



# BIBLE DOCTRINES - *Ten*



*Doctrines of*



## **Last Things**





# LAST THING

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Eschatology (from the Greek *eschatos* = last) is the doctrine of Last Things.

## I. PHYSICAL DEATH

The Bible always gives sufficient information for the faith of the believer. The Bible was never proposed merely for his curiosity. God teaches finite beings to walk by faith in the unexplained infinite.

**A. Death Is Not a Cessation of Being.** Thirty-five hundred years ago Job asked, *If a man die, shall he live again?*(14:14). This question has been asked for millenniums. It is the universal question. It does not seem right that those whom we love should die and be buried; *and* it is not right! God never made man to die; He created him to live and to have fellowship with Himself. But sin brought death and the grave, thus separation from God.

Should the Lord tarry, everyone reading these words, the author included, shall die, for *death has passed upon all men* (Rom. 5:12). A poem lasts longer than the poet; the voice on the recording tape can be heard years after the recording artist is dead; pictures of dead loved ones remain, long after they are gone. But, what of the person themselves? *If a man dies, shall he live again?*

There is a universal belief in a life after death. Whether you go to the most sophisticated or primitive parts of the earth, this question will still be asked, *If a man dies, shall he live again?* Despite bravado to the contrary, there is a universal sense that there is something beyond this life. However, apart from the Bible, this *something* cannot be known.

There are two great reservations:

**1. Reservation for the Christian.** *Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . hath begotten us . . . to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you* (I Peter 1:4). In Philippians 1:23 the Apostle Paul used the word "depart" as describing death. By this he did not mean that he would cease to exist. Depart means "to depart". Did he mean to depart to the grave with Christ? Of course not, for Christ is not in the grave; He is in heaven.

II Corinthians 5:8 makes the meaning of departure even clearer when it says, *We are confident . . . and willing . . . to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*" The word "present": means "to be at home with". The death of a Christian, therefore, is pictured as a ship pulling up anchor and setting sail for home; it means that the believer is "going home".

**2. Reservation for the Ungodly.** *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished* (II Peter 2:9).

### **B. Death Is Not Soul Sleep.**

The word "sleep" in Scripture, concerning the dead in Christ, means "rest". It does not mean "unconsciousness." The body may die, but the soul and spirit will never die. In the resurrection it is the body that is raised, not the soul and spirit. The Scriptures clearly state that the soul is absent from the body, present with the Lord; and that the souls and spirits are fully awake and aware of things round about them. A perfect illustration of the above truth is found in Revelation 6:9,10: *When he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* Here we see the disembodied souls, alive, and reasoning with God.

The Apostle Paul says, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain* (Phil. 1:21). "To live" meant that Paul had perfect fellowship with the living Christ. If death were the end, why would Paul say, "and to die is gain?"

### **C. Death Means Separation.**

Death in Scripture always means "separation". *Physical death* is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body. *Spiritual death* is the eternal, complete, final separation from God (Rev. 21:8).

Life means "union" (John 3:16). Death means "separation" (Rom. 8:35-39). The *ego*, the "I", lives in the house of flesh. You are not a body, having a soul and spirit, but you are a soul and spirit possessing a body. Our bodies may change, but we ourselves, that is, our *ego*, never changes. People cannot see *us*, the *ego*, but only the house, or tent, in which we dwell. Death is the departure from this house (II Peter 1.13,14; Phil. 1:21,24; Gal. 2:20; II Cor. 5:6,7; Job 19:26; Luke 16:26; II Tim. 4:6; II Cor. 12:2). People have been burying bodies for six thousand years; but it is just the bodies, not the persons.

The soul is the seat of feeling and appetite; from Scripture we believe it is the exact counterpart of the body. The spirit is the seat of man's intelligence. When Samuel was called up by the request of Saul, it was his spirit that appeared, not his body. We shall not be formless if we depart this life, but our souls and spirits shall be fully conscious, existing in the same form and shape as our bodies.

Memory may be seated in the brain, but the brain is not the source of thought. We may remember things that happened ten years ago, but we do not have the same brain that we had ten years ago (all of the cells have been replaced!).

## **II. THE BODILY RESURRECTION**

### **A. The Fact of the Resurrection.**

**1. Anticipated in the Old Testament.** Such terms as "in the latter days," "awake and live," are indications of a resurrection. The Old Testament contains many types of the resurrection. Joseph was counted dead, but he came back to his father; Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights, and then was released; Daniel was placed in the lion's den, a place of death, but came out alive; Israel died in the wilderness, and a new Israel went into Canaan. All of these are figures of the resurrection. The following Scriptures verify the resurrection. *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead* (Is. 26:19). See also Job 19:26, 27; Psalm 16:9,11; Daniel 6:23; 12:2; Matthew 12:40.

**2. Revealed In the New Testament.** *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (I Cor. 15:22). *There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust* (Acts 24:15). See also Matthew 22:30-32; Luke 14:13, 14; 20:35,36; John 5:28,29; 6:39,40,44,54; I Thessalonians 4:14-16; II Timothy 1:10. Christ did not come to save our soul only, but our soul, spirit, *and* body.

### **B. The Nature of the Resurrection.**

Death is never set forth as the hope of the believer. In Corinth (I Cor. 15) some had declared that there was no bodily resurrection, but Paul rebukes them for this false idea and demonstrates that there is a resurrection on the basis that Christ Himself arose. If one does not believe in man's resurrection, then it is

impossible to believe in Christ's resurrection: and if Christ did not arise, there is no Gospel and if no Gospel, we are not saved. See I Corinthians 15:14.

Satan has always been against the Bible, and he has many weapons trained against it. A revelation that he most despises is the resurrection – whether Christ's or ours.

Some cannot believe that flesh and bones shall be perfected. When speaking of Christ's resurrection, they maintain that it was a spiritual resurrection. We know of course that it was not our Saviour's *spirit* which was put in the tomb; it was His body. The Roman soldiers were not stationed at the sepulchre to guard His spirit. It was His *body* they guarded; it was His *body* which arose from the dead!

One Scripture used by those who believe in a spiritual resurrection is I Corinthians 15:44: *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* Notice that the verse does not say "a *spirit* body," but "a *spiritual* body." The natural body is controlled by the soul; the spiritual body shall be controlled by the Spirit; hence, a spiritual body.

### **1. Theories Proposed.**

**a. Germ Theory.** This is an old Jewish teaching found in the Talmud. Man is said to have a little bone, called a "luz", which death cannot destroy, and out of that germ the body will be resurrected. Some Christians have held to this, using I Corinthians 15:36,37 for support. It is false.

**b. Identity theory.** This is the belief that the body in the resurrection will be raised just as it was buried. All of the defects present at death will be present at the resurrection. What a dismal idea! If this were true, we will not be like Jesus. See I John 3:1,2.

