

Prophecy About The Future

It is Thursday night on the day before Jesus dies, and He and His disciples have finished their Passover meal. Judas has discovered that Jesus knows what he is going to do. Hurriedly he leaves to betray Jesus. That evening Jesus seeks to encourage His disciples to love each other and tells them that He will be leaving them. Peter objects because he wants to be with his master and claims that he will die for Him. Jesus knows better. Then Jesus assures them that though He is leaving, He will come again,

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus *answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times. Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me . . . I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (NASB) John 13:36-14:3

Jesus' first appearance here on earth is called His first coming or First Advent. When Jesus said, "I will come again," He was referring to His Second Coming, or Second Advent - which is yet in the future. The disciples may have thought that Jesus' appearance after His resurrection was His second coming. Apparently some thought He was going to establish His kingdom or "The Millennium" then. This explains why the disciples asked Jesus when He was going to "restore the kingdom" in Acts 1:6. But Jesus responded by saying it would not happen then, but in the future.

DISCIPLES LOOKED AHEAD. Jesus' disciples were still trying to understand the future of the world and their future. They had understood Jesus' comment completely that they would not see His return during their lives. Jesus had said this after a discussion with the Pharisees.

Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. (NASB) Luke 17:20-22

The Apostle Peter understood later in life that Jesus would

not return in the near future (2 Pet. 3:3-5).

The Apostle John wrote many years after Jesus died, returned to life, and went back to heaven (A.D. 90 -100) that Jesus would be coming back. He did not know when.

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. (NASB) 1 John 2:28

Some believe that Jesus returned when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. But this is not possible given Jesus' comment in Luke 17:20-22 and the fact that the Apostle John was alive after Jerusalem's destruction. It is important to notice that the book of Revelation was written sometime after A.D. 95. That means John wrote about the future in the book of Revelation after Jerusalem was destroyed. Rev-

elation tells us that the second coming of Jesus was a future event.

FOUR KINGDOMS. When is Jesus coming again? In order to answer this question, we must go back to the Old Testament in the book of Daniel. The prophet Daniel gives us a glimpse of Israel's future when he interprets a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Daniel 2:19-45).

The dream was about a statue which symbolizes the future nations that would control Israel while they are in the land of

Palestine. Daniel predicts a succession of empires starting with Babylon. The golden head is Babylon. The silver chest is Medo-Persia. The bronze waist is Greece. The iron legs are Rome, and the iron, clay feet and the stone are all future kingdoms. Each new kingdom defeats the preceding one. Each new kingdom is stronger than the one before it and lasts longer. Each new kingdom is a continuation of Gentile control over the land of Palestine, except for the kingdom symbolized by the stone.

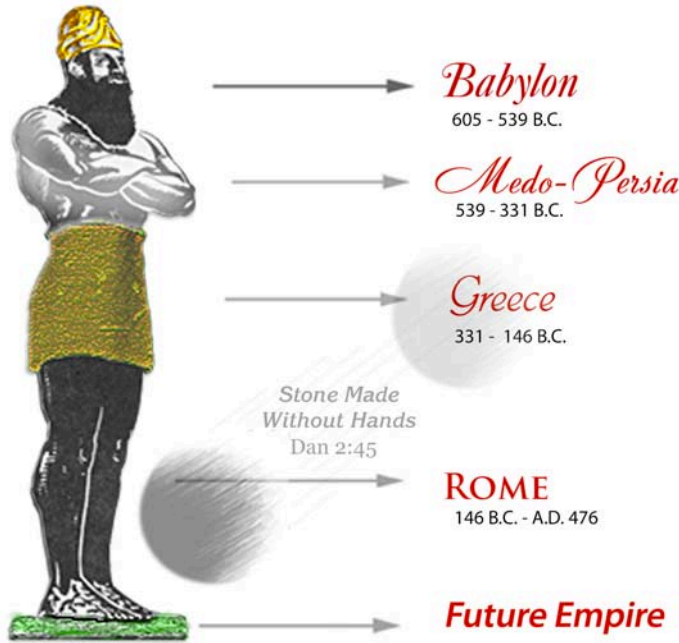
The last major empire controlling Palestine, while Israel was there, was Rome. Rome was different from the other empires. It was never defeated. It dissolved from within.

