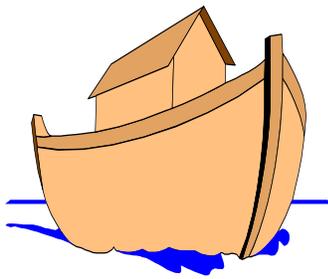


The Last Days

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With the year 2000 rapidly approaching many people are developing a keen interest in what the Bible refers to as the "Last Days". I thought it may be helpful to jot the events of the 'last days' down in a sequential format. This brief lesson is not intended & should not be construed as a definitive 'end-all', 'be-all' lesson on the subject. It is simply intended to give an overall 'bird's eye' view & give the reader a general sense of what will take place in the days & years to come.



For centuries the bible has pointed to a time where God would bring things to a screeching halt. He will wrap things up & judgement will be handed out. But there were always things that had to take place before the end could come. There seemed to be a lot of

loose ends that had to be tied up first. Well, here we are in 1997. And guess what? The ends are all tied up!

As short a time as 50 years ago there were a few outstanding loose ends. Among them, Israel had to become a nation again. Instant, global communication would have to be a practical reality. The city of Jerusalem would be the focal 'hot-spot' of world politics & religious strife, Zech. 12:3 The nations of the world would have to become "united" & the nations of Europe would have to become a political & economic entity. Well, here we are. Israel is back (after a 1900 year hiatus. Never happened to another nation like this in the history of the world). There is a "United Nations", Jerusalem & the so-called peace process is constantly in the news & the last time I checked CNN had instant world wide communications just about as real as you can get!

Nothing remains, from a biblical perspective, to prevent the Lord's return. Everything is in place. The players all have their programs & the final curtain is about to raise on the last act. Grab your socks, hold onto your chair & sit tight. You are in for the ride of your life. Literally!

The events covered in this lesson are, obviously, all in the future. Some of the events will take place sequentially while others will take place simultaneously. We will try to keep the technical aspects to a minimum while at the same time being true to the events.

The Second Coming:

Jesus promised to return. *...I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go & prepare a place for you, I will come again, & receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. Jn. 14:2-3.* This 2nd coming is divided into 2 parts. The first part is Jesus coming **for** His saints (referred to as the Rapture) & the last part is Jesus coming **with** His saints (referred to as the 2nd Coming). These 2 parts are separated by a 7 year gap. It is in this 7 year gap that most of the Book of Revelation takes place as well as a bunch of Old Testament prophecies. This period of time is also known as the Tribulation.

The Rapture:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, & the dead shall be raised incorruptible, & we shall be changed. 1 Cor. 15:51-52

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, & with the trump of God: & the dead **in Christ** shall rise first: Then we which are alive & remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: & **so shall we ever be with the Lord.** 1 Thes. 4:16-18.*

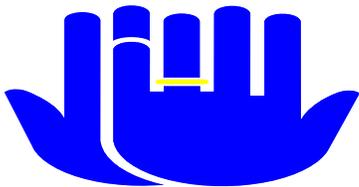
This is the rapture. Jesus comes for His own first. We are caught away from this earth for a 7 year period during which we will participate in 2 events: the Judgement Seat of Christ & the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (More of these later). Only Christians, those who have been 'born again', Jn. 3:3 will be in this group. All others remain to go thru the Tribulation.

Be careful, don't lose me now. Biblical events are being presented simultaneously. While born again Christians are in heaven for the next 7 years some wild & wooly things are about to take place here on earth! The Church is not involved with the events of the Tribulation on this earth. We are not here. We are in heaven during these events. *...Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* 1 Thes. 1:10. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,* 1 Thes. 5:9.



Please remember, there is absolutely nothing else listed in the Bible that has to take place before the rapture of the church! The trumpet could blow any moment. But, once this event does take place then the other prophetic events listed in the Bible go on automatic pilot. When the rapture takes place one of the things that happen to us

is that we get new bodies, *...Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his (Jesus) glorious body...* Phil. 3:21. Next, we will appear at the Judgement Seat of Christ. This 'judgement' is not to determine if we are going to heaven or not but simply to receive 'reward' or 'suffer loss' for the way we conducted our lives as Christians. *For we must all (christians) appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* 2 Cor. 5:10. Once this little bit of trauma is out of the way then we are ushered into the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (The Church is constantly referred to in the New Testament as the Bride of Christ). *Let us be glad & rejoice, & give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb (Jesus) is come, & his wife (the church, born again believers) hath made herself ready.* Rev. 19:7



Remember, this has been a period of 7 years. During which time the rest of the folks on the earth have experienced the events of prophesy & the wrath of God as well as the things listed in the book of Revelation. It will not be a pretty picture!