**c. Reincarnation Theory.** When a man dies he goes immediately into another body. If this should occur, we would not be "at home" with the Lord.

**d. Intermediate Body Theory.** This theory contends that the believer receives his resurrected body immediately: upon his death. Some think II Corinthians 5:1-4 teaches this: *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.* But this Scripture refers only to those believers who are *living* when Christ comes.

**2. Truth Believed.** The resurrection is by Divine Power! *God giveth a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed his own body* (I Cor. 15:38). Jesus Christ's own resurrected body was proved to be flesh and bone. When Christ appeared unto the disciples, He remarked, *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have* (Luke 24:39). Ezekiel 37 pictures the resurrection of Israel; flesh, bones and spirit are mentioned, but no blood. The law demanded the shedding of blood, and Christ shed his blood to pay for that demand. In the resurrection, all will be raised without blood; life will be in the spirit of man.

[The Lord Jesus Christ] *shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself* (Phil. 3:20, 21). Our bodies, the *same ones* that may be planted in death, will pass under a great transformation and be raised. If we

should plant a lily, a lily will come up; if we plant wheat, wheat will come up; if we plant tares, tares will come up; if we plant human bodies, glorified human bodies will come up. God looks upon the cemeteries as nothing but harvest fields. The seeds in these harvest fields are the bodies of the dead, and the harvest is the resurrection.

*And we shall be changed* (I Cor. 15:52). Yes, a great transformation will take place, but it will be the same body, for the resurrected body of Christ proves that it will be the same body, as He bore in His resurrected body the print of the nails.

I Corinthians 15:42-44 describes fully the resurrection of the just (apart from the fact of it, God tells nothing of the bodies of the damned in their resurrection): *It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption*. A dead body is a corruptible body. A live body is a mortal body. Nothing is ever said in Scripture of planting a mortal body. A corruptible body is subject to decay and dust, but one day it will be raised in incorruption, a body fit for heaven, that can never be subject to corruption again. *It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory*. These vile bodies have been dishonoured by sin, but one day they will be raised in the likeness of the glorious body of our Lord. *It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power*. Sin has made us weak. The weakest thing in the world is a dead body. In order for a dead man to move, he must *be moved*. He has eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear; he makes no protest about being put in a coffin and placed in a grave. There is no resistance in a dead body. These same weak bodies shall be raised with great power. Notice what man can do for the eyes today, but think what God *will* do. The resurrected believer will be able to see spiritual beings. Mortal man has the microscope and telescope, but, oh, what eyesight our new bodies will have! Today we have limits of speed, but in the resurrection there will be no limit. Do not make present standards the limit of our future standards. *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body*. The natural body is our animated body, containing flesh, bones and blood. Our resurrected spiritual bodies shall not be spirit-bodies, but spiritual; they will be bodies composed of only flesh and bone, no blood, dominated by our spirits.

### **C. The Time of the Resurrection.**

*As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (I Cor. 15:22). All men shall be raised from the dead, but not all at the same time. The Scriptures plainly declare that there are *two* resurrections, and *not* a general resurrection. They are the first, and the last resurrection (Rev. 20:5,6).

**1. The First Resurrection.** The first resurrection includes Christ, and all believers of all ages. Their resurrection occurs at different intervals. Christ at His time; the Church at the Rapture (before the Tribulation); and the Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints *after* the Tribulation.

**a. Christ the Firstfruits.** *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept* (I Cor. 15:20). The firstfruits were God's pledge that the entire harvest would come later. Christ being the Firstfruits is God's pledge that the harvest will be coming later. *Because I live, ye shall live also* (John 14:19). There are records of others being raised from the dead, but these were "resuscitations," or restorations; they died again. Christ liveth to die no more! *Behold, I am alive for evermore* (Rev. 1:18b).

**b. The Saints at Christ's Resurrection.** *The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after the resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many* (Matt 27:52, 53). On one occasion, the Lord Jesus said, *Except a corn of wheat fall into the*



*ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit* (John 12:24). Christ did die and was planted as a corn of wheat, but when He was raised from the dead, He brought forth much fruit with Him. This fruit was the saints who arose immediately after His resurrection. We do not know how many were raised. They likely went up to heaven with him, for remember, he was the Firstfruits, and we know that in the Feast of Firstfruits, a *sheaf* of the wave offering was waved before the Lord. There was more than one grain in the sheaf. Thus, we are led to believe that there were more people in the firstfruits to go to heaven than just Christ.

**c. The Body of Christ (The Church).** The Church will have a resurrection of its own. *The dead in Christ shall rise first* (I Thess. 4:16). The Church was never known in the Old Testament (See Chapter VII). Therefore, the Old Testament prophets saw nothing of its Spiritual baptism, rapture, resurrection and transformation. The Church was a mystery hid in God; it was first revealed (in its fullness) to the Apostle Paul (Eph. 3:1-9). However, the old Testament saints did know of their own resurrection, which shall occur after *the* Tribulation (Dan. 12:2,13).

The resurrection of the Church was revealed to the Apostle Paul; it will occur *before* the Tribulation. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth* (Rev. 3:10). See also I Thess. 1:10.

There have been nearly two thousand years since Christ the Firstfruits was raised. The time of the resurrection of the Church is not known.

**d. Old Testament and Tribulation Saints.** This phase of the first resurrection takes place after the Tribulation, at least seven years after the Church is raised. It includes all saints who do not belong to the Body of Christ. *Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days* (Dan. 12:13). See also Daniel 12:1,2.

**2. The Last Resurrection.** The last (or second) resurrection occurs after the Millennium, and shall include all the wicked dead. They shall be raised to stand before the Great White Throne. *The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years* (Rev. 20:5, 6). See Acts 24:15.

### III. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

Where are the dead? is the question on the lips of all mankind. The only true and correct answer is given by the Word of God. Other answers, such as those given by spiritualism and the various cults are nothing but a babel of voices.

The following are things to remember as we explain the intermediate state, the state of man between death and resurrection. Death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body. The soul and spirit are together in death. The soul is the seat of the appetite, and the spirit is the seat of knowledge, and they both function in death, as shown by the example of the rich man in hades. He was in torment; he had feelings. He reasoned; thus, his spirit and soul were together.

The word "Sheol" and the word "Hades" are the same. Sheol is The Old Testament Hebrew word. Hades is the New Testament Greek word. We know they are the same, for the Apostle Peter, at Pentecost, quoted from Psalm 16, saying,

*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [hades], neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:27). Psalm 16:10 uses the word "Sheol" for hell [Hades]. Thus, Hades and Sheol are the same. It can refer to the place of the dead generally, and usually to hell, the place where the spirits of the lost go before the judgement of the Great White Throne. Of Sheol and Hades the following can be said.*

1. These words are never found in the plural.
2. Sheol and Hades are never located on the face of the earth.
3. The Bible never speaks of an individual's Sheol.
4. Man never puts anyone in Sheol, as in the grave.
5. Man never digs or makes a Sheol, or a Hades.
6. The Bible never speaks of a man touching Sheol.
7. The Bible never speaks of a *body* going into Sheol, but with one exception, and the exception proves the rule. Korah (Num. 16:28-33) defied the leadership of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron, and influenced many in Israel against them. God showed His displeasure by causing the earth to open up its jaws and swallow Korah and his family.