"FEET" EMPIRE. Daniel explained that the feet represent a future version of the old Roman Empire. The feet are a continuation of the old Babylonian, Medio-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. Each empire has occupied Palestine and each was built on the previous empire. The future is found in the feet.

It is important to note that the Ottoman Empire occupied the same territory from about A.D. 1300 to 1923, but it is not represented in the statue since Israel was destroyed

The Great Statue

Daniel 2:36-45



in A.D. 70 by the Romans, and the Jews fled to other nations. The nation of Israel did not exist during the Ottoman Empire. Israel returned in 1948 when the United Nations allowed the Jews to return after almost 1,900 years. The statue deals only with those empires which have controlled the Jews while they were in Palestine. The feet are symbolic of a future version of an alliance of nations that will exist in the same territory previously occupied by the four kingdoms of the statue.

THE STONE. But first, what does the stone represent? Every part of the statue has been symbolic of an actual, real physical kingdom, empire, or nation. So we should expect the feet and the stone to represent literal, real empires too. When Daniel explains that a stone will crush the feet (Dan. 2:34, 45), he refers to one kingdom or empire defeating all the previous nations or empires. The stone is made without hands; that is, God made the stone and He will destroy all Gentile rule over Israel. The statue represents a succession of Gentile control or rule over Israel. After the statue is destroyed, the stone becomes a great mountain. It is a new kingdom which fills the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). It is God's future earthly 1,000 year kingdom. Each symbol is a kingdom and the stone is a kingdom ruled by God!

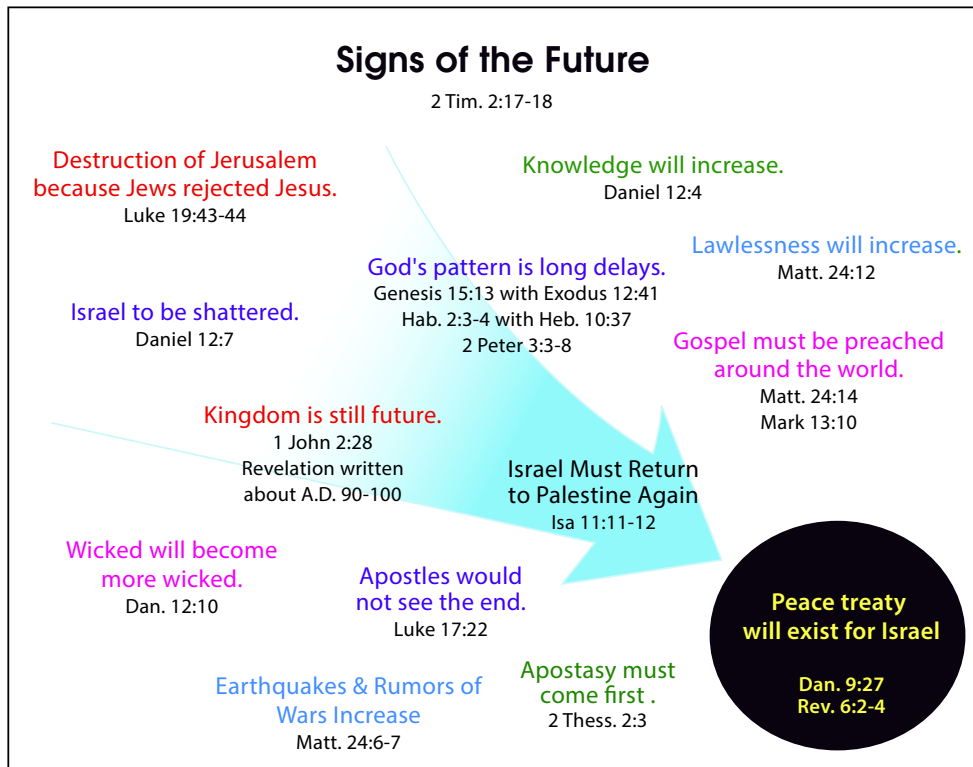
SIGNS OF THE FUTURE. When will the empire that is represented by "The Feet" come to power in the future? What are the signs of Jesus' return? Jesus told us that lawlessness will increase (Matt. 24:12) and Daniel predicted that knowledge will increase (Dan. 12:4) in the last days. Another sign is that many will turn away from God in the end. Even

