

Christian Discipleship Guide



“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

18. Bible Prophecy

One of the most talked about subjects of the Bible is that of prophecy. Prophecy deals with God's plan for the future of this world. Saved or lost, many people want to know the details of the end of the world as we know it. Let's get acquainted with the order of the major events of the "end times." We will give a brief description of these events and where you can find them in Scripture.

Bible Prophecy Sequence of Events

0 A.D.	Birth of Jesus Christ, the First Coming
33 A.D.	Death, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ
2,000+ yrs.	The PRESENT AGE (a.k.a. The Church Age, The Age of Grace) Revelation 1-3 describes the Church Age.
?	Rapture of the Church - Christians meet Jesus in the air, Judgment Seat of Christ, Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
?	Antichrist signs seven-year Peace Treaty with Israel.
7 yrs.	The GREAT TRIBULATION (a.k.a. The Time of Jacob's Trouble) Antichrist rises to world power, Mark of the Beast, two Witnesses Return of Jesus Christ, the Second Coming, Day of the Lord, Battle of Armageddon
1,000 yrs.	MILLENNIAL REIGN – 1,000 years, Reign of Jesus Christ on Earth Satan Loosed, Final Rebellion, Great White Throne Judgment, Lake of Fire New Heaven, New Jerusalem, New Earth, Eternity

The Rapture

The first major event to occur in the end times is called the "Rapture." Although this term is not in the Bible, it means "transport." The Rapture will take place at the end of the "Church Age." This age began after the resurrection of Christ and is made up of people who have been "saved by grace through faith." The Rapture will occur so God's people will avoid the coming judgment upon the Earth. This judgment will be for the nations' rejection of God and His promises to Israel. In other words, God will protect His bride, the Church. There are two main scripture verses to support the Rapture:

1. 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 ... This was a mystery revealed to the Apostle Paul that even Jesus did not speak about. It will happen in a blink of the eye and will give Christians a new body as they go up to Heaven.
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ... The bodies of Christians who have already died will come out of their graves, be changed and reunite with their souls in the clouds with Jesus. Those Christians who are alive will follow immediately with changed bodies as well. Notice we are to be comforted with this thought, not afraid of it.

The Bible gives us pictures or types of the Rapture. Enoch was taken bodily up to Heaven before God's judgment on Earth, the Flood (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5). The Prophet Elijah was taken bodily up to Heaven by a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:1-11). The Prophet Isaiah was taken up to Heaven and given a vision of the throne room of God (Isaiah 6:1-9). The Apostle Paul was taken up to the third Heaven and given visions and revelations of the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). The Apostle John was taken up to Heaven and shown God's judgment on Earth, called the Great Tribulation (Revelation 4:1-2).

The Body of Christ (saved people) will be taken up to Heaven before God's judgment on Earth, the Great Tribulation. This is when the Judgment Seat of Christ takes place (see Lesson 14).

After the Judgment Seat will be the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This is where Christ will take His bride, the saved people of the Church Age (Revelation 19:5-9).

The Great Tribulation

Following the Rapture, there will be a seven year period of God's wrath upon the Earth, known as the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7; Ezekiel 38-39), Daniel's "Seventieth Week" (Daniel 9:24-27), and the "Great Tribulation" (Matthew 24:21). The details of the Great Tribulation are found in the book of Revelation Chapters 6-19. Jesus also gives a description in Matthew 24. Among some of the events that will happen at this time are:

1. Wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6; Revelation 6:4)
2. Famines (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:5-6)
3. Pestilences, that is, epidemic diseases that are highly contagious, infectious, virulent and devastating (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 16:2)
4. Earthquakes (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 16:12)
5. False Prophets (Matthew 24:11; Revelation 13:11-15; Revelation 16:13-14)
6. Rise of Antichrist (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Revelation 13:1-8)
7. Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:16-18; Revelation 14:9-11)
8. Martyrs (Matthew 24:9; Revelation 6:9; Revelation 13:15)

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Just as the First Coming of Christ was a literal, physical event (His birth), so will be the Second Coming (His coronation). This is not to be confused with the Rapture where Jesus will meet us in the clouds and will not actually touch down on Earth. At the return of Christ, every eye will see Him (Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7). The first time Christ came, it was love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). The second time will be in wrath (Isaiah 63:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). He will clean up the Earth from His enemies and make ready His kingdom. The climax of this event will be what is known as the Battle of Armageddon (Zechariah 12:8-11; Revelation 16:12-16).