In Luke 16:19-31 we have the true account of Lazarus and the rich man both dying and existing in the intermediate state. There are some who claim that this story was only a parable. The Bible does not indicate this. In His parables, the Lord never mentioned proper names, as He does here. However, if it were a parable, it would still be true, for every parable that He spoke was based upon a true circumstance. (Matt. 13:3).

The following is a common interpretation of this so-called parable:

*Rich man* — the Jewish nation, rich in what God has given him.

*Lazarus* — the Gentiles — poor at the door of the rich man.

*Both died* — the Jewish nation dies the Gentiles are blessed by the Gospel.

There is nothing in the account to support any of this. This is but a fanciful and foolish attempt to avoid the obvious. This is a true account of two men who died and went to *Hades*.

#### **A. Before the Cross.**

The Cross is the dividing line of many Scriptural truths. We shall here discuss the question, where did men go at death before Christ died upon the Cross? We shall show that they all went to the same place —Hades (Sheol)—but in different parts.

From Numbers 16:33 we learn that Sheol, or Hades, is somewhere inside the earth. *They, and all that appertained to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.* See also I Samuel 28:13. From Luke 16:19-31 we see that Hades was in two compartments: Abraham's Bosom, the place of the departed righteous, where Lazarus went; and the place of torment, where the rich man went. A great gulf separated these two sections.

Since we know that Sheol (Hades) is somewhere in the earth, and that it is composed of two compartments, we turn to the Lord Himself to find the exact location. *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth* (Matt.12:40). Ephesians 4:9,10 makes this clearer still. *Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth.* *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.* Philippians 2:9,10 says, *God . . . hath highly exalted him . . .*

*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things: under the earth.* This speaks of the future adoration of Christ by all creation. However, we want to call attention to the above underlined words "under the earth". Thus, we conclude that Sheol (Hades) is in the heart of the earth, composed of two sections, one part for the righteous dead and the other for the unrighteous dead, with a great gulf fixed between them. It is to these places that men went before the Cross.

#### **B. At the Time of the Cross.**

[Dr. Cambren expresses a commonly held view, but it should be compared with the added fact that at death our Lord said, *Father into thy hands I commend my spirit* (Luke 23:46). It is also true that in the Old Testament at death men were said to *give up the ghost*. And, that *Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven* (II Kings 2:11). Further, Christ took the place of condemned sinners on the Cross, not in hell. It was on the Cross during the three hours of darkness that *His soul was made an offering for sin* (Isa. 53:10) and that He suffered the pangs of hell. [Psalms 16:10 should likely be seen in this light]. J.M.

Here we shall deal with two persons, the Lord Jesus, and the penitent thief. Upon death, the Lord Jesus went to Hades. We know this from Psalm 16:10, which says, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell* (Sheol); *neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption*. The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost in describing the resurrection of Christ quoted from this same passage. Acts 2:27 The Scriptures would not have employed the word "leave" if Christ had not gone there. As to the thief on the cross, he went to Hades with Jesus, into the compartment reserved for the righteous dead. *Today shalt thou be with me in paradise* (Luke 23:43b). Hades/Paradise was another name for Abraham's Bosom, the place of the righteous dead.

#### **C. After the Cross.**

During the present age the unrighteous still go to Sheol (Hades), awaiting the last judgment. The righteous go at once to heaven to be with the Lord. *We are confident . . . and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord* (II Cor. 5:8). When Christ arose from the dead *he led captivity captive* (Eph. 4:8). [But see Col. 2:14,15].

Christ emptied Hades (Sheol) of all the righteous, and took them and paradise with him to glory. Paradise was, at one time, in the heart of the earth; now it is in the third heavens. *I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise.* (II Cor. 12:2-4).

### **IV. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

#### **A. The Importance of the Doctrine.**

It is said that one out of every twenty-five verses of the New Testament speaks of the Second Coming, while in the Old Testament there are eight verses concerning the Second Coming to every verse concerning the First Coming. In the promise of a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15), the Second Coming is mentioned before the First Coming. *It shall bruise thy head* [occurs at the Second Coming], *and thou shalt bruise his heel* [occurred at the First Coming, upon the Cross].

**1. Testimony of Our Lord.** *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 14:3). See also Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 21.

**2. Testimony of Angels.** *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven* (Acts 1:11).

**3. Testimony of Peter.** *He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you* (Acts 3:20). See also I Peter 5:4; II Peter 1:16.

**4. Testimony of Paul.** *I thank my God always on your behalf . . . that in every thing ye are enriched by him . . . so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* (I Cor. 1:4-7). See also Romans 11:26; I Corinthians 15:23; II Corinthians 5; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:4; I Thessalonians (all); II Thessalonians 1:7,10; I Timothy 6:14; II Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:28.

**5. Testimony of James.** The prophets, quoted by James, represent the Lord as saying: *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up* (Acts 15:16). See also James 5:7.

**6. Testimony of John.** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (I John 3:2). See also I John 2:28, and the Book of Revelation.

**7. Testimony of Jude.** *Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints* (Jude 14).

## **B. The Meaning of the Second Coming.**

### **1. Negative.**

**a. It Is Not Death.** Death is the departing of the saint, not the coming of the Lord. The Lord *will* come, but death may never come.

**b. It Is Not the Fall of Jerusalem.** Luke 21:20-24, and I Thessalonians 4:13-18 did not occur when Jerusalem fell. The second coming of Christ is connected with the *gathering* of Israel, not the scattering.

**c. It Is Not the Coming of the Holy Spirit.** Christ said that He would send *another* Comforter (John 14:16). I Thessalonians 4: 13-18 did not occur when the Holy Spirit came. Notice that all of the Epistles, which speak of the Second Coming, were written *after* Pentecost.

**d. It Is Not the Conversion of a Sinner.** If this is true, He has come millions of times. According to I Corinthians 15:51-57, the dead would have to be raised every time a soul was saved, and then get back into the grave, waiting for another to be saved.

**e. It Is Not the Diffusion of Christianity.** By this some mean the spreading of the Gospel. But remember, this same Jesus, a personal Christ, is to come again.

**f. It Is Not the End of the World.** When Christ comes, the world will not be destroyed, for He will reign a thousand years after He appears.

