

Lesson 47: Overview of the End

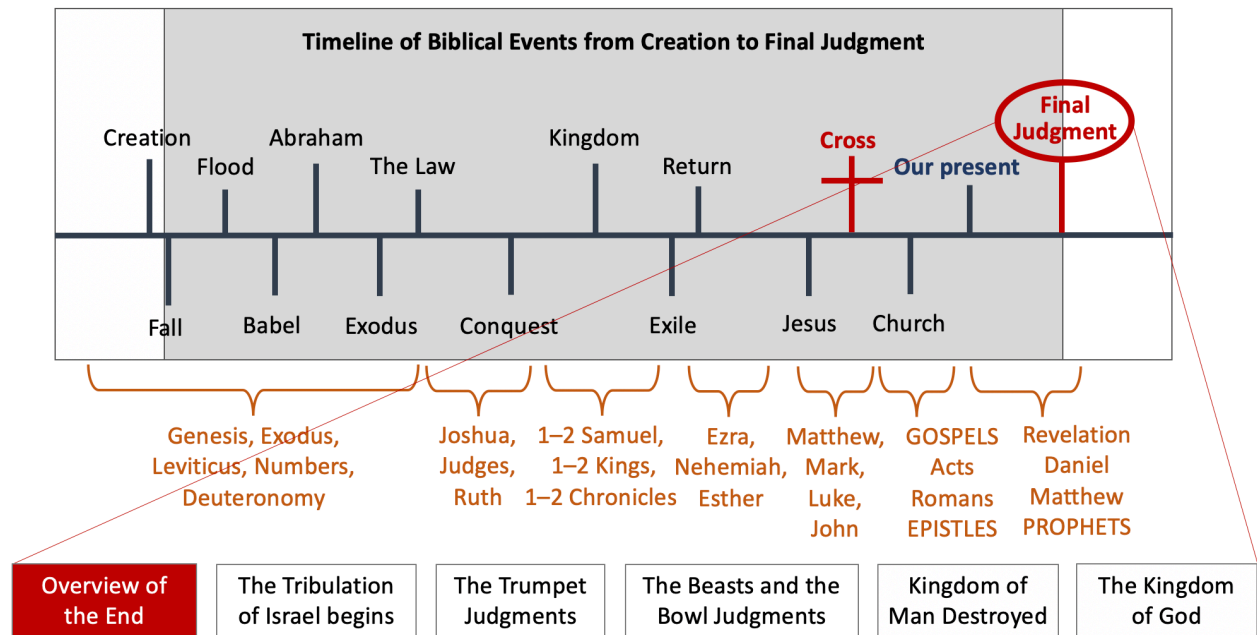
Previously...

At Jesus' first coming, He offered to restart the Kingdom of God. But instead of believing in Him, the Jews, His own people, rejected Him. So He postponed bringing back the Kingdom.

Instead, after His ascension to heaven, He received authority over the universe and He sent the Holy Spirit to earth to start, direct and grow the church. Jesus is gathering believers for His future returning Kingdom. Even though the church started with believing Jews, it became very much a Gentile body of believers. Today, both believing Jews and Gentiles make up the body of Christ, or the church.

However, Yahweh has not given up on Israel. He has not forgotten the unconditional covenants He had made with them. God's promises and plans are never thwarted. History will come to the end that God has planned.

God reveals this in the final book of the Bible: Revelation.

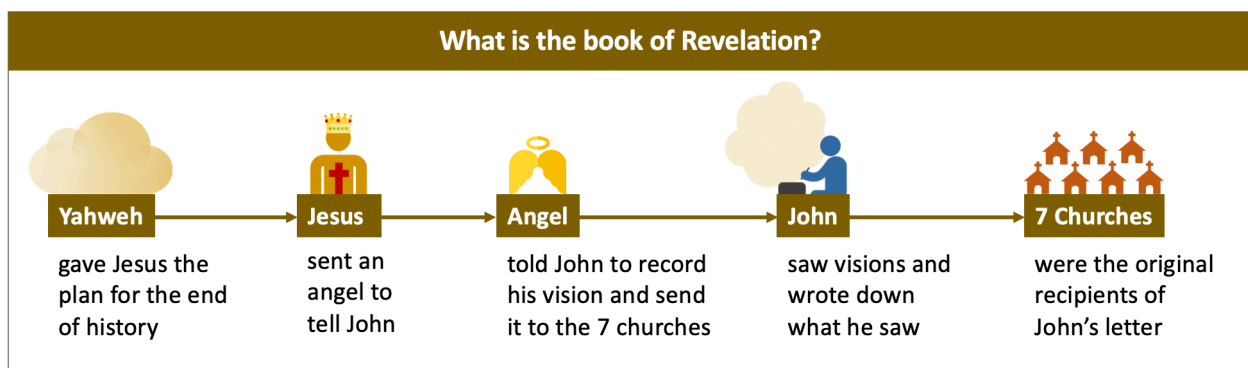


A. The Revelation from Jesus Christ to the Apostle John

The word “revelation” is from the Greek word “apokalypsis” (from which we also get the English word “apocalypse”). It means to unveil or to reveal.



God ended the New Testament with the prophetic book of Revelation.



Revelation 1:1–2

¹ This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John, ² who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:9–11

⁹ I, John, am your brother and your partner in suffering and in God’s Kingdom and in the patient endurance to which Jesus calls us. I was exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the word of God and for my testimony about Jesus. ¹⁰ It was the Lord’s Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast. ¹¹ It said, “Write in a book everything you see, and send it to the seven churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”



What was God's intention in giving the churches the book of Revelation?

God wanted to tell believers how Jesus Christ, through judgment, becomes King.

This information is meant to encourage believers to lead faithful and godly lives.

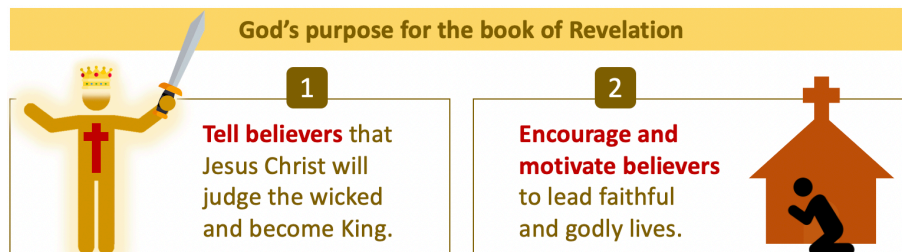
1 John 3:3

And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.

The book of Revelation is like the apocalyptic literature that Yahweh provided for Israel towards the end of the Old Testament time. God gave Jewish believers long-range hope as they lived over the centuries in exile among Gentile nations that had hostile and tempting pagan cultures.

For the church, it has so far been 20 centuries since Jesus ascended to heaven. During all this time, believers have had to endure physical persecutions as well as political and social pressures to accept impure lifestyles. They've also had to endure ruptured family relationships because of their loyalty to Jesus.

So the book of Revelation is not just about spooky future events for curious people. No, it is meant specifically **for believers** as an encouragement telling them Jesus wins in the end. So, we should live pure lives in faithful obedience to God while waiting for this.



Prophecy and revelation is all about Jesus

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is filled with prophecies that point to Jesus and His work. In fact, the Bible says that prophecy is intentionally all about Jesus.

Revelation 19:10c

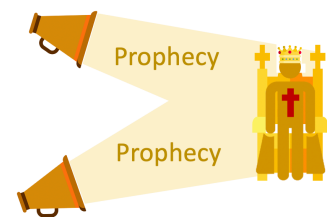
For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus.

Jesus is the reason God gives prophecies! Fulfilled prophecies prove that Jesus is Yahweh and Messiah! This is what Jesus Himself said:

John 13:19

I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I am the Messiah.

Likewise, the prophetic book of Revelation is also all about Jesus. It is about Jesus' second coming and ultimate victory.



Revelation 1:7–8

⁷ Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven.

And everyone will see him—
even those who pierced him.

And all the nations of the world
will mourn for him.

Yes! Amen!

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end,” says the Lord God. “I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.”

If we love our Lord Jesus, we must therefore be interested in prophecy and Revelation, because it is about Him!

**Special blessing in Revelation**

To encourage believers to read Revelation, God put in a special blessing. In fact, this is the only book in the Bible that begins and ends with a special blessing for those who study it!

Revelation 1:3

God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.



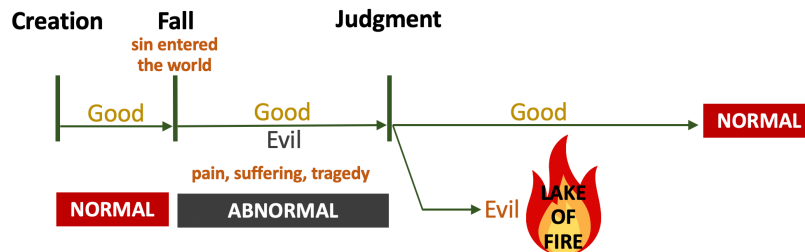
Jesus Himself says this at the end of Revelation.

Revelation 22:7

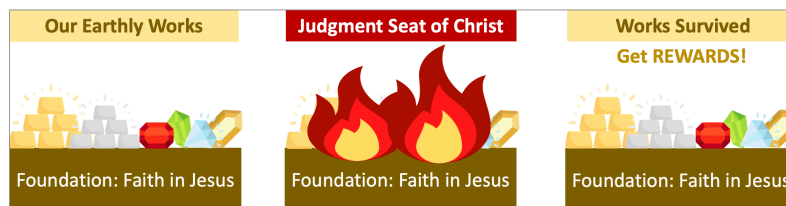
Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book.

