

Foundation Study 11: END TIMES

What do the following verses say about the End Times?

1) Matthew 16:18

The End Times events are preceded by the Church Age. The Church (age) is the current epoch. The Church is a parenthesis in God's plan for the ages. It is inserted in between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel's prophecy of the divine timeline (Daniel 9:24-27). It is a "pause" in God's plan for the ages. The Church age is in its last hour (1 John 2:18) of its last days (2 Timothy 3:1). The last days are characterized by increasing immorality and rejection of God (Matthew 24; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3,4; 2 Peter 3:3-7).

2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

The first End Times event is the rapture of the church. The term "rapture" means to seize or snatch. The rapture is the sudden carrying away of the church to heaven (John 14:3). The Rapture will occur:

- a. **Soon** (suddenly or quickly) (Revelation 1:1; 3:11; 22:6,7). Nothing is left in God's plan for the rapture to occur. It is the next event. The gospel will be shared with the entire world through angelic announcements (Revelation 14:6,7), the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11:30, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Revelation 7:4), and the various formats of the gospel left behind by Christians at the rapture.
- b. In an **instant** (1 Corinthians 15:51,52).
- c. **Surprisingly** (Revelation 3:3).
- d. **Before** the Tribulation. Believers in the Church age are promised they will not endure the coming judgment of God upon the earth (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10; 6:12,7). Also, the term "church" is not present in the Tribulation passages of Revelation 4-19.
- e. **Obviously** (2 Thessalonians 2:2).

NOTE: The first phase of Jesus' return is "in the air" to rapture the church (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The second phase is "to the earth" to judge the world at the end of the Tribulation (Revelation 19:11-21).

3) 2 Corinthians 5:10

The next event for believers in heaven is judgment. Believers will experience the "Bema Seat" judgment. The "Bema Seat" is an elevated place that was used to settle legal matters (Acts 18:12) and reward athletes (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Each believer is accountable to God (Hebrews 4:13). Each believer will experience God's judgment (Matthew 16:27; Romans 14:10). This is not a judgment of sin since that was dealt with at the cross. Rather it is an evaluation of each believer's life. Was it lived for the glory of God or not? Some will receive rewards (Crowns) (2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 4:5; Revelation 2:10; 3:11) some will not (Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 4:5).

After the "Bema Seat" judgment, believers will experience unequalled worship in heaven (Revelation 7:9-17). This will take place in heaven while the Tribulation is occurring on earth.

4) Revelation 6:15-17

The next event for unbelievers on earth is the Tribulation. The Tribulation is a time of never before outpouring of the wrath of God lasting seven years. It is concurrent with the activities in heaven for the redeemed. It is described in detail in chapters 4-19 of Revelation. It is marked by unequalled suffering and death (Matthew 24:21). It is the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:27). What sets the Tribulation apart is that it is unparalleled in measure, global in scope, and will convince people that the world is actually ending. Before people have said the end of the world is coming. Now they will indicate, it is here.

The judgments are poured out in three segments (Seals, trumpets, bowls). Each series of judgments are escalating in nature. They are worse than the one's before. In spite of His wrath, God's purpose is still to redeem people (Revelation 14:7). In fact, it is thought that heaven will be populated by more people who converted during the tribulation than all other periods of time together (Revelation 7:9-14; 14:15,16).

The Tribulation will also be characterized by the following: intense persecution and martyrdom of the redeemed and Israel, the activity of Angels, and the presence and prominence of the Antichrist.

5) Revelation 16:16

The next end time event on earth is the Battle of Armageddon. This battle occurs on a large plain some 60 miles north of Israel at the end of the Tribulation. It is between the rebellious survivors of the Tribulation and Jesus and His angelic army. MacArthur states, "*God's patience is exhausted with sinful, rebellious mankind.*" The outcome is swift, devastating, and complete (Revelation 19:11-21). It is an event that marks the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium.

6) Revelation 20:2-6

The next end time event is the Millennium. The Millennium is a literal thousand year period of time. It follows the Battle of Armageddon and is marked by the physical presence of Jesus Christ as ruling King, the absence of the Antichrist, and peace and prosperity among people. The inhabitants are the few redeemed who survived the Tribulation and the glorified redeemed who return to earth with Christ. Two thirds of Messianic prophecies are fulfilled during this time. The Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are completed during this time as well. Ryrie states, "*The promise of the Abrahamic Covenant giving Abraham's descendants the land from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates has never been fulfilled but will be fulfilled in the coming millennial kingdom (Genesis 15:18). The promise of the Davidic Covenant also necessitates the establishment of the millennial kingdom for their fulfillment (2 Samuel 7:12-16).*"¹

7) Revelation 20:11-15

The next end time event is the Great White Throne judgment. All unredeemed are dead at this point. The Great White Throne is the final sentencing of eternal judgment for all unredeemed souls who by their works, proved their denial and unbelief (Job 19:25-27; Daniel 7:9; 12:2; Matthew 16:27; 25:31-46; John 5:28,29). MacArthur states, "*Each unsaved dead person's thoughts (Luke 8:17; Romans 2:16), deeds (Matthew 16:27), and words (Matthew 12:37) will be compared to God's perfect, holy standard (1 Peter 1:15,16).*"

1. Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, page 523

8) Revelation 21:1

The next end time event is eternity (Revelation 21:22:1-9). Eternity, also called the “New heaven and earth” is a completely new creation of God. The entire universe has been destroyed and remade and will last forever! The new heaven and earth is the permanent dwelling place for the redeemed from all ages. Sin is not present. There is no longer any separation between God and man. God is present with man. *“God’s people will finally experience ultimate and everlasting fellowship with God.”* God’s glory is such that there is no need for any sun. He illuminates everything. There is no trace of any of the fallenness of the first creation. There is no suffering or death.

The new Jerusalem is the capital of heaven and the place where God dwells. It is a place of unmatched brilliance and the center of worship. Its size and dimension is described in three dimensions. It’s a cube! Even if only a quarter were inhabited it would easily accommodate 20 billion people. It is the dwelling place of the redeemed. The River and Tree of Life serve as reminders that heaven is for the redeemed alone.

All of what is described about eternity is meant to encourage the redeemed. It is meant to uplift all who are downtrodden due to the fallen state of this world. It is meant to inspire those who endure persecution and martyrdom. It is meant to provide hope to all who follow Jesus Christ.

What was the most significant verse in this study to you? Explain.