### **2. Positive.**

**a. It Will Be a Personal Coming.** John 14:3 says, *I will come*. We are not to expect a spirit, but a Spirit in a body. I Thessalonians 4:16,17 uses the word "himself." Acts 1:11 declares *this same Jesus*; not some other person or thing is expected, but Christ Himself.

**b. It Will Be a Visible Coming.** *As the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be* (Matt. 24:27). See also Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7.

**c. Meaning of the Words Used.**

(1) **Parousia.** This means the personal presence, the coming presence. It is spoken not only of the coming of the Lord, but of the coming of other men (I Cor. 16:17; II Cor. 7:6,7; Philippians 1:26). Concerning the coming of the Lord, it is at that moment, when absence ceases and presence begins (Matt 24:3, 27; I Cor. 15:23; I Thess. 2:9; Jas. 5:8).

(2) **Epiphaneia.** This simply means, "appearing". It is used of both advents (II Tim. 1:10; II Thess. 2:8; I Tim. 6:14; II Tim. 4:1,8; Titus 2:13).

(3) **Apokalupsis.** The literal meaning is "unveiling, revelation." It emphasizes the visibility of the Lord's return (II Thess. 1:7; I Peter 1:7,13; 4:13). It is used also for men: Romans 8:19; II Thessalonians 2:3,6, 8).

**d. His Coming will be in Two Phases.**

(1) **When Christ Comes for His Saints in the Air.** *We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him* (II Thess. 2:1). The promise of Christ's return of Acts 1:9-20 was given before the Rapture was revealed.

(2) **When Christ Comes with His Saints to Earth.** *Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints* (Jude 14).

**(3) These Two Phases Are Vastly Different.**

(a) **Different in Character.** "For His people" is an act for the believer; "with His people" is an act of judgment upon the world.

(b) **Different in Manner.** One is secret, the other is a manifestation.

(c) **Different in Place.** "For His people"-in the air (I Thess. 4:17); "with His people"-to the earth (Zech. 14:5).

(d) **Different as to Time.** "For His people" occurs before the Tribulation (Jacob's trouble); "with His people" occurs after the Tribulation. We are not told in Scripture to look for signs preceding His coming *for* His saints, but those in the Tribulation are told to look for signs before He comes *with* His saints (Compare II Thess. 2:1-3 with Is. 13: 6-9). However, events like the return of the Jewish people to Israel, and other events pointing to the coming Tribulation will likely be seen before the Rapture.

(e) **Different as to Purpose.** Coming "for His saints" fulfills His promise to gather His people (John 14:3); coming "with His saints" as a man of war, fulfills His promise to overthrow His enemies (Jude 14).

(f) **Different as to Relation.** "For His saints" is the adoption of the children of God; "with His saints" the time that the sons of God are manifested to the world. (Rom. 8:19,23).

**C. The Events of the Second Coming in Relation to the Body of Christ.**

As we deal with the Rapture of the Church, we recognize the fact that the word "rapture" is not a Scriptural word. The Rapture is, however, a Scriptural fact.

**1. The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ.** *The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first* (I Thess. 4:16). The very first thing that happens is the resurrection of the Church the body of Christ. Certainly this will include all who die before reaching the age of accountability, the mentally retarded, and others. If Christ does not come, there will be no resurrection, and

if no resurrection, then man shall be an eternal spirit. If diamonds can be made from soot, sapphire from clay, and opals from sand, what will God make out of our bodies? It will be wonderful, will it not?

**2. The Renovation of the Living in Christ.** *Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. . . . and we shall be changed.... And this mortal must put on immortality* (I Cor. 15:51-53). The Christian is one who is not looking for death, but for the conqueror of death. The words "we shall not all sleep" mean "we shall not all die". What a glorious hope this is! What a shout of victory there will be in that day! *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* (I Cor. 15:55). It is a blessed hope that it is possible for us to go without dying. No man, not even a Christian, wants to die. That is natural. The Christian, however, is one who is not afraid to die. The Christian is the only person who has a hope of never seeing death. Yes, we know the Scripture says, "It is appointed unto men once to die." But the Scripture does not only say *all* men!

**3. The Rapture of All in Christ.** *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind . . . as that the day of Christ is at hand* (II Thess. 2:1,2). The above Scripture, and the phrase, "we all shall be changed," eliminates the possibility of a partial rapture. The entire Body of Christ will be raptured (caught up); it will be a rapture, and not a rupture. The Body of Christ will be complete. No member of His Body will be left to go through the Tribulation. Some say, "How can this be?" God took Elijah up without death; He can take a million, or ten million up just as easily.

The Rapture of the Church will cause a great separation. All unbelievers will be left here to go through the Tribulation. The Rapture of the Church will be the means of a great reunion. *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord* (I Thess. 4:17). What a great word is "together"; all of our loved ones in Christ "together" once more.

*We should live soberly, righteously, and godly . . . looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ* (Titus 2:13). Are you looking for Him today? Are you looking for Him tonight? That is what the Scripture means by "looking for Him".

## V. THE ANTICHRIST

*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel* (Gen. 3:15). While this verse speaks of Christ as the seed of the woman, it also prophetically declares the Antichrist as being the seed of the serpent. The seed of the serpent, the Antichrist, is mentioned near the beginning of the first book of the Bible, and is described fully in the last book of the Bible. And so throughout the Bible. This is very significant

### A. His Person.

The Early Church taught that Nero was the Antichrist, and that when he died he would be raised from the dead. In the eleventh century the Waldenses, Hussites and Wyclifites declared that the Roman Catholic Church was the Antichrist. The Roman Catholic Church, in turn, declared that Napoleon was the Antichrist. During World War I Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany was thought to be the Man of Sin. Many

others have been proposed, but it is useless to speculate, for he will not be revealed until after the Rapture of the Church (II Thess. 2:1-12).

**1. He Is a Man.** *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six* (Rev. 13:18). Notice the Scripture says he has the number of a man. Man's number is 6. God says his number is 6-6-6: he is a *man*; he is a *man*; he is a *man*! He is not the Roman Catholic Church; he is not a system; he is a man. He will rule in Jerusalem, and not in Rome.

**2. He Will Likely Be a Jew.** *Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers* (Dan. 11:37a). "God of his fathers" means Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive* (John 5:43). The word "another" implies "another Jew." The name Antichrist is a Jewish title, and the Jews will not accept a Gentile as their Messiah.

**3. He Will Be a Genius.** He will be the most remarkable man the world has ever seen apart from Jesus Christ.

**a. An Intellectual Genius.** *In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up* (Dan. 8:23). See also Ezekiel 28:3.

**b. An Oratorical Genius.** *He shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries* (Dan. 11:21b). He shall be a mockery and an imitation of Him of whom it is said, *Never man spake like this man*.

**c. A Governmental Genius.** He rises from obscurity to power. He is the "little horn" spoken of in Daniel 7 and 8, and the "beast" of Revelation 13 and 14. All kings will give their power to him.

