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**Lecture Series: Bible Prophecy: The Doctrine of Things to Come**

**Lecture: "A Prophetic Calendar of Things to Come"**

## **A PROPHETIC CALENDAR OF THINGS TO COME**

The reason the Lord is not speaking today as He did in the times of the Apostles is that His message has reached its culmination in Jesus Christ and the next time God speaks it will be in judgement.

### **OUTLINE**

#### **1. The Course Of The Present Age**

- Growth of the true church (Matthew 16:13-20)
- Growth in the profession of Christianity (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)
- Growth of apostasy (II Timothy 3:13)

#### **2. The Translation Of The Church (I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-52)**

- The resurrection of the bodies of believers who have died
- The rapture of living believers (I Corinthians 15:51-54)
- The reunion of the Church (I Thess. 4:17)
- The judgement of the Church (II Corinthians 5:6-10)

#### **3. The 70th week of Daniel—The Tribulation (Daniel 9:24-27)**

Major events of the Tribulation

- Rise of a one-world government led by "the Beast" or "Anti-Christ"
- One world economy
- One world religion

Progression of the events of the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy

- The 70 weeks (or 490 years) begins with a commandment to rebuild and restore the city of Jerusalem
- After 49 weeks and 62 weeks or 483 years the Messiah will come (Triumphal entry into Jerusalem)
- The Messiah will be "cut off"
- The city of Jerusalem will be destroyed (70 A.D. )
- At beginning of 70th week the Anti-Christ ("the ruler that shall come") will make a covenant with Israel
- In the middle of the week the covenant will be broken, the Anti-Christ will set up a worship of himself through the "false prophet."
- The last part of the week characterized by wars and desolation

- Then the end will come

#### **4. The Second Coming Of Christ To The Earth (Revelation 19:11-16)**

#### **5. The Millennial Reign of Christ (Revelation 20)**

#### **6. The Great White Throne judgement (Revelation 20:11-15)**

#### **7. The New Heavens and the New Earth (Revelation 21-22)**

### **OVERVIEW OF THINGS TO COME**

After the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His disciples saw Him many times. He talked with them of many things, but He did not remain with them for ever. The day came when He was ready to leave them. He took them with Him outside the city to a mountain called the Mount of Olives. There, He promised that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them and that they should be His witnesses. As He spoke to them He rose from the earth, and He ascended up to Heaven. As they stood looking up into Heaven two angels stood by them in white robes, and said to them, You men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into Heaven? This same Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven shall come again in just the same way you have seen Him go. But you must go back to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit which He gave you.

This was a clear promise that Jesus would come again. He did not go to Heaven to stay there forever. He is coming back to this earth again. He had told them the same thing in John 14:1-3 - "I will come again and receive you unto myself." We have His sure word that He is coming again. Isaiah chapter 11 tells us that when Jesus comes again, all the wild animals will become tame; the snakes will lose their sting. There will be peace on earth, such as there never has been since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.

How is Jesus coming and what will He do? The second coming of Jesus is something like His first coming in one way. It does not take place all at once. At His first coming, there was the star and the angels' song, and the temptation and the miracles and the transfiguration and the crucifixion and the resurrection. When He comes again, many things will happen, too.

### **THE RAPTURE (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-53; John 14:1-3)**

The first thing that will happen at Christ's second coming is called the Rapture. The word rapture means "to be caught up". There are several places in the Bible where we read about it, and where we can find out clearly just what it is. When Paul had been in Thessalonica he had taught the believers that they could look for the Lord to return at any moment. Every day when they got up in the morning they could say to themselves, Perhaps He will be back today! But then there came a day when some of their loved ones, a mother or father, a brother or sister, died. They immediately asked Paul if these loved ones, whose bodies had been put in their graves, would be left behind, and if the living ones should see the Lord first. Paul answered them in I

**Thessalonians 4:13-18.** Paul says that they are not to be ignorant about these loved ones, because God does not want believers to sorrow like unbelievers who have no hope. Just as surely as we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so surely may we believe that he will bring with Him at his second coming, the spirits of the loved ones who have died. We shall not go first, but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead **in Christ** shall rise **first**. Note that the dead out of Christ do not rise then. As soon as the bodies of these Christians are out of their graves and their spirits, brought from Heaven, are in them, all the living believers will be changed, to become like the Lord Jesus.