But how are we blessed when we read Revelation?

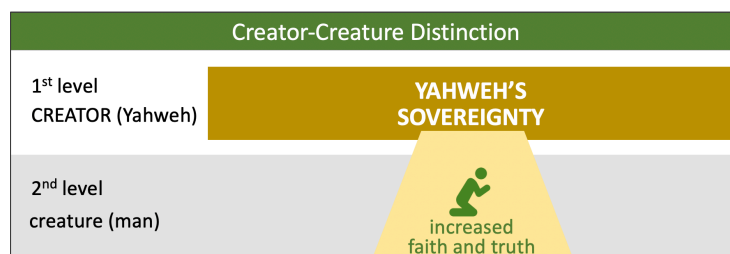
1. **It gives us proper perspective in life and therefore, hope.** All sin and evil will be dealt with and eliminated. No matter how depressing the world or our lives may be now, it will come to the good end that Jesus Himself will bring in. Knowing this calms our hearts and minds and gives us peace and assurance for the future.



2. **It motivates us to live godly lives.** Knowing that God will reward believers gives us strength and encouragement to continue in faithfulness to Him. Also, living godly lives is itself a blessing in this life. It affects our motives, attitudes, actions and relationships for the better (1 Timothy 4:8).



3. **It grows our faith and trust in God.** We see God’s sovereignty over all people, all spirit beings, all time and all history. This leads us to a deeper appreciation and worship of Yahweh. We are blessed with greater intimacy with Him when we worship God!



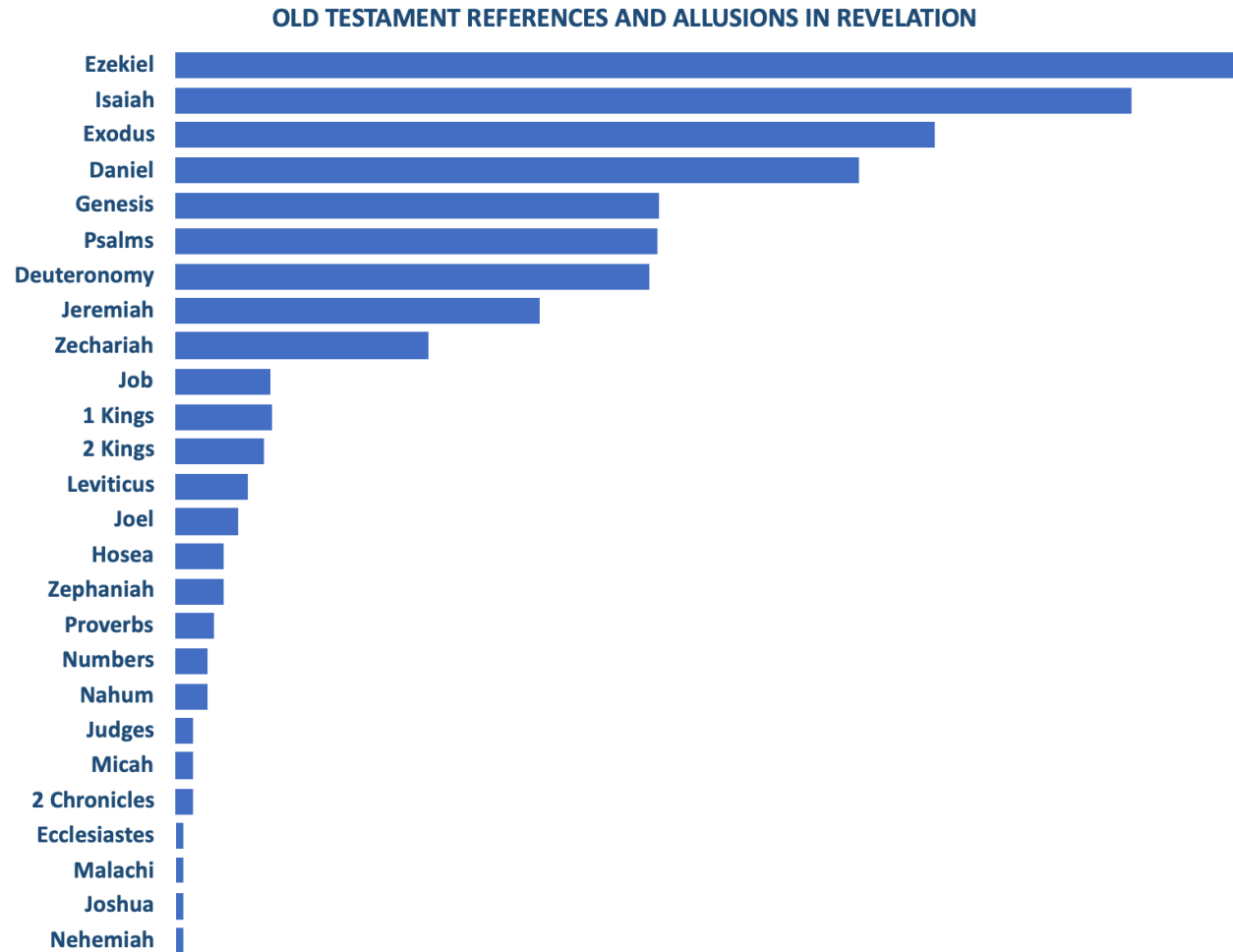
Revelation is about unveiling: God wants to reveal the future to us. And because God promises a blessing to those who study Revelation, it means that this final book of the Bible can be understood! God will not mock us by promising a blessing for a book that we cannot understand. No, He means for us to read, understand and be blessed by it.

One important thing we need to realise is that a believer’s hope is based on Yahweh’s actual historical acts and so we can rely on Him for true meaning in life. If we reject His **objective** record of history and His revelation of the future, the only way to have hope and meaning in the midst of life’s difficulties is to invent our own **subjective** meaning and that is not real hope at all.

Does this mean that anyone, Christian or non-Christian, who picks up the book of Revelation will understand it? No.

Understanding Revelation relies on understanding the Old Testament

There are 404 verses in Revelation. Although there are no direct quotes of the Old Testament, Bible scholars have counted up to 550 references to places, people and events from the Old Testament. Revelation is a book packed with biblical imagery and signs taken from all across Scripture.



This means that Revelation is not meant for the unbeliever or even a new believer. They would not have the background knowledge to understand the significance of the words and symbols. They will have problems interpreting and understanding the message.

That is one reason why we have taken all this time to go through Scripture, starting at the beginning so that we can learn the important words, places, people and events that help us see where God is directing world history. The biblical record exists to show that God's faithfulness can be confirmed. It gives us an objective foundation for our hope. It also gives us solid confidence about the future. No other religion has such an extensive historical record to prove its god's faithfulness and sovereignty.

Jesus gives John the guidelines for Revelation

John is shown in a vision of the things that are to happen in the future. It is as if God played a movie trailer for him.

The first vision John sees, is of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands, holding seven stars in His right hand.

This is what Jesus says to John.

Revelation 1:19–20

¹⁹ “Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen. ²⁰ This is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

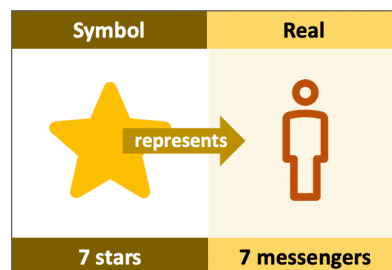
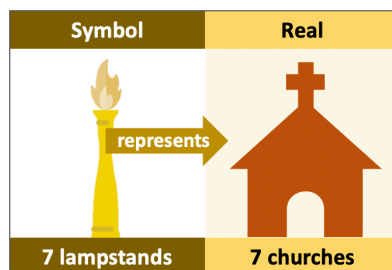


Guideline 1: Jesus tells John he will be writing about two things.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. Things that are now happening | The Present | Revelation 2–3 |
| 2. Things that will happen | The Future | Revelation 4–22 |



Guideline 2: Jesus also gave John the key to understanding the symbols in Revelation. Jesus is saying that symbols refer to something real.



B. Jesus' Message to the Seven Churches

Jesus told John that the book of Revelation was meant to be given to seven churches in the western part of modern-day Turkey. Interestingly, the order of the churches in Jesus' message in Revelation 2–3 followed the ancient postal delivery route.



Why these seven churches when there were about 30 in that area?


1. Possibly, it was because John had previously been the leader of this group of churches.
2. It could also be because these churches are representative of different kinds of churches in any age.

Jesus' message was meant for:








- the “angel of the church”, who was the human messenger, leader or representative of that church
- the church body.

(In Greek, the word “angelos”, which is translated as “angel of the church” simply means “messenger”, whether human or spirit being. In giving instructions and scolding the church, it makes more sense that Jesus was instructing human leaders rather than obedient angels.)