The following verses further describe the Second Advent of Jesus Christ:

1. Acts 1:9-12 --- Christ will descend in like manner as the disciples saw Him ascend into heaven.
2. Zechariah 14:1-5 --- All nations will battle against Jerusalem... Christ will fight against the nations... His feet will stand upon the Mount of Olives...
3. Matthew 24:27-51 --- Immediately after the tribulation... then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...
4. 2 Peter 3:10 --- ... the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...
5. Revelation 6:12-17 --- For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?
6. Revelation 11:15-19 --- And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.
7. Revelation 14:14-20 --- ... behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.
8. Revelation 19:11-21 --- ... And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

As a result of Christ's return, the Beast and the False Prophet (two thirds of the Satanic trinity) will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20). Satan (the remaining one third of his trinity) will be chained up and cast into the Bottomless Pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3). This will allow Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom on Earth without interference.

The Millennial Reign of Christ

After the Great Tribulation, Jesus will set up His 1,000 year kingdom on Earth, known as the Millennium, where He will rule with a rod of iron (Revelation 12:5; Revelation 19:15). He also will allow His followers from the Church Age and Great Tribulation to reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 20:4-6). This millennial reign is also referred to in Scripture as the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3). It will be a time of peace and perfection.

A description of this kingdom is given in the following passages:

1. Isaiah 2:1-4 --- ... and he (Christ) shall judge among the nations ...
2. Isaiah 11:1-9 --- ... The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb ... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD ...
3. Isaiah 33:20-22 --- ... the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king ...
4. Isaiah 40:9-11 --- ... the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him ...
5. Jeremiah 23:5-8 --- ... a King (Jesus Christ) shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth ...
6. Zechariah 14:8-9, 16 --- ... the LORD shall be king over all the earth ... every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts ...
7. Daniel 7:22, 27 --- ... And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.
8. Luke 22:28-30 --- ... I (Jesus) appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed and will gather all those who want to rebel against Jesus Christ. He once again will be defeated, and this time will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever (Revelation 20:7-10).

The Great White Throne Judgment

The Bible tells us that there will be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29). The resurrection of life will take place at the Rapture and is for the saved. The resurrection of damnation is for the unsaved and will take place at the Great White Throne. The lost will be taken out of Hell, brought before God and cast into the Lake of Fire. It is at this judgment they will be told why they must suffer torment, that is, their rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior (Revelation 20:11-15). This judgment will not be for Christians. Each individual will be judged according to their works and given a different degree of punishment in the Lake of Fire (Matthew 10:14-15; Matthew 11:20-24).

New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem, Eternity

Once the Great White Throne Judgment is complete, Eternity will begin with God and His servants. Revelation 21 and 22:1-5 give us a brief description of what it will be like, including streets of gold, gates of pearl, and the throne of God.

There are three specific places mentioned in Eternity. The following is a possibility of who will abide where:

1. New Heaven: Gentiles who came through the Great Tribulation and Millennium
2. New Earth: Jews
3. New Jerusalem: Bride of Christ / Church-Age Saints

Many people worry about the End Times and the Great Tribulation, but Christians do not need to worry if they remember the promises that Jesus gave His followers:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3)

“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. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit...” (1 Corinthians 2:8-10)

Questions:

1. What event will begin the End Times? _____
2. What will be Christ's attitude when He returns? _____
3. Who will be judged at the Great White Throne? _____

Additional Scripture Verses:

1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 20:6.