

MAJOR EVENTS IN PROPHECY

This brief synopsis of the major events in prophecy is by no means comprehensive. It is intended to provide a concise explanation of prophetic events as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. I will also attempt to answer some of the more difficult questions folks often ask as they study the glories of the premillennial faith.

LAST DAYS: Also referred to as “**the latter days**” and the “**time of the end**” in Scripture. The last days started with Christ’s First Advent and will continue until Christ’s Second Advent. We are currently in the first phase of the last days which also may be referred to as “**the times of the Gentiles**” (Luke 21:24 cf. Rom. 11:25). The Last days will continue through the Tribulation Period, which is the second phase of the last days also known as the “**Time of Jacob’s Trouble**” (Jer. 30:7, 11). The Last Days will be officially over when Christ comes back to the earth in the Second Advent to set up His Millennial Kingdom. Many of the signs leading up to the Rapture may also be applied to the times leading up to the Second Advent. Scriptures relating to the time frame of the Last Days: Hebrews 1:1-2; I Peter 1:20; I John 2:18; Matt. 24:24; Jer. 30:23-24; Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1-3. Scriptures relating to the signs or marks of the Last Days: Dan. 12:4; Matt. 24: 3, 6-7, 12, 24, 32-33, 37-39; II Thess. 2:1-3; I Tim. 4:1-4; II Tim. 3:1-5, 13; 4:3-4; James 5:1-8; II Peter 3:3-4; Jude 18-19.

RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS: I believe that the Rapture of the Saints will occur before the Seven Year Tribulation Period begins. I would be labeled as a Pre-Tribulation Premillennialist. Some are Mid-Trib, others are Post-Trib regarding the Rapture. My reasons for believing in a Pre-Trib Rapture are simple. I believe that the Seven Year Tribulation Period will be a time when God systematically pours out his wrath and judgments upon the people of the earth during the brief reign of the Antichrist as described in Revelation chapters 6-19. God has not appointed believers to wrath (I Thess. 1:10; 5:9). The Rapture is an imminent event, meaning that it could occur at any time (Matt. 24:36, 42, 44; Rev. 22:20). Believers are to be looking for the Blessed Hope (Titus 2:13), the coming of Jesus Christ, not the revealing of Antichrist. The Pre-Trib Rapture is a source of comfort to believers who will escape the judgments of the Tribulation Period (I Thess. 4:16-18). The general overall chronology of the Book of Revelation also suggests a Pre-Trib Rapture. Revelation 4 is a picture of the Rapture where the saints are taken to Heaven to worship the Lord as Revelation 5 suggests. Revelation chapters 6-19 describe the details of the Tribulation Period.

Christ will come in the air and take believers to Heaven in the Rapture just as He promised in John 14:1-3. The Rapture will also include the resurrection of the just where the spirits of departed saints will receive their glorified bodies and the saints who are living will be caught up to receive their glorified bodies (I Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:2). While the glorified saints are in Heaven they will be anticipating the day when they return to earth with Christ to rule and reign for 1000 years (Rev. 5:9-10). While the Tribulation Period is taking place on earth, the Judgment Seat of Christ or the Bema Seat will be taking place in Heaven (II Cor. 5:8-10) along with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-10).

SEVEN YEAR TRIBULATION PERIOD: Also referred to as the “Time of Jacob’s Trouble” (Jer. 30:7, 11) and “Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:24-27). The Tribulation begins immediately after the Rapture of the Saints and will be the most horrific time on earth in all of human history according to Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 24:21. At the beginning of the Tribulation the Man of Sin, also referred to as the Antichrist will be revealed (II Thess. 2:1-8). There will be a great deal of political, economic, and religious chaos in the world. The Antichrist will claim to be the world’s Savior and ultimate problem solver (Dan. 7:20; 8:25; II Thess. 2:9-10). He will establish a peace pact with Israel and the Arab nations (Dan. 9:27), only to break the pact at the mid point of the Tribulation, described by Daniel and Jesus as the abomination of desolation. A detailed description of the events of the Tribulation Period are set forth in Revelation chapters 6-19 as seen through the judgments of the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. The first 3.5 years of the Tribulation will include the ministry of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:1-5) who will be martyred. The second 3.5 years of the Tribulation will be more intense as the Antichrist shows his true colors to the world (Rev. 13:4-8). There are several purposes for the Tribulation, but one of the major ones will be the preparation of Israel to receive her Messiah (Deut. 4:30-31; Rom. 11:25-27). After the judgment of religious, political, and commercial Babylon (Rev. 17-18) the Seven Year Tribulation will end with the Second Advent of Christ and the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-16).