though the good news about Jesus Christ has been spreading around the world, many will reject God. God calls this apostasy (2 Thess. 2:3). One very significant sign is the return of the Jews to the land of Palestine. This was predicted in Isaiah 11:11-12

and Ezekiel 37:11-14. Multiple passages indicate that the temple must also exist in Jerusalem in the end-times (Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:3-4).

Jesus warned us that wars and earthquakes would increase (Matt. 24:6-7). The signs of the future appear to exist already. But we do not know if Jesus is coming soon or if He will delay His return for another 100 years. He could come tomorrow or in one hundred years. Christians have been expecting the end of the world for hundreds of years.

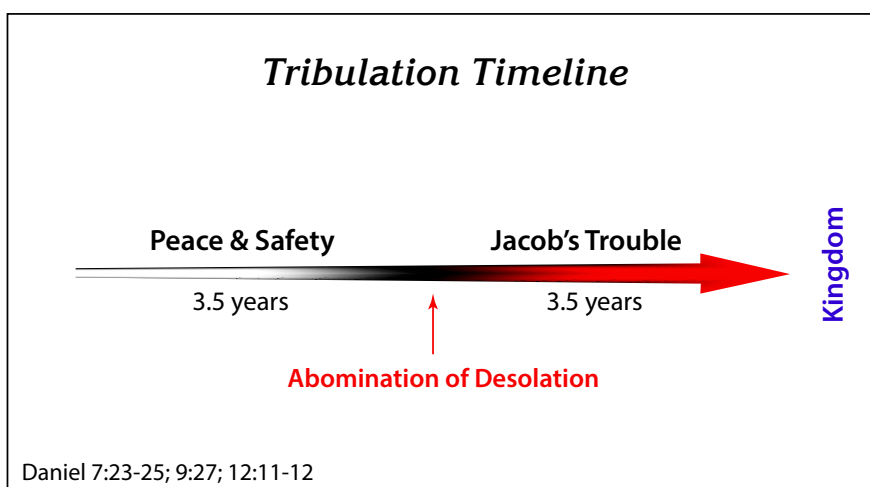
Jesus also warned us that the end-time would be very close when the "Abomination of Desolation" appears as predicted by the prophet Daniel (Matt. 24:15). We will discuss the "Abomination of Desolation" in more detail later. When Jesus said this, He was referring to the prophet's statement in Daniel 9:27.



the "Abomination of Desolation" appears, the peace will end and plagues, disasters, terror, and war will follow. This means that the first 3.5 years are peaceful and the last 3.5 years are filled with pain, misery, and a horrible war.

Jesus called the last 3.5 years a period of "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21). As a result, the entire 7 year period is called the Tribulation. In other places in the Bible, each 3.5 year period is also called "time, times and half a time" (Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14), 42 months (Rev. 11:1-2) and 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3).

So the next major event in the future is the peace treaty that Daniel predicted. When it occurs, only seven years will be left before Jesus returns to set-up His kingdom on earth - His future earthly 1,000 year kingdom.



"THE FEET" ARRIVE. Daniel

Daniel's Vision of Four Beasts

Daniel 7:4-7



Daniel 7:4

**Babylonian
Empire**



Daniel 7:5

**Medo-Persian
Empire**



Daniel 7:6

**Empire of
Greece**



Daniel 7:7

**Roman
Empire**

7:27 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4-5 reveal that the “Abomination of Desolation” will occur when the Anti-Christ stops the temple sacrifices, sits down in the temple, and declares himself to be God.

... the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (NASB) 2 Thess. 2:3-4

Rev. 13:14-15 suggests that the Anti-Christ might even erect a statue of himself in the temple. But his reign of terror will only last 3.5 years or “time, times, and half a time.” Who is this individual? The Bible calls him the Anti-Christ. He is the leader of the empire we already know as the “The Feet” (Dan. 7:23-25).