**d. A Commercial Genius.** No one will be able to buy or sell without his seal. *No man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name* (Rev. 13:17).

**e. A Military Genius.** *I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer* (Rev. 6:2). *Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?* (Rev. 13:4).

**f. A Religious Genius.** He demands to be worshiped as God. *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God* (II Thess. 2:4).

**g. A Financial Genius.** *He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps* (Dan. 11:43). See also Ezekiel 28:4,5.

## **B. His Titles.**

**1. Man of Sin.** This is the most important and most terrible of all his titles. All the sins of man will be embodied and headed up in him. *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition* (II Thess. 2:3).

**2. Son of Perdition.** The above Scripture declares him to be the *son of perdition*, also (II Thess. 2:3).

**3. The Lawless One.** *Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming* (II Thess. 2:8). Christ is the *righteous one*; the Antichrist is the *lawless one*.

**4. The Lie.** *God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie* (II Thess. 2:11). Jesus Christ is the *Truth*; the Antichrist is the *Lie*. John 8:44 says that the Devil is a liar "*and the father of it.*" "It" refers to "the lie."

**5. The Antichrist.** *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time* (I John 2:18).

**6. King of Babylon.** Babylon is always the seat of Satan. Babylon shall be revived in the last days, and the Antichrist shall reign over it (Rev. 17 and 18).

**7. The Little Horn.** *Out of one of them came forth a little horn which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. . . And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences shall stand up* (Dan. 8:9,23). See also Daniel 7:8.

**8. The Wilful King.** *The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done* (Dan. 11:36).

**9. The Assyrian.** *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation* (Is. 10:5). See also Isaiah 10:12,24.

**10. The Beast.** (Rev. 13,17,19).

### C. His Forerunners.

Some are seen in the Scriptures, and some outside of the Scriptures.

**1. Cain.** He denied the blood and was a liar and murderer (I John 3:12).

**2. Nimrod.** His history preceded the calling of Abraham to the Promised Land. The Antichrist will precede the final gathering of the seed of Abraham and set up his throne in the Promised Land. Nimrod means "rebel." While the Scriptures speak of him as being a mighty hunter, in reality he was not a hunter of animals, but a hunter of souls. He was "a mighty man against the Lord." So the Antichrist will be.

**3. Saul.** Always an enigma, this king of Israel was demanded by the people, but he was against the anointed of the Lord. The Antichrist will be the choice of the people also, and he will be against God's anointed.

**4. Absalom.** Absalom means "father of peace"; yet he rebelled against his father. He posed as a man of peace and tried to steal the kingdom. So will the Antichrist

<i>Absalom</i>	<i>Antichrist</i>
1. A man of beauty.	1. The same.
2. Tried to gain the kingdom by flatteries.	2. The same.
3. Set up a pillar to himself.	3. The same.
4. Came to a violent end.	4. The same.

**5. Nebuchadnezzar.** He as the first world ruler become a foreshadowing of the last world ruler.

**6. Antiochus Epiphanes.** He was the mad man who sacked Jerusalem, killing four hundred thousand Jews. He took a sow and burned it upon the altar. The Antichrist, too, shall profane the altar.

**7. Alexander the Great.** Alexander was a military genius who never suffered defeat. He sought to be worshiped as the Son of God. The same will be true of the Antichrist



**8. Caias Caligula.** This Roman Emperor was considered mad. No doubt he was possessed by a demon. The Antichrist shall be fully possessed by the Devil.

**9. Nero.** During his life he was thought to be the Antichrist by the early Christians. Many believed that when he died he would be raised from the dead. The Antichrist shall be raised from the dead.

**10. Charlemagne.** This man was considered a great warrior and statesman. The Antichrist shall be considered the same.

**11. Napoleon.** He sought to revive the Holy Roman Empire. This figurative empire is considered to comprise those countries whose lands are washed by the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Napoleon planned a new Jewish kingdom and Sanhedrin. The Antichrist will accomplish many of these same plans.

**12. Kaiser Wilhelm.** This leader of the German Empire had the same objective as Napoleon. It is said that every general carried a map of the Holy Roman Empire.

**13. Mussolini.** There were no doubts as to the objectives of this man: At one time he made a map of the old Roman Empire and included England in it. England protested, but the map remained. The Antichrist will not only make a map, but he will make a kingdom with all empires in it.

#### **D. His Work.**

His work shall be motivated by Satan, ruling the world and trying to destroy the Jewish people (Is. 10:12-27).

#### **E. His Career.**

Remember, this is the mocker and mimic of Christ. He shall claim a reincarnation. His birth shall be obscure; he will begin as a mere man in world affairs; but he will be rapidly promoted until he becomes ruler of the entire world. Daniel 9:27 states that he will "confirm the covenant" with the Jews. "Confirm" means to "recognize." What covenant is Israel interested in? The Mosaic Covenant. For the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation the Jews will be allowed to worship in their new temple. This would have been difficult to believe a hundred years ago, for then only a handful of Jews lived in Palestine. But look at Israel today. She is recognized as a nation; she has a government, an army, an air force; she is doing business with the rest of the world. There are literally hundreds of thousands of Jews back in the land. Here is Israel as a nation; why do they so exist? Is this the last re-gathering? Are they waiting for the Messiah? No. For the most part, Israel has returned to the land in unbelief. They do not even believe the God of their fathers, much less in their rejected Messiah. What, then, is Israel waiting for? She is waiting for the rise of the Antichrist, although she knows it not. He is to confirm the covenant. Therefore, there must be a nation with which the Antichrist can confirm the covenant. Here then is Israel, waiting for the Antichrist

*I saw one of his heads as it was wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast (Rev. 13:3).* According to this Scripture and Revelation 17 the Antichrist will suffer a deathblow. Revelation 13:12 has the phrase, *whose deadly wound was healed*, which describes fully his death and resurrection. See also Revelation 13:14. No wonder the world will wonder after him and say, *Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?* (Rev. 13:4).

He shall be the seventh of seven kings who shall be world rulers. When he dies and is resurrected he becomes the eighth ruler of the world. The world shall

be divided into ten kingdoms, overlorded by ten rulers. *These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast* (Rev. 17:13).

He comes to the ascendancy of world rule in the seventieth week of Daniel. He demands to be worshiped as God at this time, and in so doing his rise marks the beginning of The Day of the LORD.

#### **F. His Time.**

He has not yet been revealed, but it is *possible* in the light of present-day events, that somewhere, in the world he is alive today. He will not appear as the Antichrist until the old Roman Empire is revived composed of the ten-toed kingdom of Daniel 2 and the ten-horned beast of Revelation 13 and 17. These events will no doubt take place very quickly after the Rapture of the Church.