THE SECOND ADVENT AND THE MILLENNIUM: Immediately after the Seven Year Tribulation Jesus Christ will come back to the earth with His glorified saints in an event known as the Second Advent. The Second Advent of Christ also marks the beginning of the Millennium, referred to as the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ with His saints upon the earth (Rev. 20:1-7).

When Christ returns to the earth in the Second Advent He will bring all the glorified saints in Heaven with Him to establish the Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Zech 14:5; Jude 14-15). This event is something the glorified saints in Heaven look forward too and sing about (Rev. 5:9-10).

There are several prophetic events that will occur in rapid succession in conjunction with the Second Advent. It appears that the first order of business will be that of defeating the nations that come against Israel in the Battle of Armageddon (Zech. 12:7-9, 11; Rev. 16:16-17; 19:11-16). As Christ is coming with the glorified saints the elect among the nation of Israel will look upon the One who they had pierced and embrace Him as their Lord and Messiah by the power of the Holy Spirit (Zech. 12:10; 13:1; Rev. 1:7 cf. Rom. 11:25-27), thus fulfilling the terms of the New Covenant God made with Israel (Jer. 31:31-34). God will also fulfill the covenant promises He made to Israel in the Abrahamic Covenant as they will be restored to their land and dwell there in peace (Gen. 17:7-8; Ezek. 39:27-29) as well as the Davidic Covenant in which Jesus will reign as King over all the earth from His throne in Jerusalem (Psa. 89:33-37; Isa. 24:23; Jer. 3:17; 23:5-6).

At the beginning of the Millennium evil will be purged from the earth as Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-2). The survivors of the Tribulation Period and the Battle of Armageddon will be gathered from the four corners

of the earth to face the Lord in the Judgment of the Nations (Matt. 25:31-46 cf. Matt. 13:41-43; 24:29-30). The wicked who are identified as goats will be cast into hell to await the resurrection of the unjust dead when they will be summoned to the Great White Throne Judgment to be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15). The elect who are identified as sheep will enter into the Millennial Kingdom in their natural bodies (Matt. 25:32-34).

The Millennial reign of Christ will be the literal fulfillment of several promises and prophecies in Scripture that relate to God's ultimate purpose for the earth (Psalm 67; 72:7-8; Hab. 2:14; Matt. 5:5). The 1000 year reign of Christ with His saints will be a time of unsurpassed spirituality, holiness, joy, grace and peace, unlike anything the earth has ever experienced (Psalm 46:9-10; Isaiah 2:4; 11:6-7; 32:1; 35:1-2; Zech. 14:9).

At the end of the Millennium, when the 1000 years are expired, the Lord will release Satan from the bottomless pit for one last battle and final defeat (Rev. 20:7-10).

The last order of business just prior to the Eternal Ages will be The Great White Throne Judgment in which the wicked of all time will be summoned in the resurrection of the unjust to face the Lord Jesus (Rev. 20:11-15). This judgment will determine their level of punishment in the Lake of Fire for all eternity based upon their works.

THE ETERNAL AGES: This will be a time frame that starts right after the Great White Throne of Judgment and will continue forward into the infinity of eternity (Rev. 21:1-5). It is significant to note that the eternal ages will be marked by absolute righteousness and holiness. In order for this state of perfection to be achieved, God will purge the Universe of all wickedness as revealed in II Peter 3:7, 10-12.

The contents of Revelation chapters 21 and 22 give us glimpses of the glory that will be revealed in the eternal ages. There will be a new heaven and a new earth (21:1), a New Jerusalem that hovers above the earth (Rev. 21:2, 9-23), nations of redeemed saints that dwell on the new earth (21:24-27), a new river (Rev. 22:1), a new tree of life for the healing of the nations (22:2) and a new throne of the Lamb (22:3).

Innumerable blessings will abound as the eternal ages roll into infinity. There will be no more sorrow, pain, or death. There will be unbroken fellowship with the Lord and His people. There will be complete compatibility between the Lord and His people. There will be no wicked to disrupt the peace and fellowship of God and His saints (Rev. 21:8, 27).

I realize that I have but scratched the surface of the eternal ages. I must confess that this subject is too vast and deep for my finite mind. My comprehension of this future age of unsullied glory and unmatched brilliance is but feeble. But, oh how I long for the day when I shall enter in to the realms of bliss and happiness that yet await me in the eternal ages.