The rise of the Anti-Christ:

Immediately after the church is caught up at the Rapture the "man of sin" (anti-christ) will be revealed 2 Thes. 2:2-4. He will have all the answers that the world is looking for. And he will have the charisma as well as the political clout to make it all work for him Rev. 6:1-2. He will have answers for the Mid-East problem, acid rain, Aids, the depleting ozone layer, the exploding world population, the rain forest & all the poor little endangered species scattered around the world. And unfortunately, Israel will welcome him with open arms as the Messiah they have been waiting for all these years, Jn. 5:43.

He will sign a peace treaty with Israel, guaranteeing their safety for a 7 year period. In the meantime there are storm clouds on the horizon & the honeymoon is about to come to a screeching halt. Take time to read Dan. ch. 11 (all of it!)

The Battle of Gog & Magog:

Russia, in prophesy, is referred to by it's ancient tribal name of Gog. Historically, Russia has never been a friend to the Jew or the nation of Israel. In Ezek. 37 the bible prophesies that the nation of Israel will be established once again (after 1900 years of not being a country!) & Jewish people will be gathered from the 4 corners of the world to set up the new state of Israel. At this point Satan is apoplectic! He has tried for thousands of years to get rid of the Jew. If he could succeed in that one area he has made God a liar because God has staked His reputation on certain events having to do with the Jews & the nation of Israel in the last days. If Satan could thwart that plan, eliminate the Jew & prevent the re-establishment of the nation of Israel then he would have made God a liar & most of the Old Testament prophesies would be null & void & thus the Bible just like any other book. It is no wonder that these people have endured persecutions far beyond any sane logic. They have endured holocausts, pogroms, national expulsions, Inquisitions & mindless, irrational hatred. Why? They were never a political threat to anybody. They never forced their religion down anybody's throat like the Muslims have done for centuries. They did not have a country, a flag, a national anthem or army. Why then this mindless, irrational, never ending hatred? Simple. As we stated above. If Satan could eliminate the Jew he has made God a liar & undermined the credibility of the Book!

In Ezek. 38-39 we are told, in graphic detail, how Russia & her allies will come upon Israel "to take a spoil". At this point the anti-christ (he is acting as Israels messiah & has a treaty with them remember) will come to Israels defense. The Russian confederation will be defeated & only 1 out of 7 will return home!

The Great Tribulation:

In the middle of the 7 year period of the Tribulation the anti-christ will do something that will kick everything up to a new level of intensity here on the earth. By now, in the middle of the tribulation, the new Jewish Temple in Jerusalem will have been completed. (You can chart the progress of this event by keeping your eye on the local newspapers & CNN)! Then the anti-christ will do something so stupid & dumb that every Jew on the planet will realize once & for all that they have been duped. That this guy was not, in fact, the real messiah, but an imposter, a fake, an anti-christ, if you please! He will have the audacity to go into the holy of holies, the most sacred spot of land on the planet for the Jew, (which will be in the new Temple) & sacrifice, of all things, a pig on the altar! Dan. 11:31. I don't think I have to belabor the point about Jews & pork! The cat will be out of the bag. They will realize their monumental blunder. God will open their eyes & the chase will be on. Get ready, because the tribulation has just become the Great Tribulation & all Hell is about ready to explode for the next 3 & a half years!!! Mt. 24:15-22. (Remember, the born-again are still in heaven at this point).

War in Heaven:

In Rev. 12 we are told that there is a war in heaven after the woman (Israel) is forced to flee from the anti-christ.

And there was war in heaven: Michael & his angels fought against the dragon; & the dragon fought & his angels, & prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. (Bet you didn't know he was still there did you? But that is for another lesson!) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, & Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, & his angels were cast out with him. Rev. 12:7-9

I don't know about you but I'm glad I'll be pigging out at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven during this time. 'You know who' is going to go absolutely ballistic for getting his butt booted out of heaven.! It will not be a pretty picture!

The anti-christ will now be possessed, literally, by Satan, Rev. 13:1-6. He will persecute the Jews with a vengeance, Jer. 30:1-8. At this point world-wide revival will break out. Not because of any missionaries or preachers that we have come to know. God will have His own preachers & witnesses. He will seal 144,000 Jewish men from all possible harm & they will preach & literally millions will be saved during this terrible time.

But **not** if you have heard the gospel & rejected the invitation to be saved prior to the rapture! *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, & shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power & signs, & lying wonders, & with a deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.** 2 Thes. 2:8-12*

There are some things that we best not trifle with & God's invitation to accept His Son as our Saviour is one of them!