Each letter to the churches follows a pattern. We will use the church in Ephesus as an example.

| The Pattern of Jesus' Message | Revelation 2:1–7 |
|--|---|
| <p>1. The Addressee</p>  | <p>¹ “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus.</p> |
| <p>2. The Communicator (Jesus describes an aspect of Himself that is relevant to the message.)</p>  | <p>This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands:</p> |
| <p>3. The Praise</p>  | <p>² “I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don’t tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. ³ You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.</p> |
| <p>4. The Complaint</p>  | <p>⁴ “But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first! ⁵ Look how far you have fallen!</p> |
| <p>5. The Call (Jesus’ response is linked to His description of Himself as the communicator.)</p>  | <p>Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. ⁶ But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the Nicolaitans, just as I do.</p> |
| <p>6. The Encouragement (These words are also meant for all believers everywhere.)</p>  | <p>⁷ “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.</p> |

Following this same pattern, refer to page 39 for a summary of what Jesus said to the churches.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>EPHESUS</p>  <p>The loveless church</p> | <p>SMYRNA</p>  <p>The loyal church</p> | <p>PERGAMUM</p>  <p>The lax church</p> | <p>THYATIRA</p>  <p>The liberal church</p> | <p>SARDIS</p>  <p>The lifeless Church</p> | <p>PHILADELPHIA</p>  <p>The labouring church</p> | <p>LAODICEA</p>  <p>The lukewarm church</p> |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|

Even though Jesus was giving a personal message to each of the seven churches, He wants all churches to pay attention too. How do we know this? This was what Jesus said at the end of each of His message to the churches:

Revelation 2:7a (also found in Revelation 2:11a, 17a, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)
Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.



Jesus was saying that this applies to “anyone with ears to hear”. This applies to all believers.

But Jesus didn’t just ask the churches to listen. Jesus ended the message for each church by promising rewards for faithfulness and repentance. He called those who are successful in doing this “anyone who is victorious”, “conquerers” (ESV) or “overcomers” (NKJV).

Revelation 2:7b (also found in Revelation 2:11b, 17b, 26a; 3:5, 12a, 21)
 To everyone who is victorious I will give...



But who are these “overcomers”? Are the rewards only meant for them? Here is John’s own description of the “overcomer” that he used in another of his letters.

1 John 5:4–5 (ESV)









⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

“Overcomer” = **believer in Jesus!**



John is saying that “overcomers” are all ordinary believers! “Overcomers” is John’s term for the believer.

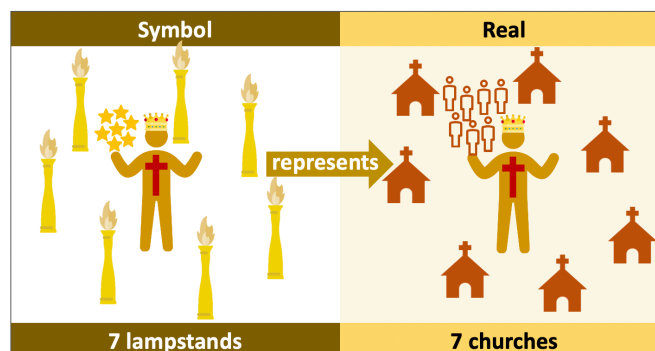
And if we look at the promises that Jesus made to each church, we realise that other passages in the Bible also show these same promises and rewards for all believers! This is how we know the message to the seven churches are indeed relevant for all churches.

|  | | ENCOURAGEMENT | Also found in: |
|--|---------------------|--|---|
|  | EPHESUS | Believers will eat of the tree of life (Revelation 2:7). | Revelation 22:14 |
|  | SMYRNA | Believers will get the crown of life and not face second death (Revelation 2:10–11). | Revelation 20:6, 21:8 |
|  | PERGAMUM | Believers will get manna from heaven and a white stone with a new name (Revelation 2:17). | John 6:48–51 |
|  | THYATIRA | Believers will rule the nations with Jesus (Revelation 2:26). | Daniel 7:27; Revelation 20:4 |
|  | SARDIS | Believers will be clothed in white and their names are in the book of life (Revelation 3:5). | Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 6:11, 7:13–17, 13:8, 19:7–8, 20:15, 21:27 |
|  | PHILADELPHIA | Believers will be kept from the time of Tribulation and they have a permanent place in God’s presence (Revelation 3:10, 12). | 2 Peter 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9–10; Revelation 22:1–5 |
|  | LAODICEA | Believers will sit with Jesus on His throne (Revelation 3:21). | Matthew 19:28–29; John 12:26; 2 Timothy 2:12 |

But what can we learn from Jesus’ message to the churches? While there are many lessons, here are several thoughts to ponder.

1. Jesus is watching believers.

Jesus is standing in the midst of the seven churches and holding the leaders in His hand.

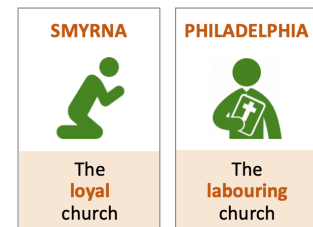


? Thought to Ponder

- It is assuring for believers to know that Jesus is with us and among us. Sometimes, our churches can seem so “godless”, yet the Bible reassures us that Jesus has not left His church, His body, His bride. He is standing in our midst.
- Moreover, it should assure church leaders that Jesus’ hand of protection, care and discipline is holding onto them. They are not alone as they lead the church.
- However, this is also a warning that Jesus is watching how we live. He will either reward us or discipline us based on the choices we make.

2. Jesus wants loyal and faithful believers. (Smyrna and Philadelphia)

Jesus praised Smyrna and Philadelphia for their faithfulness and loyalty to Him despite much suffering (Smyrna) and having little strength (Philadelphia).



In fact, Jesus had no complaint against either of these churches!

Instead, He encouraged them not to be afraid of suffering and to continue patiently enduring trials. He told them to focus on God’s guarantee of their future.

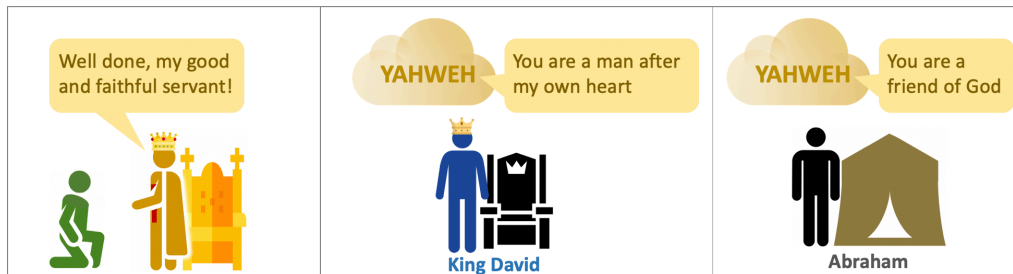
? Thought to Ponder

- The examples of these two churches show that it is possible to please Jesus! It is possible to have no complaints against us! That is definitely one encouragement for us as believers to persevere in faithfulness.
- Interestingly, despite suffering, Smyrna remained faithful. Or perhaps what may have happened is, because of their suffering, they clung to Jesus! Many of us as believers pray against suffering and persecution. We are so afraid of confrontation or being disliked by society. Yet, perhaps suffering is what grew and matured the Smyrna church so that they received a glowing report from Jesus.



If we value Jesus' praise more than anything, maybe instead of praying for no suffering, we can pray that whatever journey God takes us on, that He sanctify and grow us so God would say to us at the end:

- “Well done, my good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).
- You are “a man after my own heart” (the way God referred to David) (Acts 13:22).
- You are “a friend of God” (as Abraham was called) (James 2:23).



How much do we desire to hear these words from God? It is possible to hear them!

3. Jesus warns believers not to fall away from Him.

There are two specific warnings.

a. Jesus warns believers against losing their love for Him. (Ephesus)

The church in Ephesus had a very high profile. Paul, Timothy, Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla all ministered there.

In fact, eight books in the New Testament were written to them!

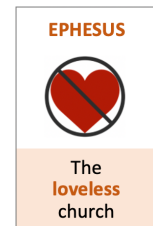
8 New Testament books written to the church at Ephesus



The church started out strong. Years earlier, Paul wrote that they had great love for God and others.

Ephesians 1:15–16a

¹⁵ Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, ¹⁶ I have not stopped thanking God for you.



But now, about 30 years later, they had grown cold in their love for God and each other. They knew their Bible well and worked hard for God. But Jesus does not want mere actions without devotion. He desires love for Him and fellow believers.



He told them to repent or He would remove their lampstand from its place, meaning He will do away with this church. Unfortunately, this was exactly what happened. The Ephesian church declined around the 5th century.



? Thought to Ponder

It is possible for us to be right in our Bible knowledge and be diligent in fighting against false teaching and still displease God! We can be doing God's work, and yet not be in God's will. What God wants is for us to have genuine love for Him and His people. But what does this mean? Does God want us to be emotional or have positive feelings towards Him and others all the time? No, Jesus said our love is to be shown through works of love.

Revelation 2:5b

Turn back to me and do the works you did at first.

Those of us who have been Christians a long time need to be especially wary of losing our "first love" for God. We need to be careful that we aren't just going through the motions of doing what a Christian should do. Rather, this is what Paul said:

Colossians 3:16–17

¹⁶ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

b. Jesus warns believers against tolerating false teaching, false teachers and adopting their influence into their lives. (Pergamum and Thyatira)

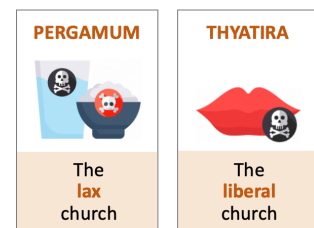
Pergamum was a very wealthy but wicked city with many pagan cults. Jesus knew the believers were living in a difficult place. He said to them:

Revelation 2:13a

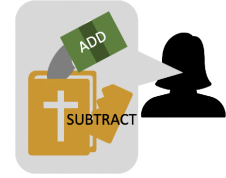
I know that you live in the city where Satan has his throne,

While many believers were faithful to God despite of where they lived, there were others in the church who compromised their faith. They followed false teachings and led a life of idolatry and immorality.

Jesus also scolded **Thyatira** for tolerating "Jezebel", also a false teacher. (Here we see Jesus referring to this false teacher by the name of an Old Testament person to make a quick comparison of what is happening.)