#### **G. His Appearance.**

He shall be a Jew by birth, a Roman by citizenship, and a Syrian by nationality. *Out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land* (Dan. 8:9). He marches on to conquer the nations of the south, and the east, and the west, He does not conquer the north, for that is where he shall come from.

#### **H. His End.**

*Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming* (II Thess. 2:8). See also Revelation 19:20.

## **VI. THE TRIBULATION**

There are three distinct tribulations in the Scriptures, and unless they are distinguished from each other, confusion will result. While the Bible says that the Body of Christ is enduring tribulation, it also says that Israel shall have tribulation. Then also it speaks of three and one-half years of great tribulation, *such as the world has never seen*. At this point some become confused, and combine these into one. They are distinctly separate, however.

First, there is the Tribulation of the Church, which is for the Body of Christ and is now present. Secondly, there is the Tribulation known as Jacob's Trouble, which lasts seven years and is future. Finally, there is the Great Tribulation, which commences in the midst of Jacob's Trouble and lasts for three and one half years. In this last, the entire world is affected.

**A. The Tribulation of the Body of Christ.** There is no denying that the Church is enduring tribulation. *For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know* (I Thess. 3:4). *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (II Tim. 3:12). It is the nature of the Church to suffer. The world is in the hands of the wicked one; we being of heavenly origin are bound to be persecuted by Satan and his cohorts.

Paul in speaking to the Colossians, said, *[I] now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church* (Col. 1:24). Notice that the word "afflictions" is the Greek word *thlipsis*, meaning tribulation. This is the same word that is used of the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation. Also, we call attention to the words "afflictions of Christ": it is the Tribulation of Christ, or the Body of Christ, the Church. As it is natural for the Body to suffer, and as the Colossians were not then suffering, Paul

in the trials he endured, in a sense made up for what they did not have to endure. Paul had never been to Colosse; he only knew a few of the Christians there; he was in Rome, hundreds of miles away, yet because all believers are joined to Christ and part of His Body, such a statement as this could be made.

John states the same thing in Revelation 1:9. *I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation.*

Truly, the Church, the Body of Christ, is at the present time enduring tribulation.

### **B. The Tribulation of Israel.**

A more familiar term is "Jacob's Trouble." *Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.* (Jer. 30:7).

This period lasts for seven years, and is known as the 70th week of Daniel. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week* (Dan. 9:24-27).

From these verses we learn that seventy weeks, four hundred and ninety years, were determined for *Daniel's people*, the Jews. From the time that the command came to rebuild Jerusalem to the time when Messiah (Christ) was cut off, was sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. Between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week is a gap, known, as the Church Age, which Daniel knew nothing about, nor did any other Old Testament prophets (Eph. 3:5). We know that these seventy weeks have to do with Israel alone. The years during the Church period have, we must confess, been lean years for the Jews. It seems that God has forsaken them, but He has not. After the Church Age is completed, known as the "fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25), the Church will be raptured, and the Lord will again place the Jews (Israel) back in the centre of His dealings. This will be seventieth week, the seven year Tribulation.

The Church will not go through any part of these seven years, and is not mentioned after Revelation Chapter Three in that book's description of the Tribulation for Israel and the world. Israel's Tribulation begins after the Rapture when the Antichrist confirms his covenant with them. It is concluded with the return of Christ in judgment.

### **C. The Great Tribulation.**

While it is still Jacob's Trouble, judgment shall be intensified the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. It is marked by the breaking of the covenant by the Antichrist, and by the revelation of the Antichrist as *the Lie*. *In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate* (Dan. 9:27). The Lord Jesus added further details to the above Scripture: *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the*

*holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. . . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matt 24:15,16,21). From the words of Daniel and the Lord Jesus we learn that in the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jews, causes the revived sacrificial rites to come to an end, and places himself in the holy place, which is described as the abomination of desolation. II Thessalonians 2:4 describes this event in added detail: the Antichrist *opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**

During this last three and one-half years, when the Antichrist will demand to be worshipped as God, man will not be able to buy or sell without his mark (Rev. 13:17).

Many ask, "Will anyone be saved during the Tribulation (including the Great Tribulation)?" Yes, people will be saved. The departure of the saints will convince many unbelievers of the truth of the Gospel; however, these believers will *not* be part of the Body of Christ. Some may question this on the basis of following verses: *Then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all 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 believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thess. 2:8-12).* .

This seems to teach that if one has rejected Christ before the Rapture he will not be able to be saved during the Tribulation. But we call attention to the fact that God causes them to believe a *Lie*, and they will not be able to believe this Lie until the *middle* of the Tribulation period, as the Antichrist will not be fully manifested until then. Therefore, we are led to believe that the invitation will still be given men to be saved during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation. But if they reject Christ during this time, God shall give them strong delusions to believe the Lie, and once this has been believed it will be impossible for them to be saved during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

The question then arises, "Will anyone be saved during the last three and one-half years?" Revelation 7 declares emphatically that there shall be countless numbers of Jews and Gentiles saved during this period, known as the Great Tribulation. These will be those who have never heard the Gospel and have not taken the mark of the beast. Their salvation will be brought about by the preaching of a great evangelistic movement, which will be composed, we believe, of the 144,000 Israelites (Rev. 7:4-8).

You may ask, "How, then, will it be possible for them to be saved when the Holy Spirit has been taken out of the world?" The Holy Spirit will not be taken out of the earth, but will take His restraining hand off sinful man and give him up fully to his sin. The Holy Spirit will still be here; for He is omnipresent. He will not, however, manifest Himself as He did *before* in the dispensation of grace. The Great Tribulation ends with the coming of Christ to this earth.

Again we remind the reader: Believers of this day do not go through any part of the seven-year Tribulation. The purpose of the Tribulation is to *punish* the world (Isa.

13:11), and to *purify* Israel (Zech. 13:9). For us our sins were dealt with so fully at Calvary that our Saviour could say: IT IS FINISHED (John 19:30).

## VII. THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

In times of great war, the Battle of Armageddon comes to mind. First let us see what it is not, and then what it is.

### A. What It Is Not.

#### 1. It Is Not World War I and II.

2. **It Is Not the First Battle of Gog and Magog.** In this battle a Northern confederacy (Russia and her allies) move into Israel, (Ezek. 38,39). It is soon over; God rains fire and brimstone upon the armies and countries from where they came. This occurs at the beginning of the Tribulation.

3. **It Is Not the War in Heaven.** This battle is described in Revelation 12:7-17. It concerns the forces of Satan being defeated by Michael and his army.

4. **It Is Not the Second Battle of Gog and Magog.** This is the concluding battle of all battles, whether physical or spiritual. It is fought *after* the Millennium, when Satan is loosed for a season and deceives the Gentile peoples (Rev. 20:7-9). Fire comes down from heaven and destroys them.