After the Rapture, the rise of the anti-christ, the battle of Gog & Magog, the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem, the war in heaven, Satan getting kicked out & possessing the anti-christ, the persecution of the Jews, the preaching of the 144,000 & the 2 witnesses, Rev. 11:3-12, the focus shifts to the East.

The Euphrates river is dried up. This opens the land access to the far east. And guess what? An army of 200 million men (you read that right!) swarms across to invade Israel, Rev. 9:14-21. Now, gathered on the plains of Megiddo (Armageddon), are the armies of the East, the forces of the anti-christ & the rest of the world (who are able to muster a force) to finish Israel once & for all. And guess who shows up? Ta-da!!

The Second Coming:

And I saw heaven opened, & behold a white horse; & he that sat upon him was called Faithful & True, & in righteousness he doth judge & make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, & on his head were many crowns; & he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: & his name is called the Word of God. (this is Jesus, Jn. 1:1). And the armies which were in heaven (us, the church) followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white & clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: & he shall rule them with a rod of iron: & he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness & wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture & on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, & LORD OF LORDS. Rev. 19:11-16

At this point things start to wind down real quick. The armies of the world are wiped out at the Battle of Armageddon. The beast (anti-Christ) & the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire (eternal damnation.), Rev. 19:19-21. Satan is bound & cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, Rev. 20:2-3. The nations of the world are judged as to their attitude toward the nation of Israel, Mt. 25:31-46; Zech. 12:9; 2:8; 14:12

The Millennium:

After the 7 year Tribulation the Lord Jesus Christ will reign, in the flesh, on a literal throne, in the city of Jerusalem for a thousand year period, Rev. 20:4-6; Isa. 24:21-23. During this time the earth will be restored to it's natural condition as it was in the time of the Garden of Eden. All those problems that we mentioned before, the ozone layer, acid rain, pollution, dwindling rain forests, endangered species, etc. will be set right. This time by the one who made the earth in the first place!

The nations of the world will come & give homage to the Lord on a yearly basis, Mic. 4:1-7. The 'daily horoscope', the psychic network along with Dionne & her buddies will be out of a job, Mic. 5:12-13. Israel will possess the land promised to Abraham, by God, back in Gen. 12 & 15. For a clearer picture of some of the things that will take place during the millennium take a look at Zech. 14 in it's entirety. The chapter deals with events that take place at the end of the Tribulation just before the Lord comes back at the 2nd Coming & on into the Millennium.

During this 1000 year period Satan will be chained up in the bottomless pit, *And he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, & Satan, & bound him a 1000 years, & cast him into the bottomless pit, & shut him up, & set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the 1000 years should be fulfilled: & after that he must be loosed a little season.* Rev. 20:2-3.

Satan will be out of the picture for a bit. He will not tempt, or influence or "make anybody do it". Life will go on. Children will be born. Houses will be built. Hopes & dreams will be pursued. Until he is let loose 'for a little season'. Then all hell breaks loose again. He goes forth to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:7-8) & once again the nations of the world join him against the nation of Israel. But this time it's not Netanyahu or some other Israeli prime minister running the show. This time the devil confronts none other than the Lord of the Universe sitting on the throne! The results are predictable & almost laughable, Rev. 20:9-10.



We are almost to the end of time as we know it. After the devil has been cast into the lake of fire (a worse punishment than hell!! Rev. 20:14) it is now time for what is referred to as the judgment of 'The Great White Throne'. *And I saw a great white throne, & him that sat on it, from whose face the*

earth & the heaven fled away; & there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small & great, stand before God; & the books were opened: & another book was opened, which is the book of life: & the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; & death & hell delivered up the dead which were in them: & they were judged every man according to their works. And death & hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:11-15.

Time, as we know it, has finished. God proceeds to make a new heaven & a new earth, Rev. 21:1. The church, those 'born again' between the time of Christ & the Rapture, after having reigned with Christ for the 1000 year millennium, will now be ushered into a city, suspended in heaven which is called 'New Jerusalem'. This is described in the 21st ch. of Rev. We now begin eternity.

Every now & then someone will ask, 'what will heaven be like? I'll answer like this: Try to imagine the greatest, biggest, best, most wonderful, perfect, ideal, satisfying, unbelievable of anything you want to imagine. Then, scrap everything you have come up with & go with this, *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* 1 Cor. 2:9

As I said, this was not meant to be a definitive study on this vast subject. There is a lot that we just skimmed the surface of & some we have not even mentioned. But this will give you an idea of the events & sequences of the future. It all starts with the Rapture of the church. And that could happen anytime!

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Mt. 24:44