This Jezebel taught that it was okay to be a Christian and still lead immoral lives and participate in idolatry. The church did nothing to deal with her. In fact, they allowed her to continue her nonsense without opposition, so she ended up polluting the church.



? Thought to Ponder

Both Pergamum (the lax church) and Thyatira (the liberal church) can be compared with many of our churches today. Many are located in very pagan places. And within our churches are people who hold to false teaching. They see no problem being a Christian and engaging in lives that insult and dishonour God. They are tolerant of immorality and often replace God with their own man-made idols. Worse, these people encourage others to do the same. This is how Paul describes them:

Romans 1:32

They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

Jesus does not want us as a church to do nothing when faced with false teaching. He wants churches to courageously and righteously deal with the false teaching and the false teachers, even if we face criticism. Otherwise, Jesus will be angry with us instead.



c. Jesus warns believers against being a dead church even if they look like an effective one. (Sardis)

The church in Sardis had a good reputation and people thought they were an effective church. But Jesus knew better. He told them they were dead in their love and works for God.



These were believers, they were not spiritually dead. We know this because Jesus didn't ask them to get saved. Instead, He told them to "wake up" because they were spiritually asleep and useless.

Revelation 3:2–3a

² Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God.

³ Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again.

Jesus told them what they needed to do to “wake up”.



| How to wake up | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| REMEMBER | OBEY | REPENT |
| “Go back” to God’s Word to see why they are Christians to begin with | Hold to God’s Word by obeying Him | Change their thinking and behaviour to be aligned with God’s Word |

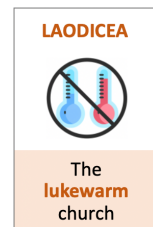
? Thought to Ponder

As Christians, we go through ups and downs in our Christian life. Sometimes we are all energised for God and love Him deeply. Sometimes, we are dry and we don’t feel like reading the Bible, don’t feel like doing anything for God and don’t feel like being with other believers.

Interestingly, Jesus says the “cure” for this deadness is to “remember, obey, repent”. It is a very simple but intentional exercise of going back to Him. Jesus didn’t talk about the “secrets”, “special keys” or “supernatural experiences” to wake up from this. When we are dry, “dead” in our love and works for God, let us also “remember, obey, repent” and intentionally apply Jesus’ solution to our lives.

d. Jesus warns believers against relying on their wealth and being lukewarm towards Him. (Laodicea)

Laodicea was a wealthy city famous for its banking, ophthalmology (study and treatment of the eyes) and special black wool. Because of their material wealth, they were contented and arrogant and felt they needed nothing. Jesus was angry with them and sarcastically told them that actually, they were poor (despite their banks), blind (despite being famous for eye medicine) and naked (despite having woollen clothes).



Revelation 3:17

You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

Laodicea famous for:

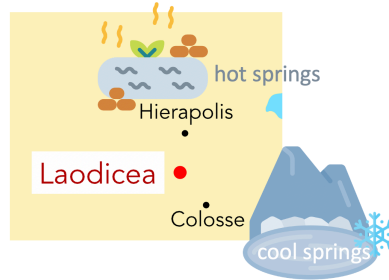
| | | |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| banking | ophthalmology | black wool |
| POOR! | BLIND! | NAKED! |

But Jesus’ evaluation of them is that they are...

Their useless attitude and lifestyle disgusted Jesus so much, He spat them out of His mouth!

Revelation 3:15–16

¹⁵ “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! ¹⁶ But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!



Jesus used local imagery to scold Laodicea. The nearby city of Hierapolis had useful hot springs. And nearby Colosse had cool spring water from the mountains. But Laodicea had no natural water supply. Their water came from eight kilometres (five miles) away through an aqueduct. It was lukewarm and tasted terrible.

Because of their pride in all their own accomplishments, Laodicea was lukewarm towards Jesus. God meant very little to them and they were unaffected by Him. In fact, they kicked Jesus out of His own church entirely! They left Him standing outside! But because they were believers, Jesus intended to discipline them. God only disciplines His children to correct them from wrong. Then Jesus invited these believers to get back into right fellowship with Him.

Revelation 3:19–20

¹⁹ I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. ²⁰ “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.



? Thought to Ponder

What does Jesus think of us? Does He think we focus too much on our material wealth and worldly needs and are not really interested in Him? Have we made ourselves so sickening to Jesus that He wants to spit us out? We pray Jesus would never say that of us!

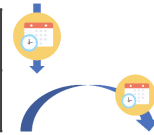
Let us reflect on our own attitudes and lifestyles. Jesus wants believers who are passionate and serious about Him, and who want to have continued warm fellowship with Him. He does not want Christians who are indifferent or unconcerned. What kind of Christians are we? What exactly does Jesus think of us?

We can think of these letters to these churches as Jesus’ last message to all churches before God completed the writing of the New Testament and therefore the whole Bible.



After this, John was shown visions of the future which he was to write down. What he saw and heard is covered in the rest of Revelation.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. Things that are now happening | The Present | Revelation 2–3 |
| 2. Things that will happen | The Future | Revelation 4–22 |



Revelation is about Future Events

Up till now, we have been studying past events in this Bible study. Through the writings of the prophets, God told us how He has been directing history (Amos 3:7). We have used this biblical framework to interpret and understand key world events.

However, moving forward, we will be studying future events: things that have not yet happened. So, the approach we will be taking for these next lessons will be slightly different. We will be focusing more on the big picture instead of all the details. Why?

Because we know that God has not told us everything. This is what John wrote:

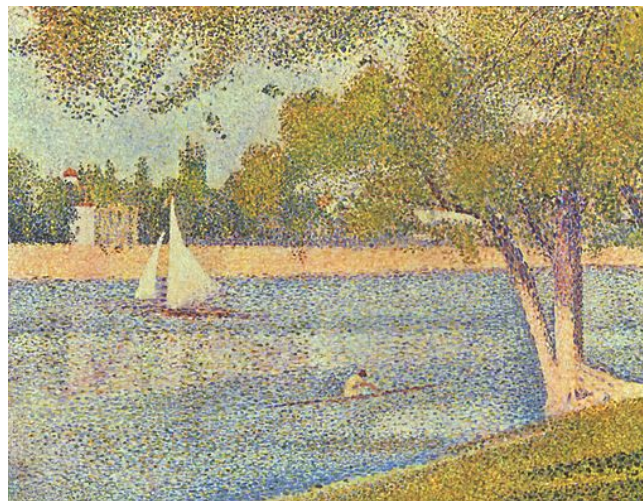
Revelation 10:4

When the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write. But I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Keep secret what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down.”



Also, while God gave us the big picture, there are details that He didn't tell us. It is almost as if there are, for example, 1000 pieces of information to know but God has only given us 300.

Or here is another way to think about it. Looking at this oil painting, we can see what the “big picture is”. There is a river with a sailboat, a man rowing, a tree on the right and a building on the far bank.



However, if we zoom in to see the details, it's all a blur!



Zoom in on the picture

In a sense, Revelation is like that. God didn't "zoom in" to reveal a crystal clear picture of all the small details. The details can be guessed but we cannot be rigid and insist that what we think is 100% accurate.

Here is one example. God told us there will be "two witnesses" but gave only a few details about them. We don't even know their names or where they come from.

Revelation 11:3

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will be clothed in burlap and will prophesy during those 1,260 days.



Over the years, Christians have made reasonable speculations about who they could be. Many of the guesses are possible. But because God didn't identify them, as we go through our study of Revelation, we will not be insistent on who they could be either.

When will the events of Revelation 4–22 occur?

All true Christians share four very important beliefs about the end. We believe:

- A. There will be a visible, physical, actual **return of Jesus Christ** to the earth.
- B. There will be a future, bodily **resurrection** of believers and unbelievers.
- C. There will be **final judgment**.
- D. There is an actual **heaven and hell**.

We believe this because there are many Bible passages that teach these truths. So, there is generally no disagreement among Christians about these things.

However, Christians have different views on the timing of end-time events. This is where there is much debate, confusion and disagreement.

The three "timing issues" are:

- 1. **Overall fulfilment:** when will the book of Revelation take place?
- 2. **Millennium:** when is the millennium?
- 3. **Rapture:** when does the rapture happen?

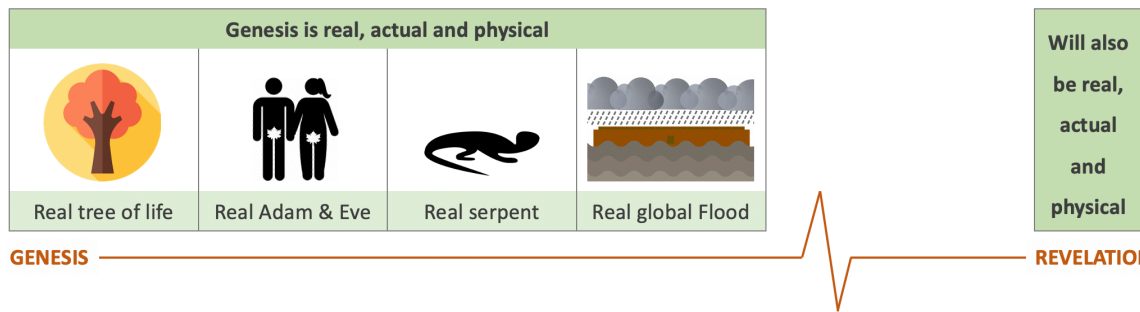
Timing issue #1: Overall fulfilment

These are the different views on when the events of Revelation will happen.

| Past | Present | Timeless | Future |
|--|---|---|---|
| Revelation happened already. | Revelation is happening right now. | Revelation is timeless. | Revelation will happen in the future. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd coming of Jesus happened already. • Jesus returned spiritually in AD 70 (through the Romans) and destroyed Jerusalem. • We are now living in the new heaven and new earth. • If there is an end to history, God did not tell us about it. • Such believers think John wrote Revelation before AD 70. (However, almost all others agree that John wrote around AD 95.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events of Revelation is an overview of church history: started when the church was born and will end at the 2nd coming of Jesus. • We are in the middle of Revelation events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revelation is a picture of the continuing battle between good and evil. It teaches believers good general principles on how to live in this life. • Symbols in Revelation do not have definite meanings. • Uses an allegorical interpretation of the Bible (gives spiritual meanings to many parts of the Bible). • Popular view of many Bible scholars today. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revelation is about real people and real events that have not yet happened. • Uses a plain and normal understanding of God's Word. • This is the view of Jesus' apostles and the main view of the early church. |

The view that we will be taking in these lessons is the future view. This is because throughout the series, we have used a plain and normal understanding of God's Word in interpreting the message of the Bible.