### B. What It Is.

1. **The Participants.** *I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army* (Rev. 19:19). This is the seed of the serpent fighting against the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). It is the conflict between Christ and the Antichrist

2. **The Place.** The Plain of Esdraelon in northern Israel is the location. This is an ancient battleground. Gideon fought there; Saul and Jonathan were killed there; Josiah was killed by Pharaoh there; the Greeks and Romans battled there; and Napoleon suffered his first defeat there.

3. **The Time.** The battle occurs at the end of the Great Tribulation, just before the Millennium begins.

4. **The End.** The end of this battle results in the complete annihilation of the Antichrist's army. *The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone* (Rev. 19:20).

## VIII. THE MILLENNIUM

The Millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ immediately following the Great Tribulation. Millennium is not a Scriptural word, but it is a Scriptural truth.

### A. The Fact of the Millennium.

1. **The Lord Has Decreed It.** (Ps. 2).

2. **Christ Taught It.** (Matt 24; Mark 13; Luke 21).

3. **The Scriptures Teach It.** (Is. 2,11).

4. **The Psalmist Described It.** (Ps. 72).

5. **The Angels Declared It.** (Luke 1).

6. **The Transfiguration Pictures It.** (Matt. 16:28-17:7).

7. **A Gospel Outlines It.** (Mark 6:45-56).

**8. The Apostles Preached It.** (Acts 2,3).

**9. Nature Longs For It.** (Rom. 8).

**B. The Description of the Millennium.**

**1. The Thousand Years.** (Rev. 21:1-7).

**2. The Age to Come.** (Eph. 1:21).

**3. The Day of the LORD.** (Rev. 6:12-17; Joel 2:10,11,30,31; Hag. 2:6,7; Matt 24; Zech. 14:1-5).

**4. In That Day.** (Is. 4:2; 2:11,17,20,21; 11:11).

**5. The Restitution of All Things.** [The Lord] *shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began* (Acts 3:20,21). This restitution includes

**a. Israel to the Promised Land.** (Is. 11:10-12).

**b. Repentance of the Nations to Jehovah.** (Zech. 12:10-14).

**c. The Removal of the Bond of Iniquity.** (Zech. 3:9).

**d. Restoration of Rain.** (Joel 2:23-29).

**e. Re-engraving of Jehovah's Law.** (Jer. 31:28-37).

**f. Redistribution of the Land.** (Ezek. 48).

**g. Reconstruction of Jerusalem.** (Is. 62; Ezek. 40).

**h. Restitution From Bondage of Fear.** (Is. 14:1-3; Jer. 33:14-18).

**i. Restitution of Jehovah's Love.** (Zeph. 3:16-20).

**j. The Regeneration of All Things.** (Matt 19:18; Is. 32).

**k. The Falling Stone.** (Dan. 2).

**C. The Types of the Millennium.**

**1. The Year of Jubilee.** (Lev. 25).

**2. The Feast of Tabernacles.** (Lev. 23).

**3. The Sabbath.** It is that rest to come.

**4. The Kingdom of Israel Under Solomon's Reign.** This was an absolute reign of peace.

**D. The Conditions During the Millennium.**

**1. The Church.** *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him we also shall live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us* (II Tim. 2:11,12). Wherever the Lord shall be, there we shall be with Him (I Thess. 4:17). We shall reign, and we shall judge over angels and the world. I Corinthians 6:2,3 says, *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world. . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*

**2. Satan.** Satan shall be sealed and bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7). The Antichrist is cast into the lake of fire before that (Rev. 19:20).

**3. Israel.** She shall become the head of all nations again, and will not remain the tail as she is today (Is. 2:1-4; 11:3,4; 61:5; Zech. 8:23; Deut 28:13).

**4. The Nations of the World.** All nations will have to come up to Jerusalem year by year and worship Jehovah there. If they do not keep the yearly Feast of Tabernacles, God will cause no rain to fall upon that nation (Zech. 14:16,17).

**5. Mankind.**

**a. Spiritual Conditions.** There will be universal adoration of Christ (Heb.8:11; Is. 2). The Millennium begins with only born-again believers. But, though Satan is bound, and the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9), yet the flesh principle will remain with those who are born during that time, and while outward

sin will not be possible, increasingly as the years pass many will only render feigned devotion to Christ.

**b. Physical Conditions.** Human life will be lengthened. Some will be able to live throughout the Millennium. There shall be death during this reign of Christ, also — death, not to the believer, but to the unbeliever. No babes or children shall die. When the sinner becomes one hundred years old and still rejects Christ, he shall be cut off by death. *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed [cut off] (Is. 65:20).*

**c. Moral Conditions.** This will not be a period of absolute perfection. However, sin will not be allowed to raise its head. Christ shall rule with a rod of iron (Ps. 46:9; Is. 2:4). Sin, nevertheless, will be committed in the hearts of men.

#### **6. Creation.**

**a. Physical.** When Adam fell, the earth was cursed (Rom. 8:18-23). Man has accomplished wonders with his irrigation systems, and the like, but look what God will do! *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (Is. 35:1).* See also Isaiah 55:13. Creation shall be restored completely; no more earthquakes; no more storms, famines and pestilences (Joel 2).

**b. Animal Creation.** Before man sinned, God had put the fear of man in the animals. They ate the grass of the fields. During the Millennium they shall revert back to the same order that He intended for them (Is. 11:6-9). *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb...And a little child shall lead them (Is. 11:6).* This passage shows that a child, during the Millennium, will literally lead about formerly wild animals.

### **IX. THE JUDGMENTS**

The Bible does not teach a single general judgment. Instead, it informs us that there are a number of judgments. These need to be carefully distinguished.

#### **A. Judgment of the Christian.**

**1. Judgment on Sin.** When did this occur? For the Christian this is a past judgment, for all of our sins were judged at Calvary. *Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (I Peter 3:1.8).* *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (I Peter 2:24).* See also Galatians 3:13; John 3:16; Isaiah 53:5,6.

**2. Judgment on Christian Service.** The believer's sins have already been judged upon the Cross of Calvary. The Christian will, however, have to answer to God for his works and how he conducted his life as a believer. *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (II Cor. 5:10).* The Christian has escaped the future judgment of the wicked: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life (John 5:24).* But he shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The words, "judgment seat," are from the Greek word "Bema". In New Testament times this was a rewarding stand in athletic games. This will take place in heaven after the

Rapture. *Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be* (Rev. 22:12).

There are several crowns that the Christian may receive:

**a. The Crown of Life.** *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him* (Jas. 1:12). See also Revelation 2:10. This is rewarded for faithfulness, even unto death.

**b. An incorruptible Crown.** *Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible* (I Cor.9:25). This is a reward for those who live separated lives unto the Lord.

**c. Crown of Rejoicing.** *What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?* (I Thess. 2:19). This is the soul-winner's crown.

