. And if you reject His death on the cross, you will have to pay for your own sins in hell. Whether we like it or not, that is a divine law. The Bible says that "the wages of sin *is* death" (Romans 6:23).

So who will be at this solemn scene of judgment? Pastor Adrian Rogers identified several groups of people who will be present.⁵ First, he noted, out-and-out sinners will be there. These are people who ignored God and lived as if there were no God. Some of them mocked God. Some of them laughed at God. All of them denied God. That group of people will be at *The Great White Throne Judgment*.

The second group that Dr. Rogers said will be at *The Great White Throne Judgment* will be self-righteous people. These are people who lived with high morals. They obeyed the law. They were good to their families and friends. The only problem with these people is that they allowed their own goodness to become a substitute for getting saved. They thought they were so good that they didn't need to bow their knees and repent of their sins. They didn't realize that they themselves were sinful. They were better than most people they knew, and

they felt confident with those comparisons. But they failed to understand that God doesn't compare us to each other. He compares us to Jesus. And when that comparison is made, "*There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Romans 3:10). Indeed, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But the self-righteous crowd never understood that. And, as a result, they will end up at *The Great White Throne Judgment*.

The third group that Dr. Rogers identified as participants in *The Great White Throne Judgment* will be the procrastinators. These are the people who knew they needed to get saved. They intended to get saved. They just never got around to it. That's why the Bible says that "now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). We should never put off until tomorrow a decision for God that should be made today. But these procrastinators did just that. They put it off. And at *The Great White Throne Judgment* it will be too late for them to be saved.

The fourth group that Dr. Rogers said will be at *The Great White Throne Judgment* will be unsaved church members. These are people who were active in their churches. They had been baptized. They sang in the choir, served

on committees, taught a class, and perhaps did a lot of other noble deeds. But to their own destruction, they were trusting in those things to get them to heaven. They assumed they would go to heaven because their names were on the church role. But they never repented of their sins, trusted Christ to save them, and had their names written in *The Lamb's Book of Life*. They were religious. But sadly, they were lost. And they, too, will stand at *The Great White Throne Judgment* awaiting their sentences to hell.

Lest you get a warped view of God, please understand that He doesn't want anyone to go to hell. He didn't create hell for people. He created hell for the devil. Jesus described hell as "the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). But if a person rejects Christ, there is no other alternative. Sins must be paid for. At *The Great White Throne Judgment*, God will review the lives of those who never knew Him personally...and He will determine the degree of their punishment in hell. The Bible says that "the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (Revelation 20:12). The Bible then says, "And anyone not found written in the

Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

The Bible has a lot to say about hell. It is dark. It is loud. It is hot. It is painful. But worst of all, it is final. And it is the only place in the world where God is absent. I can’t imagine anything worse than spending eternity outside the presence of God. Whatever you do, don’t go to hell. It is so unnecessary. You can be saved today.

The Eternal State



The tenth and final event on God’s prophetic clock is the eternal state. As I have already explained, the eternal state of the unsaved is awful. It will be in a place called the “lake of fire,” or hell (see Revelation 20:14-15).

The eternal state of the redeemed, however, is wonderful beyond compare. The last two chapters of the Bible, Revelation 21 and 22, describe heaven in great detail.

Heaven is free from everything that is bad and full of everything that is good. In heaven “there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

There are no problems in heaven. There is only perfection there. There are streets of gold. There are gates of pearl. There are walls of jasper. There are mansions prepared for us by Jesus. There are loved ones. There are family members and friends we’ve not met yet. There is a river. There are fruit trees. There is unimaginable beauty. But none of that is the best part of heaven. The best part of heaven is the presence of Jesus. We will “serve Him” forever (Revelation 22:3). And we “shall see His face” (Revelation 22:4). Now we walk by faith (see II Corinthians 5:7). Then we’ll walk by sight!

There is something interesting to me about the heaven described in Revelation 21 and 22. It is called “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1). The apostle John had a vision of “the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”

(Revelation 21:2). Think about that. Heaven will end up on earth.

The Bible says on that great day “the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God” (Revelation 21:3).

God has always wanted to be with His people. He walked with Adam and Eve each day in the Garden of Eden, but sin messed everything up. At the end, though, because of all that Jesus has done, we will live in the presence of God forever. It will truly be heaven on earth! And I wouldn’t miss it for anything!

The Final Invitation

We don’t know for sure when the trumpet will sound. We don’t know for sure when the rapture will take place. But we do know that it could happen at any moment.

It is interesting to me that Jesus referred to His return three times in the last chapter of the Bible. Each time He said, “I am coming quickly” (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20).

In that same last chapter of the Bible, we find the final invitation to eternal life recorded in the Word of God. The apostle John said, “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

The final invitation is a clear and open invitation to everyone who wants to go to heaven. Jesus is the only door to heaven, but praise God this door is open to everyone. John explained that “whoever desires” may come to Jesus and receive forgiveness and salvation (Revelation 22:17).

And John pointed out that the Holy Spirit is prompting unsaved people to come to Jesus. The church is inviting unsaved people to come to Jesus. The Christian should encourage unsaved people to come to Jesus.

And as I close this booklet, I want to ask you a question: Have you ever been to Jesus? Have you ever repented of your sins? Have you ever asked Jesus to save you? Have you ever trusted Him to save you?

If you haven't, or if you're just not sure, I want to give you an opportunity to make your peace with God right now. The Bible says, "*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*" (Romans 10:13). The word "whoever" includes you! If you would like to know for sure that you are saved, pray this prayer now:

"Dear Jesus,

I believe that You love me and that You died on the cross to pay for my sins. Right now, I ask You to come into my heart, forgive my sins, and make me a Christian. I ask You to save me, and I trust You to do it. Please make me the person You created me to be. And please give me the courage to make my decision public soon.

*In Your Name I pray,
Amen."*

Friend, if you prayed that prayer, and if you meant it with all of your heart, then Jesus just saved you. He is in your heart. He will never leave you. And your sins have been erased!

Begin now to develop your relationship with the Lord. Talk to Him. Listen to Him. Read His Word. Get involved in a good church.

And as you live your life each day, remember that Jesus could come at any moment. Heaven is only one trumpet blast away!

¹ Webster, P.J., G.J. Holland, J.A. Curry, and H. R. Chang, "Changes in Tropical Cyclone Number, Duration, and Intensity in a Warming Environment," *Science*, vol. 309, pp. 1844-1846, 16 September 2005.

²"Increase in Frequency and Intensity of Earthquakes," *Global Rumbings*, April 18, 2012, <http://www.globalrumbings.blogspot.com/2012/04/increase-in-frequency-and-intensity-of.html> (accessed March 13, 2013).

³ Kathryn Hadley, "Alarming Increase in Wars," *History Today*, July 12, 2011, <http://www.historytoday.com/print/076586> (accessed March 13, 2013).

⁴ Yahoo! Canada Answers, "How Fast is the Twinkling of An Eye," n.d., http://ca.answers.yahoo.com/question/index;_ylt=AvM_4aeDKJvzOBYFX0IDW1vpFQx.;_ylv=3?qid=20120421093843AAluVR2 (accessed March 13, 2013).

⁵ Adrian Rogers, *Unveiling the End Times in Our Time*, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2004, p. 233-234.

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