For example, we believe God's account in Genesis of how the world began was real, actual and physical. There was a real tree of life, a real Adam, a real serpent and a real global Flood. Therefore, we believe when God tells us in Revelation how everything ends, it is also real, actual and physical.



Also, we believe that when we look at how God fulfilled past prophecies, we will understand how to interpret prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled.

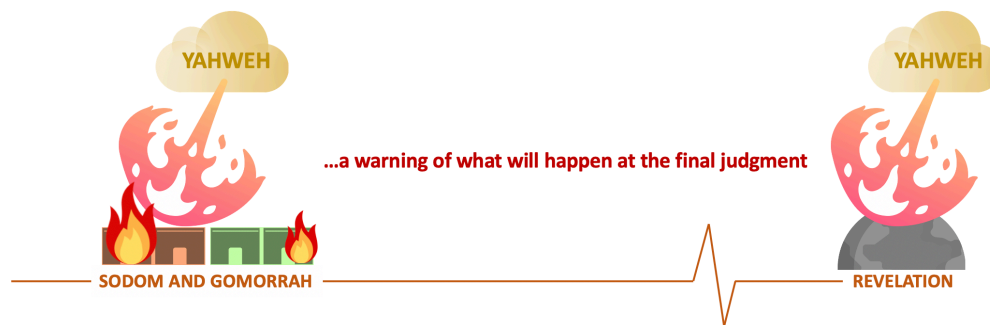
- For example, at Jesus' first coming, He completely fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies in a real, actual, physical and literal way. We therefore believe that prophecies about Jesus' second coming will also be fulfilled in a real, actual, physical and literal way.



- God also used the Old Testament to teach mankind about Himself and how He works. Often, things in the Old Testament foreshadow what will happen in the New Testament. This is what Jude said.

Jude 7

And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment.



Just as God actually and physically destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, we believe God will literally and physically bring judgment on the unrighteous.

But what does Revelation itself say about when the events will happen?

Revelation 1:1a, 3

¹ This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. ³ God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.

What does “must soon take place” and “the time is near” mean? We understand it to mean “imminent”, that the events are definitely going to happen, and it can happen at any time.



The apostle John says something similar in another of his letters.

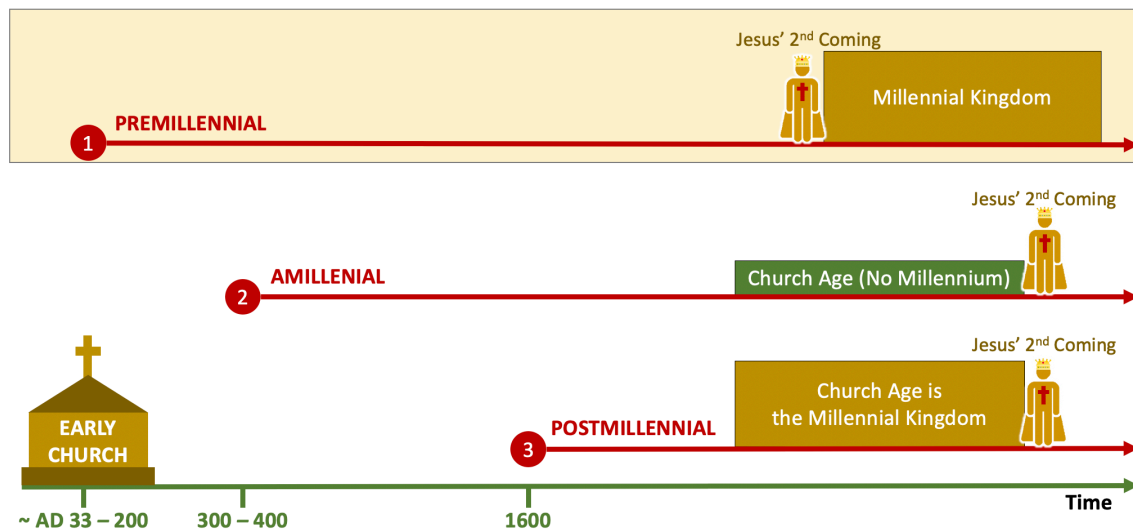
1 John 2:18

Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come.

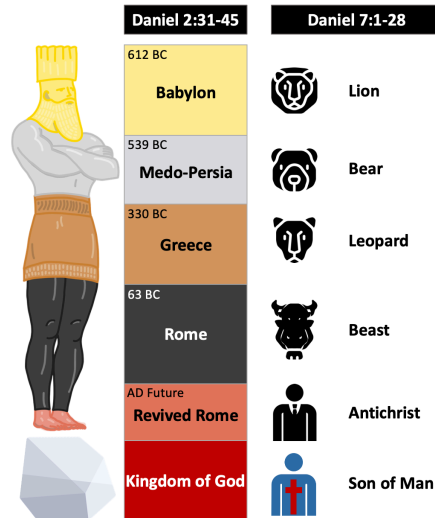
There is a sense of urgency because the end-time events can start at any time.

Timing Issue #2: Millennium

These are the three main views regarding the millennium, which is the thousand-year-long, physical Kingdom of God that the Jews are still waiting for. In the previous lesson, we covered the background and explanation of these three views. This chart summarises the views and when they started.



The view that we will be taking in these lessons is premillennial. We believe that Messiah Jesus is the crushing rock from Daniel 2:31–45, 7:1–28. He will personally return to earth at His second coming, destroy the Kingdom of Man and start the actual thousand-year-long Kingdom of God on earth. Also, this study has consistently used a plain and normal understanding of God’s Word and that results in a view that is premillennial.

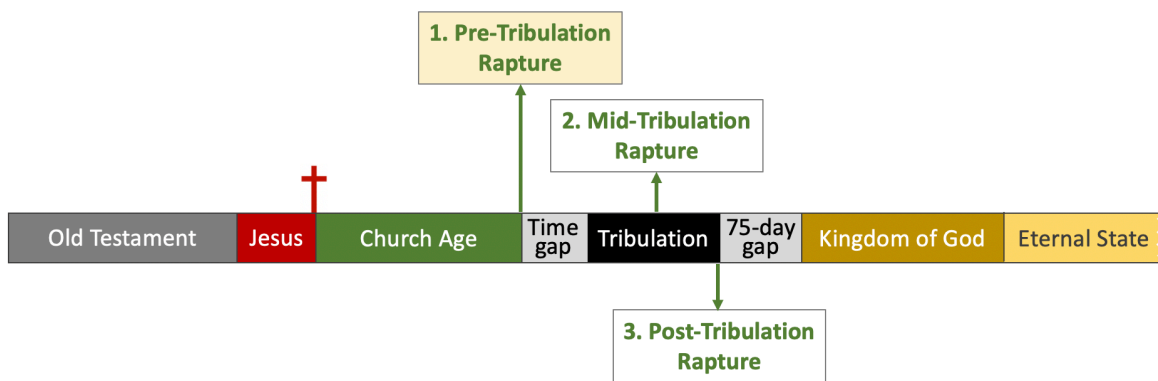


Timing Issue #3: Rapture

In lesson 40, we reviewed Bible passages on the rapture. We saw that rapture can happen at any moment. Jesus will descend from heaven and while in mid-air, He will take all living believers from the earth and bring them alive into heaven to be with Him. These believers will not face physical death.










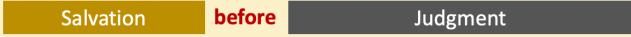
There are three main views on the timing of the rapture. They are all stated in relation to the time of Tribulation.



The view that we have taken in these lessons is pre-tribulation rapture. We believe that Jesus will save the church from the wrath of God before the start of the Tribulation of Israel.

This is most in line with Yahweh's historical pattern of saving believers before sending judgment on unbelievers. We have observed how God's judgment and salvation always go together and that He consistently saves believers from the unbelievers' judgment.

YAHWEH'S PATTERN OF JUDGMENT / SALVATION

| | |
|--|--|
|  <p>The Flood</p> | <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>God saved believing Noah and family before He destroyed the unbelieving world.</p> |
|  <p>Sodom and Gomorrah</p> | <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>God saved believing Lot and his daughters before destroying the two unbelieving cities.</p> |
|  <p>The Passover</p> | <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>God saved the believing Israelites before killing the firstborns of unbelieving Egyptians.</p> |
|  <p>Tribulation</p> | <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Jesus will save His believing bride, His body before dealing with unbelieving Israel.</p> |

This is what Peter said about God knowing how to rescue godly people **from** trials.

2 Peter 2:6–7, 9

⁶ Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people.