**d. Crown of Glory.** *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away* (I Peter 5:2-4). This is the shepherds', pastors', or ministers' reward.

**e. Crown of Righteousness.** *There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* (II Tim 4:8) This crown is given to all who love His Second Coming. If you love His appearing, you will talk about it. Many professing Christians today, sadly, place very little emphasis on the Lord's Return.

**B. Judgment of the Nations.** This takes place at the beginning of the Millennium (Matt. 25:31-46). It is the judgment of all individuals from among the Gentile nations who come alive out of the seven-year Tribulation. There are three classes of people mentioned: sheep, goats and brethren. The brethren are the Jews; the sheep are the righteous; and the goats are the unrighteous.

The righteous go into the kingdom, the unrighteous are sent immediately to the lake of fire. They go there a thousand years sooner than the *wicked dead*, and will not be judged at the Great White Throne.

There are those who contend that this is a judgment of works and that men go to heaven or hell on the basis of their works. But faith is the basis, and works are always an outcome of true faith in Christ.

What prompted the *sheep* among the nations to minister to the *brethren*, the Jews, during the Tribulation? They did it because they accepted the brethren's preaching. Do you think that they would have visited, clothed, fed and ministered to the brethren during the Tribulation if they had not believed? Remember, the Tribulation is going to be a time of peril. Man will not be able to buy or sell without the mark of the beast. The sheep (Gentiles) defy this order, reject the mark of the beast, and receive the Gospel which the brethren (likely the 144,000) preached.

The unrighteous among the nations (goats) are cast into the lake of fire because of their unbelief. They rejected the brethren, thus rejecting Christ

**C. Judgment at the Great White Throne.** This great judgment is found in Revelation 20:11-15: *I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for*



*them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.* It is the judgment only of the wicked dead who have been raised at the last resurrection. No born-again believer shall appear here. The wicked dead are not to be tried as to whether they are going to heaven or hell; it has already been determined that they are going to hell, for they died condemned (John 3:18). This judgment is to determine the degrees of punishment, "according to their works" (Rev. 20:13).

There are two witnesses against them: The Book, and the Books; that is, the Book of life, and the Books of Works. We do not know what the different degrees of punishment will be.

## X. AFTER THE MILLENNIUM

*When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them* (Rev. 20:7-9). This is the war that ends all war. It is the final conflict of the universe.

### A. Satan Loosed.

As he is loosed for a short time, he tries one more thrust at God.

### B. Nations Gathered.

We ask ourselves, Who could Satan organize among the Gentiles to fight against God? None other but those unsaved whom we have seen previously who are ninety-nine years old and younger, and have been born during the last century of the Millennium.

### C. Army Destroyed.

Fire comes down from heaven and destroys them.

### D. Satan Doomed.

He is then cast into the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels.

## XI. THE FUTURE OF THE WICKED.

It is not hard to think of everlasting life, but it is difficult to think of an eternity in hell; nevertheless, it is true.

### A. The Scriptural Teaching.

1. **There Will Be a Day of Judgment.** (Acts 17:30,31).

2. **Every Man Will Be Judged for His Works.** (Rom. 2:16; Rev. 20:12).

3. **It Is Eternal.** (Mark 9:43-48). See also Matt 13.

4. **There Will Be Degrees of Punishment.** (Rev. 20:12; Rom. 2:5,6).

5. **There Will Be a Resurrection of the Unjust As Well As of the Just.** (John 5:29).

6. **Language Describes It.** (Matt 25:46; Mark 9:45-48; John 3:36).

7. **All Is Based Upon the Character of God as Righteous.**

### B. The Terms Used.

The following are the places where wicked human beings and angels are, or shall be sent to:

**1. Sheol.** This is the Old Testament word describing the place of the departed wicked

**2. Hades.** This is the New Testament Greek word, describing the intermediate state of the wicked dead; it is the same as Sheol.

**3. Tartarus.** This is the place where the wicked angels are chained. It is a place of darkness. See II Peter 2:4; Jude 6.

**4. Gehenna.** Gehenna was the city dump outside of Jerusalem, whose fire never went out. The Lord Himself likened hell unto it, describing the fires of hell that shall always burn: *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched* (Mark 9:44).

**5. Tophet.** "Tophet" is the Old Testament Hebrew word meaning the same as Gehenna.

**6. Abyss.** This is the place of fallen angels, human beings are never placed here (Rom. 10:7).

**7. Lake of Fire.** This is found only in the Book of the Revelation. Its meaning is the same as Gehenna.

**8. Eternal.** Sometimes this word is translated "everlasting." The meaning is the same. The punishment of the wicked is eternal.

**a. First Interpretation.** Thayer translates it to mean "without beginning and without end."

**b. Second Interpretation.** This states that "eternal" means "without beginning."

**c. Third Interpretation.** This holds that "eternal" means "without ending." We agree with all three. We do not hold to the interpretation that it means only "age lasting." Some would have us believe that the wicked will endure hell for just an age. The word "eternal" describing hell is the same word which describes eternal life (John 3:16), and the everlasting God (Rom. 16:26), and the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:11).

### **C. The Theories Proposed.**

**1. Universalism.** This is the belief that all will finally be saved, including the Devil. What would the words "judge" and "judgments" mean if they did not mean judge or judgment? When God speaks about eternal judgment, He means eternal judgment (Acts 3:21-24; I Cor. 15:22; Matt. 18:9; John 3:38).

**2. Conditionalism.** This false teaching was not found in the Early Church, but first made its appearance in the nineteenth century. It was reasoned that eternal life is based upon the acceptance of Jesus Christ. If one accepts Him, he has eternal life. If he does not accept Him, he will never live; non-acceptance in this life will result in non-existence in the future life. There is no Scriptural foundation for this theory.

**3. Everlasting Punishment.** This is based upon Biblical truth, which connects sin with punishment. All sins committed are committed against eternity. He who sins by rejecting Jesus Christ shall endure eternal punishment.

## **XII. HEAVEN**

The Scriptures teach that there are three heavens:

### **A. First Heaven.**

This is the region of the clouds where the birds fly, the atmospheric heaven.

**B. Second Heaven.**

This is the stellar heaven, where the stars are located.

**C. Third Heaven.**

This is the place where God lives; it is the place where Jesus came from. The Lord Jesus ascended through the first and second heaven to get to the third heaven,

The Third Heaven is just as real as the clouds and stars. It is the place where Stephen saw God; the place to which John was caught up by the Spirit. The first thing John saw was the Lord Jesus. Christ is the heart of heaven (Rev. 1; Heb. 9:24). Paul, too, was caught up to the third heaven (II Cor. 12:2).

Revelation 21 and 22 describes this wonderful home of the redeemed. And, shortly we shall be there: *Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels* (Heb. 12:22).