Only believers will be caught up to meet Him. Just like a magnet picks up only steel or iron, but will not pick up tin or nickel or sawdust, so when the Lord Jesus comes, those who have been born again will go to meet Him. The unsaved will not. In **I Corinthians 15:51-53** we learn a little more about what is to happen to believers at the Rapture. Paul writes, Behold, I tell you a secret. We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

What will this change be? How will we be changed? In **I John 3:2** it says we shall be made like the Lord Jesus when we see Him as He is. In **Philippians 3:21** it says that when the Lord Jesus comes, He will change our bodies so that they may be made like His glorious body. All our sins will be gone. We will not even have our old nature any longer!

#### **THE TRIBULATION (Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:25-26; Revelation 6:15-17; Revelation 7:13-14)**

It will be wonderful for believers when Jesus comes, for then they will go to be with Him for ever. Their bodies will be made like His, and they shall live for ever with Him. Nothing could be better than that! But can you think what it will be for those who are not believers? For they will be left behind. Not one of those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be taken when He comes. Some day all Christians will disappear. The unbelievers will be looking for them, but they will not find them. They will be gone!

What a terrible place the world would be if there were no Christians in it. All the wicked people will be able to do what they like. And God will begin to judge the earth. Judgement after judgement will come. There will be war, famine, sickness, death. In the midst of it many will believe in the Lord Jesus. All Jews and many Gentiles will come to believe in Him. They will have a very hard time, for there will be so many unbelievers and the judgements on the earth will be so great, that many of them will have to die for Jesus' sake.

In the midst of this time, which will last seven years, there will come a great ruler. He will try to set up his kingdom over all the earth. At first he will pretend to be kind to the Jews, and will let them have their land, their temple and their sacrifices. But he will break his agreement with them. The world will divide into two great sides, and they will all be fighting. When the war is at its worst at the great battle of Armageddon, a sign will be seen in Heaven--the sign of the Son of Man. And like lightening, that shines from East to West, the Lord Jesus will come!

## **THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE EARTH (Matthew 24-25)**

At the Rapture Jesus will come in the air to call His own out of the earth. But following the Tribulation, He will come all the way to the earth. His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. And we are coming back with Him, for we have His promise that we shall never have to leave Him again forever. When Jesus comes, the battle stops, and He judges the nations. Those who have rejected the Gospel which the Jews, His brethren, have preached during the Tribulation, will be judged. And those who have accepted that Gospel will be rewarded. And then He will set up His Kingdom on the earth.

## **THE MILLENIAL KINGDOM (Revelation 20:1-10)**

The Kingdom which Jesus will set up will last for a thousand years. It is called the "millenium" which means one thousand years. There will be no more deserts. They will all be like flower gardens. There will be no more wild animals. They will be tame, every one of them. Then, if you like, you can have a lion or a tiger for a pet. Babies will be able to put their hands down the holes made by snakes that used to be poisonous, without fear of harm, for there will be no more poison. And best of all, the Lord will rule, and make every one obey Him. There will be no more war and no more fighting. All will be Peace because the Prince of Peace, our Lord Jesus will be here, and will be the King.

## **THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT (Revelation 20:11-15)**

At the conclusion of the Millennium, the unsaved dead will be raised--whose names are not written in the "Lamb's book of life." They will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire, along with Satan and his demons (Revelation 20:11-15)

## **THE ETERNAL STATE (II Peter 3:9-13; Revelation 21-22)**

Following the Millennial Reign of Christ, and the Great White Throne judgement, the earth will be purged of all evil and there will be a "new heavens and new earth" (II Peter 3:9-13). Then the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city will descend from heaven to rest upon the earth. This glorious city will be the place where we will live for eternity with God. Its beauty and glory is described in Revelation 21-22.

## **APPLICATION TO OUR LIVES**

We know that the Lord Jesus may come at any moment, to take us to be with Himself. Does this make any difference in the way we live? In all our joy in the Lord's coming, we cannot forget those who are not saved, and who will be left behind when He comes. That will be a terrible time for unbelievers. And we want, so much, to let them know about the Lord Jesus Christ, so that they will believe and be saved, and go to meet Him when He comes. We know that not all the world will be converted, so we are not just trying to make things better here, but we are trying to rescue all we can from Satan before the Lord comes. If we really mean this, we will be telling our friends about Him. And we will pray for them and for missionaries who are preaching to so many about Him, asking God to bless them, and to bring many, many to Himself.

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