So what do we know about “The Feet”? Daniel 7:3-7 presents the same information that is recorded in Daniel 2 but uses four beasts: lion (Babylon), bear (Media-Persia), leopard (Greece), and a dreadful beast (Rome). The

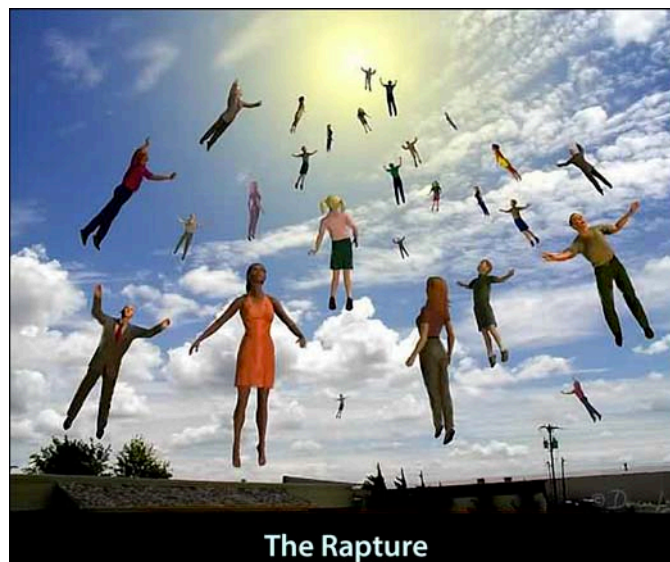
fourth beast is described as dreadful. Each beast represents an empire, just as the four metals of the statue in Daniel 2. In Daniel 7 we are told the modified version of this fourth empire, “The Feet,” will appear as a beast with ten horns.

The ten horns are ten kings (Dan. 7:8, 20-24) or ten nations. The future version of the fourth empire, “The Feet,” will be an alliance of ten nations which establish the peace treaty for Israel in the Middle East. When “The Feet” bring peace to the Middle East, the Tribulation will have started.

The leaders of these ten nations with the help of Anti-Christ, “the prince,” will have established what appears to be a lasting peace for Israel, a covenant of peace; but it will only last 3.5 years (Dan. 9:27). This treaty of peace will mark

the beginning of the 7 year period called the Tribulation and the appearance of “The Feet.”

THE RAPTURE. The Bible teaches that not everyone will go through the seven years of tribulation. All of the followers of Jesus Christ will escape at the beginning of the Tribulation. They escape when the rapture occurs. The rapture refers to the removal