⁷ But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him.

⁹ So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment.

Peter was referring to what happened to Lot, a believer, when God came to judge the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In fact, we see that the angels sent by God to destroy the cities could not begin their work until Lot and his family were taken out of the way. They were saved from that judgment because it was not meant for them.

Genesis 19:18–22

¹⁸ “Oh no, my lord!” Lot begged. ¹⁹ “You have been so gracious to me and saved my life, and you have shown such great kindness. But I cannot go to the mountains. Disaster would catch up to me there, and I would soon die. ²⁰ See, there is a small

village nearby. Please let me go there instead; don't you see how small it is? Then my life will be saved."

²¹ "All right," the angel said, "I will grant your request. I will not destroy the little village.

²² But hurry! Escape to it, for I can do nothing until you arrive there." (This explains why that village was known as Zoar, which means "little place.")

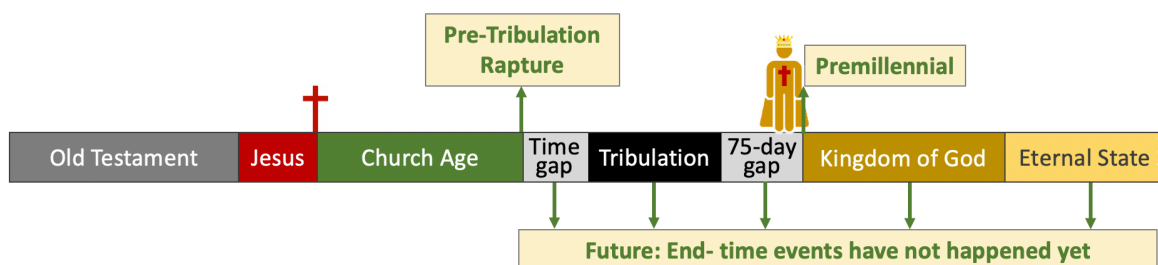
The angels of judgment could not begin their work till the righteous were saved. We see that God saves **believers** from the judgment He is bringing upon **unbelievers**.



Much more can be studied about these timing issues. Good books on the subject have been written and you can do further research on the arguments for and against each of the views.

However, this is the view we have on the end times:

- **Future** (End-time events have not happened yet.)
- **Premillennial** (Jesus returns before the start of the thousand-year Kingdom period.)
- **Pre-tribulation rapture** (Jesus will take away the church before the Tribulation begins.)



We believe this is most consistent with our normal, ordinary reading of the Bible and also with God's track record of how He has judged in the past.

Though God wants us to understand the big picture of future events, He will probably surprise us with some of the details of exactly how He will unfold the future.

So this will be our approach to studying the end times:

- We will focus on the big picture.
- If the Bible is vague or unclear about a certain detail, we will not speculate and then insist that what we think is correct.



Timeline Overview of the Events of Revelation

After John records the letters to the churches, he is given a vision of what happens next.

Revelation 4:1–2

¹ Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this.” ² And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it.

In these final few lessons, we will look at what John saw and heard. We will also study passages from other parts of the Bible describing these end-time events.

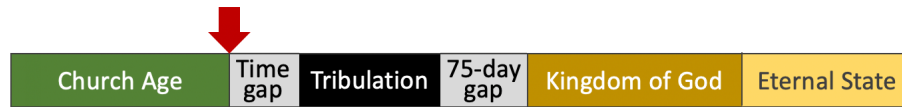
To begin, here is a brief overview of the events that will happen next. The sequence of events is based on the following Scriptures (as well as additional passages):

- Daniel 7, 9:26–27, 12:11–12
- Matthew 24–25
- Revelation 4–22

Have page 41 in front of you for the next section.

Note: in the following timeline, certain events are marked with an asterisk (*). Bible scholars aren’t certain where exactly these events fit in the overall sequence of the end times. However, we don’t want to exclude them so we have placed them into possible slots in the timeline. But please note, we are not dogmatic about the timing of these events.

1. The Church Age and the Rapture



- We are currently living in this church age which began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). During this time, God puts believing Jews and Gentiles into a body called the church, or the body of Christ (Ephesians 3:1–6). We are also known as the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2).

- The church age will end suddenly, without any warning, with the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13–17). Jesus will come in the air and:

- He will carry away to heaven all living believers from the earth.
- He will also raise all church-age believers who have died.
- Unbelievers will be left behind on the earth.



Rapture of the church

- Jesus will give all church-age believers resurrection bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50–55).

- With these resurrection bodies, we will live in the Father's house which Jesus has been preparing for us (John 14:1–3).



Resurrection bodies

- In heaven, we will all face the Bema or the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:9–10; Romans 14:10). Jesus will evaluate all of us for the work that we have done and will reward us for work that survives His evaluation (Luke 19:11–26).

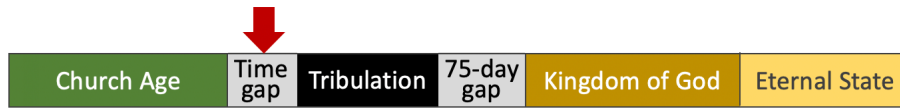


Bema

- * After the Bema, we will start getting ready for the Wedding Supper of the Lamb which will begin at the end of the Tribulation (Revelation 19:6–9).

Note: With the rapture, the church will escape from the judgment that people on earth will suffer during the time of the Tribulation (Revelation 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:9–11). Throughout the Tribulation, the church stays safely in heaven.

2. Time Gap



The Bible does not say that the start of Tribulation happens immediately after the rapture. Bible scholars believe there may be a time gap. They believe it is possible that God will use this time to further prepare the world for the start of Tribulation. For example:

- **The revived Roman Empire:** To restore order after the dramatic rapture of the church, a group of ten leaders forms a revived Roman Empire with its headquarters in Babylon.
- **The Jewish Temple:** We know that Jews will start sacrificing in their new temple (Daniel 9:27) before the Antichrist desecrates it at the midpoint of the Tribulation. This means before that midpoint, the Jews need to have a new temple.

3. Start of the Tribulation (First 3½ years)



- On earth, there is now a revived Roman Empire, headed by a group of ten rulers (Daniel 7:7).
- In heaven, Jesus receives the scroll with seven seals and He starts to open each seal (Revelation 5). This starts the Tribulation from God's perspective.
- Then the Antichrist arrives on the scene and signs a seven-year peace agreement with Israel (Daniel 9:27). This starts the Tribulation from the earth's perspective. This is the final "one set of seven" that Daniel prophesied about. This is why the Tribulation is often called Daniel's 70th Week or simply the 70th Week.
- The Antichrist will be treated like the great peacemaker because this treaty will give Israel and possibly the whole Middle East, peace and security.



Scroll with
7 Seals

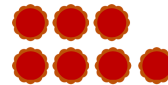


Peace treaty

- * When Israel thinks it is at peace, an alliance of countries will attack it. The Bible calls this the “War of Gog and Magog” (Ezekiel 38–39). However, God will quickly and supernaturally rescue Israel and defeat the enemy by sending a great earthquake, hailstones, fire, burning sulphur, disease and by causing infighting among the soldiers of this alliance.
- Seal judgments: Jesus begins to send judgments to the earth, starting with the seven seal judgments. Great devastation falls upon the earth. There is war, famine, massive inflation, earthquakes and epidemics. One quarter of the world’s population will die during this period (Revelation 6, 8:1–6).
- God will raise and set apart 144,000 believing Jews for Himself. They will do His work for Him on earth during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:1–8).



War of Gog and Magog



Seal Judgments



144,000 Jews

4. Midpoint of the Tribulation



- * Up until this point in time, Satan still has access to heaven (Job 1–2), but now, he is thrown out together with the fallen angels (Revelation 12:7–12). Their access to heaven is completely cut off. Satan is very angry and declares all-out war against the Jews. He will work through the Antichrist and the false prophet to try and destroy the Jews.



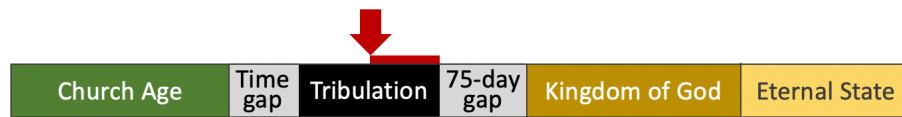
Satan expelled

- The Antichrist will break the treaty with Israel and grossly violate the temple at Jerusalem by setting up an idolatrous statue (Matthew 24:15).



Broken treaty

5. Second Half of the Tribulation (Second 3½ years): The Great Tribulation



- Satan will try to destroy the Jews entirely through the Antichrist. But God will supernaturally hide some of His people and protect them (Revelation 12:14, 16).



Hidden Jews

- * The Antichrist will gain military strength but at some point, he will be killed. However, he will be supernaturally brought back to life by the power of Satan! This will cause the world to begin worshipping him (Revelation 13:3–4, 12).



Risen
Antichrist

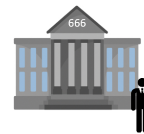
- After rising from the dead, the Antichrist will now rise to complete power. The other rulers will hand over all authority to him and he will rule the entire world in the second half of the Tribulation (Daniel 7:24; Revelation 17:12–13).

- The Antichrist will destroy worldwide religion and declare himself to be God. With the help of the false prophet (Revelation 13:11–18), he will force the whole world to worship him. And they will. This is because the false prophet will have amazing powers of signs and wonders and will greatly deceive the world. And the Antichrist will make Babylon his capital.



Antichrist
worshipped

- The Antichrist will also set up a one-world government and economy. No one can buy or sell goods unless they have the number and mark of the Antichrist: 666 (Revelation 13:11–18).