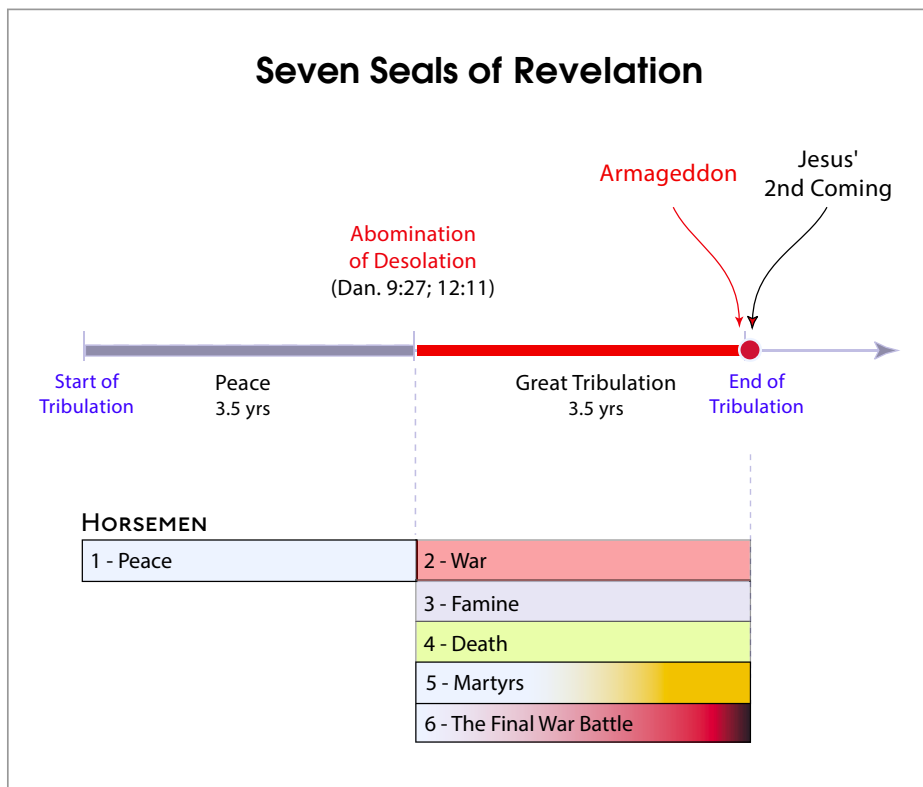


of Christians from this world by Jesus before the great period of suffering starts (Tribulation). 1 Thess. 4:15-17 describes the rapture this way,

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. (NASB) 1 Thess 4:15-17

1 Thess. 5:4-6 tells us that Christians should not be surprised as to the signs of the end times and Jesus' coming, but the world will be surprised. It will come as a thief in the night. Many of those who become followers of Jesus during

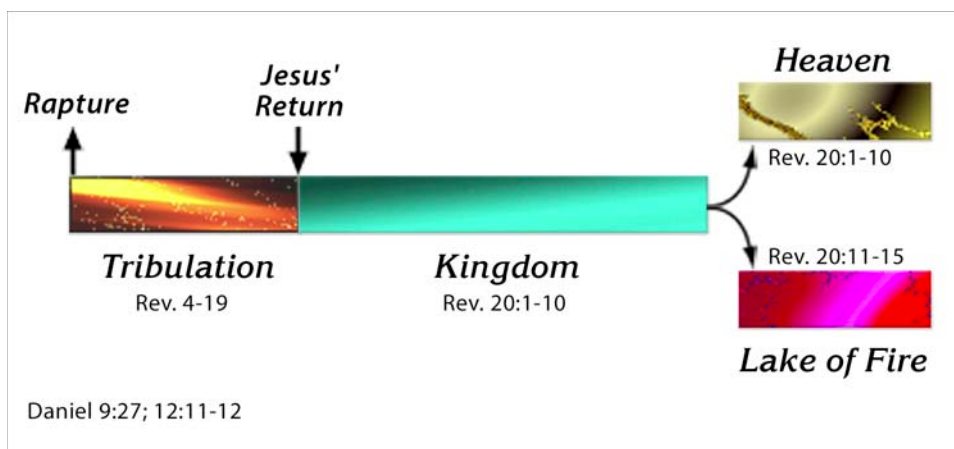


the Tribulation will die for their faith. They will suffer greatly. But many will come to Jesus because it will be obvious that God is fighting with the world.