One-world
government

- Together, Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet will form the “unholy trinity”. They imitate God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- The Tribulation gets even worse as Jesus sends the trumpet judgments. Israel is devastated, as are the Gentile nations. There are geophysical disasters, wars and by this time, more than half of the world’s population will have died. In all its history, this world has never seen this level of death and destruction before (Revelation 8–9).



Trumpet
Judgments

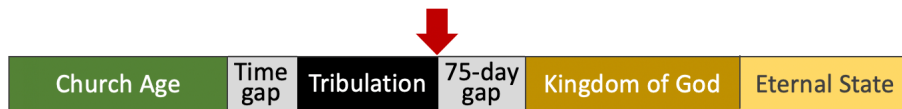
- God sends two witnesses to minister for Him in the midst of this Great Tribulation (Revelation 11:3–14). God will equip them with power and will protect them while they are doing His work. Then God will allow the Antichrist to kill them. But after 3½ days, God will raise them from the dead and bring them to heaven.



Yahweh's
2 witnesses

6. End of the Tribulation

The end of the world as we know it finally arrives.

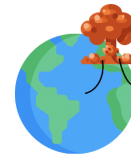


- Jesus pours out the bowl judgments rapidly (Revelation 16). The city of Babylon is destroyed (Revelation 18).



Bowl
Judgments

- Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet gather the armies of the world in a place called Armageddon for the battle on the great day of God the Almighty (Revelation 16:12–16).



Armageddon

- Jesus returns with the armies of heaven (the angels) and the resurrected church. He totally destroys all the armies of the world (Revelation 19:11–21; Zechariah 14:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). The birds are invited to the great supper of God to feast on the flesh of the dead.



Jesus'
2nd Coming

- Jesus throws the Antichrist and his false prophet into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).



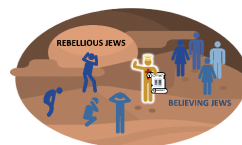
Antichrist
judged

- Satan is bound in chains and thrown into the abyss (this is not the same as the lake of fire) for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1–3). This prevents him from influencing the world and mankind. Since the Fall, there has not been a day without Satan's evil influence but now, he is barred from spreading evil for 1,000 years!



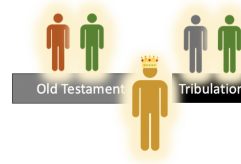
Satan bound

- The living Jews: Then Christ will gather all the surviving Jews from around the world to judge them. He will rescue those who now acknowledge and trust Him as Messiah. They will be given new life (hearts) by the Holy Spirit. In this way, Jesus fulfils the New Covenant for the Jews. The Jews who reject Him will be removed from the earth (Ezekiel 20:33–38; Romans 11:25–27).



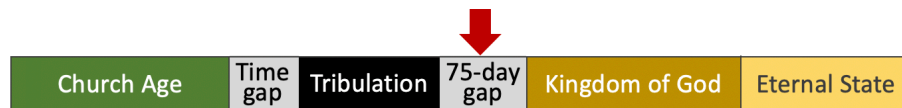
Those living
are judged

- The living Gentiles: Jesus also judges all the surviving Gentiles. Those who come to trust Him as Saviour are saved. Those who reject Him are removed from the earth. This is the “sheep and goats” judgment (Matthew 25:31–46).
- The dead Old Testament and tribulation believers: Jesus will resurrect them at this point, evaluate their lives and then reward them (Revelation 20:4–6; Daniel 12:1–4; Isaiah 26:16–19).



Believers' resurrection

7. 75-Day Time Gap



- Before Jesus restarts the Kingdom of God, Daniel tells us there is a 75-day time gap between the end of the Tribulation and the start of the Kingdom. (We will work out how there is a 75-day gap when we examine Daniel 12:11–12 closely.)
- The Bible doesn't say what happens in this 75-day gap. Perhaps it is a time of preparation and clean-up work before the Kingdom begins!

8. The Thousand-Year Kingdom of God

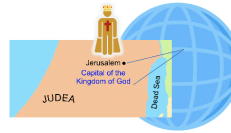


- With Satan out of the way and all unbelievers gone, Jesus then brings in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 20:1–6). This thousand-year Kingdom is often called the Millennium.
- The Kingdom is a renewed earth, totally different from our current broken earth! Weather, climate, nature, geography and all the animals will be very different. Humans will live extremely long lives. Animals will no longer eat each other nor hurt man. All will be tame. (See Lesson 30: The Jewish Expectation (Part 2) for Bible references.)



Renewed earth

- Jesus will rule from Jerusalem. He is the perfectly righteous King, a true human son of David who reigns from David’s throne in Jerusalem. There will be no rebellion at all when He is King. Based also in Jerusalem, resurrected David will rule over Israel as Prince (Ezekiel 34:24, 37:25).



King Jesus in Jerusalem

- Israel will be the superpower of the world and the Jews will be a respected and popular people. Gentiles will live all around the world but will visit Jerusalem to worship Jesus face to face.
- Jesus will rule “with an iron rod” and maintain world peace (Revelation 19:15; Psalm 2:9). He is the head of the global government with resurrected believers helping Him rule. Mankind will successfully fulfil responsible dominion, fill the earth and take care of it well.

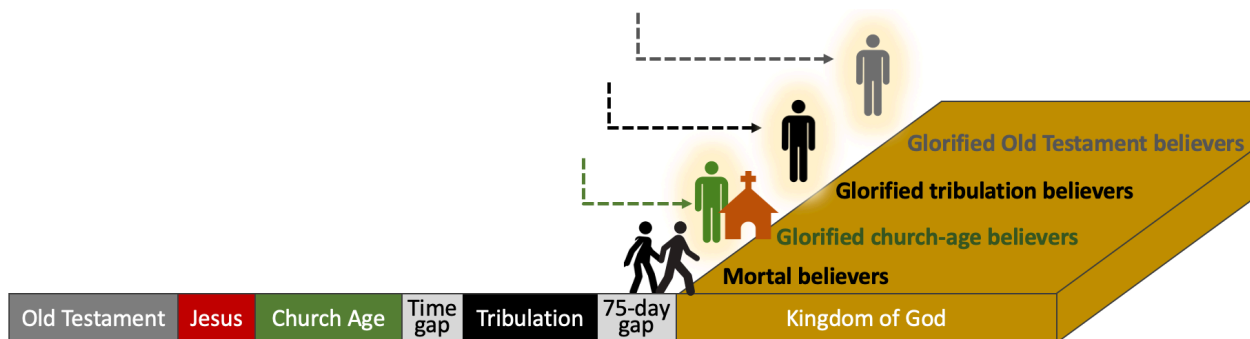
- Israel will finally enjoy all of their Promised Land that God gave them, divided among the 12 tribes (Ezekiel 47:13–48:35).



Promised Land

- These are the people who will enter the finally returned Kingdom of God:
 - Mortal believing Jews and Gentiles who survived the Tribulation.
 - Immortal, resurrected Old Testament believers.
 - Immortal, resurrected tribulation believers who died during the Tribulation.
 - The immortal, resurrected and returned church or bride of Christ who comes back with Jesus.

This means there will be a mix of mortal humans and immortal resurrected believers in the Kingdom.



Note: Mortals will continue to marry and have children. These children will be born with a sin nature just like all humans. They will have to make their own personal decision of whether or not to trust King Jesus as their Saviour. (Such believing mortals who die during the Kingdom will be given resurrection bodies at some point before the Eternal State.)

- * There will be the celebration of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7). It appears that the wedding ceremony itself may be in heaven but the feast is in the Millennial Kingdom. The marriage of the Lamb to His Bride, the church, will be celebrated with the guests (John 3:27–29; Ephesians 5:25–26; Revelation 19:6–9).



Wedding Feast

9. The Final Battle



- The Kingdom era is not the Eternal State. Just as all mankind had a choice to love and obey God willingly, the mortals born during the Kingdom era will also be given that choice. That choice once again is between God and Satan.

- God will release Satan from the abyss after the Kingdom of God has existed for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:7–10). Satan would not have changed after 1,000 years in the abyss. Neither would sinful mortal man.



Satan released

- Satan will once again deceive the nations in a war called “Gog and Magog” (a second battle with the same name). He will raise a mighty army to fight against King Jesus. This rebellious army is only made up of mortals. With Satan enticing and tempting them, these mortals now openly rebel against Christ! Resurrected believers will not be part of this army as they can never fall or sin again.



Final battle

- God supernaturally defeats all of them.
- Satan is thrown once and for all into the lake of fire for all eternity.



Yahweh wins

- Then Yahweh completely destroys the heavens and earth (Revelation 20:11–12; 2 Peter 3:10).

- The final resurrection occurs. All unbelievers from all generations will be resurrected with new bodies. They will then face Jesus at the Great White Throne judgment meant only for unbelievers (Revelation 20:11–15). They will all be sentenced by Jesus to the lake of fire, but they will each suffer different degrees of punishment based on how badly they had lived on earth. Their punishment is for eternity; it never ends.



Great White Throne

- Death and Hades are also thrown into the lake of fire.
- Yahweh finally separates good and evil permanently.



Evil finally destroyed

10. The Eternal State



- Yahweh then brings in a new heaven and a new earth! It's a brand new universe! Not only that, God's special city, New Jerusalem descends from heaven down to the new planet earth (Revelation 21, 22:1–5).



New Heaven and Earth

- God had planned at the start of creation that He will personally live with righteous mankind and He will now do that in the Eternal State.