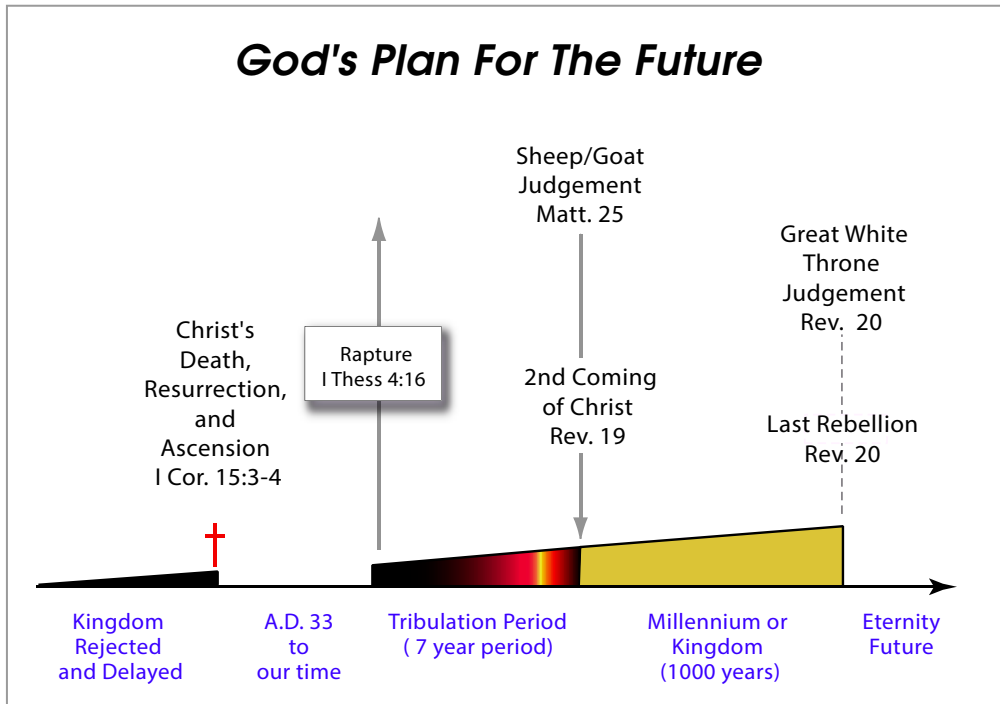
2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 tells us that the rapture will occur before the Day of the Lord. Since the Day of the Lord starts with the Tribulation,

this means every follower of Jesus Christ will escape the Tribulation. The Day of the Lord starts with the Tribulation and ends after the Kingdom (1 Thess. 4:16-18; 5:1-3; Joel 2:1-11; Matt. 24:22-31; Rev. 6:17; 16:14; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 20:11). Note that the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thess. 2:3 is the Anti-Christ.

PEACE TO DISASTER. The rapture will remove those who believe and follow Jesus Christ either before the peace that Daniel predicted in the Middle East or just as the peace starts. As we have already discovered, the peace will be established by an alliance of 10 future nations that come from the ter-



ritory that the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires once occupied. These four empires controlled territory that is now occupied by Middle East, North African, and European nations. The



tion predicts that people will know this is the hand of God, but they will not forsake their sin and submit to God. Instead they will become angry and curse Him (Rev. 6:16-17; 9:20-21). That will be a tragic mistake.

peace will end after 3.5 years when the Anti-Christ eliminates three of the ten world leaders of these nations (Dan. 7:7-8; 7:24). Then the Anti-Christ along with the world will make war against the Jews and the followers of Jesus Christ during the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation (Dan. 7:21; Rev. 13:1-10).

The book of Revelation describes the events of the Tribulation (Rev. 4-19). The seven seals that Jesus breaks in Revelation 6 provide an overview of what will occur during the Tribulation. The last 3.5 years will be a period of terrifying war, famine, death, and will end with the great battle of Armageddon. We are told that God will warn and encourage people to believe in Jesus Christ but most people will ignore Him. He will send 144,000 Jewish witnesses who follow Jesus (Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1-5), two supernatural witnesses who speak out for God and perform miracles (Rev. 11:1-14), and seven angels who preach from the sky above (Rev. 15).

Many land animals, water life, plants, and people will die because the oceans, seas, rivers, and streams are polluted and destroyed. One-third of the trees and grasslands will be burned. A third of the sun, stars, and moon will be affected (Rev. 8). Many people will become sick, suffer, and many will die (Rev. 8, 16). The city of Babylon will be destroyed and the economy of the world will collapse (Rev. 17-18). Revela-

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts. (NASB) Rev. 9:20-21

In the end, they will seek war with God. The Anti-Christ will convince the world leaders that they can defeat God at a battle called Armageddon (Rev. 19).

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. Both Daniel and Revelation tell us that the Anti-Christ and the world's armies will be defeated at the battle of Armageddon when the Ancient of Days, Jesus Christ, returns again (Dan. 7:11-12; 7:26-27; Rev. 19:11-19). Jesus will return with the angels of heaven and those followers who have already died. Jesus will annihilate the armies of the world. The Anti-Christ and the false prophet will be killed and sent to the Lake of Fire after their defeat (Rev. 19:20-21).

THE KINGDOM. The dead who were followers of Jesus Christ will be resurrected at that time and enter into the 1,000 year kingdom that is promised in Acts 1:6-7. The

Future Events	Biblical Passage
Signs of Jesus's coming appear	Dan. 12:4, 10; 2 Thess. 2:3-5; Matt. 24:3-14
Rapture occurs - Christians are caught up to Jesus in the air	1 Thess. 4:13-17
Start of tribulation - Man of Sin comes	Dan. 9:27
Peace & safety - Covenant	1 Thess. 5:2-3; Dan. 9:27
Birth pangs - Suffering has arrived	1 Thess 5:3; Matt. 24:7-8
Abomination of Desolation	Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess 2:3-4
Jacob's Trouble - Great Tribulation	Matt. 24:21; Jer. 30:7
Second Coming - Jesus returns and defeats the world's armies	Matt. 24:29-31; 2 Thess. 2:8-12
Anti-Christ and False prophet put into eternal judgment	Rev. 19:20-21
Kingdom established - Jesus reigns	Dan. 7:21-28; Rev. 19:11-20:6
Satan Released - Last war	Dan. 7:12; Rev. 20:7-10
Final Judgment - Book of Life is opened	Dan. 12:1-3; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15
Heaven - Eternal Life for followers of Jesus	Dan. 12:2-3; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 21-22

kingdom will be a period of peace on earth. Even the animals will be at peace. The lamb and the lion will lie together and a child will play with a cobra.

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. (NASB) Is. 11:6-8

Those who long for a world without guns will rejoice at this event. Psalm 72:8-11 says that the Lord's kingdom or "The Millennium" will cover the earth and the rulers of the nations who are still alive will come and give Him honor.

Isaiah 2 and 11 give us some great details about the kingdom, and Ps 2 and 72 provide others. Isaiah 2:2 says that in the "last days," the mountain of the house of God will be the chief of the mountains. The phrase "mountain" was a common ancient term symbolic of a kingdom (see Dan. 2:35). That appears to be the meaning here. If not, then it implies that Jerusalem will be the most significant place on earth, and the message is the same. Isaiah 2:3 and Ps. 2:6 tell us that the city of Jerusalem is on this mountain and it will be the capital of the kingdom.

The kingdom or "The Millennium" will be what many dream about, but not everyone will be happy. Some will not like holiness or God. Even though the Anti-Christ will have

been defeated, the religious and political influence of the world's empire will be allowed to continue for an "extension of time" (Dan. 7:12; Rev. 20:1-10). Incredibly, they will try once again to defeat God, but they will utterly fail once more. The world empires, or kingdoms, as represented by Daniel's statue in Daniel 2 and the four beasts in Daniel 7 along with Satan will be defeated finally and forever (see Dan. 7:13-14), and Christ's kingdom will be established - an eternal one (Dan. 7:21-28). Praise the Lord!

FINAL JUDGMENT. Then the final judgment will follow. Those who never repented of their sins, never believed that Jesus was God, and never submitted themselves to God will be sent to an eternity of punishment. That they will be judged for their actions, thoughts, and deeds will be reminders or proof that God's judgment is just. Their actions, thoughts, and deeds will prove that they rejected God! Those who have rejected Jesus and refused to submit will be sent to the Lake of Fire.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (NASB) John 3:16-18

ETERNITY. After the destruction of the universe, every

follower of Jesus Christ will enter into an eternal future called the “new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1). Our future home will be a holy place filled with joy and peace, without pain because the curse of sin will be gone. There will not be any danger from thieves, murderers, or politicians. We will not need to worry about going to work or someone becoming angry with us. Everyone will love one another (Rev. 22:3). We will want to serve and praise God because of all that He has done for us. Heaven will be one great, awesome, glorious, exciting time.

But the greatest and most unbelievable gift will be living

with God the Father and God the Son - Jesus Christ - the Lamb, and seeing Him face-to-face (Rev. 22:3-4).

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. (NASB) Rev. 22:12-13

If you are interested, you can read more about heaven in the study series called “Revelation.”