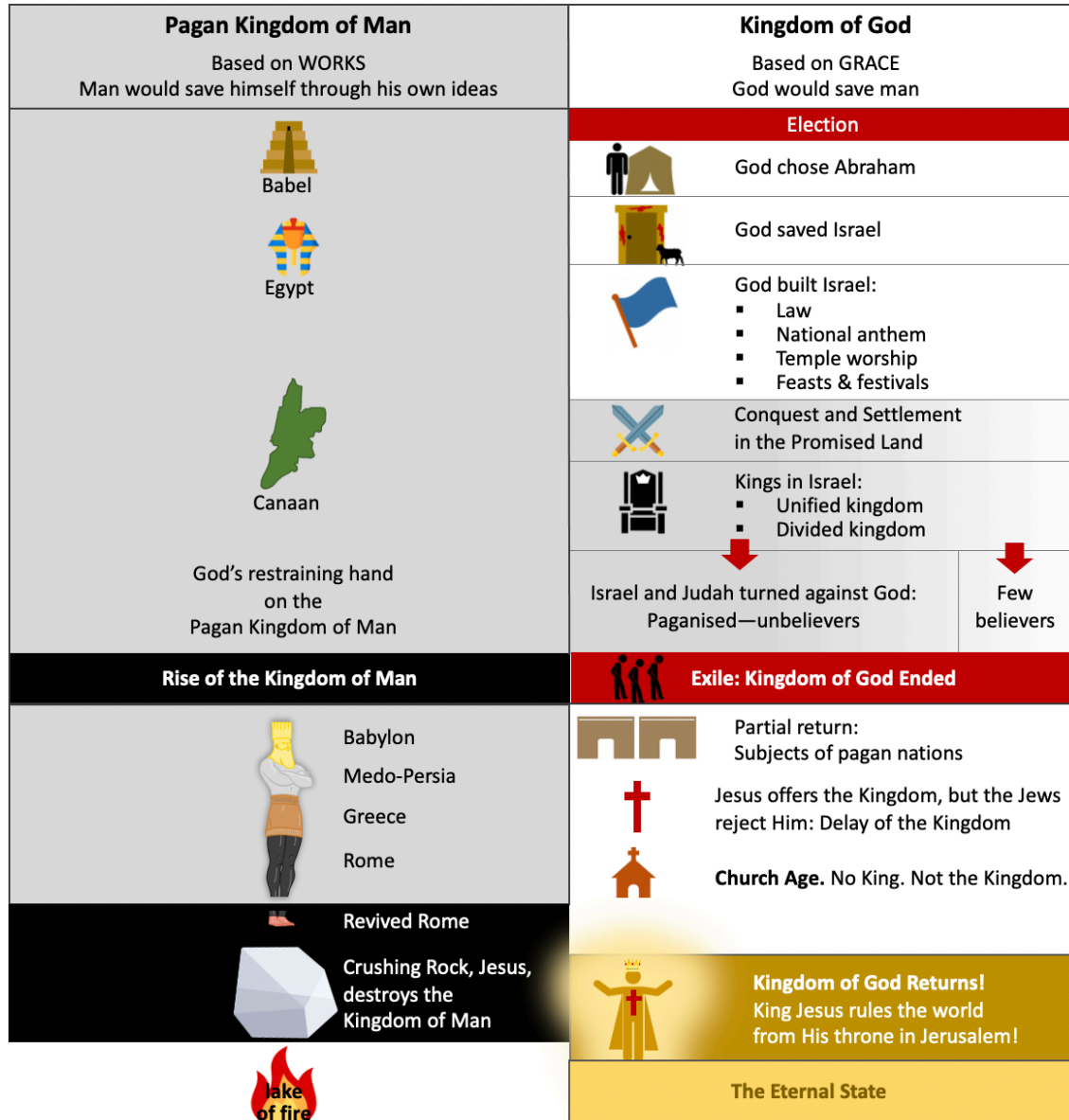


God lives with man

- Many things will not be there: no sea, tears, death, mourning, crying, pain (Revelation 21:1–4), thirst, wickedness, Temple, night, closed gates, curse (Revelation 21:6–8, 22–25, 27, 22:3)! There is only God's goodness, perfect fellowship between God and mankind and an eternity in which to enjoy God and His creation!
- We will finally see Yahweh in all His glory and both man and nature will finally truly reflect and worship His glory!

This is a quick overview of the events of the end times. In the next five lessons, we will go into more details.

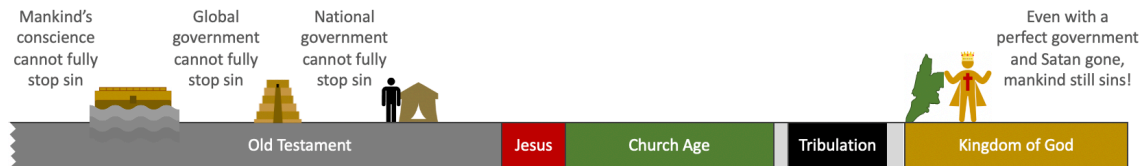
Why does world history take so long to unfold before God brings about His Eternal State?



Throughout our study of biblical events, we have seen that God pushes history forward with a specific teaching plan. With each era, God teaches mankind more about Himself, the nature of fallen mankind and the spiritual forces that try to deceive and destroy mankind.

Each era teaches a lesson about fallen mankind's thinking. God refutes each idea of how sinful people can save themselves and make the world perfect again.

For example:



- The era from after the Fall to the Flood proves that mankind's conscience alone does not restrain sin.
- The era from just after the Flood to Babel proves that civil government, when it becomes global, does not restrain sin because it becomes corrupted. Mankind keeps attempting to make the government the ultimate authority and the saviour.
- The period from after Babel to Abraham shows that even when the divine institution of civil government is limited by tribal diversity to just the national level (that is, not a global government but individual nations ruling themselves), people still ignore God and suppress His revelation. And so He elects for His purposes, Abraham and the nation that comes from him.
- And now in Revelation, we see mortal, fallen mankind living within the thousand-year-long Millennial Kingdom of God on earth. Notice how this Kingdom is freed from Satan's influence. It has an incorruptible government that rules at a global level over a geophysical environment that is functioning at the best that we've ever seen. And yet, we see that fallen mankind still chooses evil when given the opportunity!

God is teaching us an important lesson through the flow of history. The different historical scenarios answer all the "what-ifs" that people can think of. Every idea mankind has to save itself will have been tried and refuted by the end of the Millennial Kingdom. God shows that inherently sinful people can only be redeemed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and the resurrection He provides. Only then will mankind truly be transformed.

By recording biblical events for us to study, God gives us a "behind-the-scenes" look at history to reveal all of mankind's foolish thinking. God also shows how Satan and his demons are working against mankind and how people are not capable of coping with these spiritual forces.

Through God's revelation, we see ultimately how the Kingdom of Man with its idea of mankind saving itself is a failure time and time again. God has to intervene through the Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom to finally refute once and for all the Kingdom of Man as well as Satan and his spiritual forces.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. In His seven letters to the churches in Asia Minor, Jesus has personal words for the believers in those cities. The letters show that He carefully watches over His body. How should knowing that Christ watches his disciples carefully motivate you?
2. Have you thought much about how mortal history will end? How does knowing what will happen in the future influence the way you live today? (Consider how you spend your time, energy, talents and resources.)
3. How does the knowledge of what God is going to do to the earth shape your understanding of the church's and the believer's role in society?















Pre-reading for next lesson: Daniel 9; Matthew 24; Revelation 4–7 (whole chapters)

Endnotes

Page 18: Digital reproduction of the painting “The Seine at La Grande Jatte by Georges Seurat” by The Yorck Project (2002) 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei (DVD-ROM), distributed by Directmedia Publishing GmbH. Public Domain work. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georges_Seurat_026.jpg (Accessed 11 Aug 2020.)

Jesus' Letters to the Seven Churches

| |  Description of Jesus |  Praise |  Complaint |  Call |  Encouragement | |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|
|  | Ephesus (Loveless) | He stands in the midst of the churches and holds church leaders in His hand. | Busy for God and careful with the Bible. | Lost their love for God and others. | Repent or God will remove the church. | Believers will eat of the tree of life. |
|  | Smyrna (Loyal) | Jesus is the first and last, who died and was resurrected. | Strong in testimony for God despite suffering. | None! | Do not be afraid of suffering. | Believers will get the crown of life and not face second death. |
|  | Pergamum (Lax) | He has the sharp two-edged sword (Word of God). | Loyal to God despite the anti-God city they live in. | Accepted false teachings and practised immorality taught by false teachers. | Repent or God will fight them with His Word. | Believers will get manna from heaven and a white stone with a new name. |
|  | Thyatira (Liberal) | Eyes like flames of fire and feet like polished bronze. | Continuing to grow in works, love, faith. | Tolerated a false teacher and accepted her immoral teachings. | Repent or God will bring them great suffering. | Believers will rule the nations with Jesus. |
|  | Sardis (Lifeless) | Jesus has the Holy Spirit and holds the church leaders. | None! | Have the appearance of an effective church, but they are not. | Repent and wake up or God will come and judge them. | Believers will be clothed in white and they belong to Jesus forever. |
|  | Philadelphia (Labouring) | Holy and true and has the power to give and take away. | Stayed faithful to God despite having little strength. | None! | Keep faithful. | Believers will be kept from the time of Tribulation and they have a permanent place in God's presence. |
|  | Laodicea (Lukewarm) | Faithful and true witness, the One who created all. | None! | Lukewarm towards God and spiritually poor because they were contented in their material wealth. | Repent, accept God's discipline and fellowship with God again. | Believers will sit with Jesus on His throne. |

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