

Foundations 10: The End Times

What do the following verses say about the End Times?

Note; The End Time events are preceded by the Church Age (Matthew 16:18). The Church Age is the current epoch.

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

The first end time event is the rapture of the Church. The term rapture means to seize or snatch. The Rapture is the sudden carrying away of the Church to heaven (John 14:3). The first phase of Jesus' return is "in the air" to rapture the church (1 Thessalonians 4:17) The second phase is "to the earth" to judge the world at the end of the Tribulation, (Revelation 19:11-21). The Rapture will occur:

- a. **Soon** (Revelation 1:1, 3:11, 22:6,7) Nothing is left in God's plan for the rapture to occur. It is the next event.
- b. **Instantaneously** (1 Corinthians 15:51,52)
- c. **Surprisingly** (Revelation 3:3)
- d. **Before the Tribulation** (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9, Revelation 3:10) Believers in the Church Age are promised they will not endure the coming judgment of God upon the earth. Also, the term *Church* is not present in the Tribulation passages of Revelation 4-19.
- e. **Obviously** (2 Thessalonians 2:2)

2. 2 Corinthians 5:10

The next event for believers in heaven is judgement. Believers will experience the "Bema seat" judgment. The "Bema seat" is an elevated place that was used to settle legal matters and reward athletes. Each believer is accountable to God (Hebrews 4:13). Each believer will experience God's judgment (Romans 14:10). This is not a judgement of sin since that was dealt with at the cross. Rather it is an evaluation of each believer's life. Was it lived for the glory of God or not? Some will receive rewards (crowns) (1 Peter 4:5, 2 Timothy 4:8, Revelation 2:10, 3:11). Some will not (1 Corinthians 3:13-15, Romans 2:16, 1 Corinthians 4:5). After the "Bema seat" judgment believers will experience unequalled worship in heaven (Revelation 7:9-17). This will take place in heaven while the Tribulation is occurring on earth.

3. Revelation 6:15-17

The next event for unbelievers on earth is the Tribulation. The Tribulation is an equaled outpouring of the wrath of God. It lasts seven years. It is concurrent with the activities in heaven for the redeemed described above. It is described in detail in chapters 4-19 of Revelation. It is marked by suffering and death that has never before been witnessed. (Matthew 24:21) What sets the Tribulation apart is that the judgment of God is worse in nature and greater in scope than at anytime in the history of mankind. *For years some men have been talking as if they thought the end were near, but at the beginning of the Tribulation, they will realize that the end is actually at*

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*hand.*¹

The judgments are poured out in three segments (seals, trumpets, bowls). Each series of judgments are escalating in nature. They are worse than the ones before. The Tribulation will be also be characterized by the following: intense persecution and martyrdom of the redeemed and Israel, the activity of Angels, and the presence and prominence of the Antichrist.

Yet, in spite of his wrath, God's purpose is still to redeem people. The gospel will be shared with the entire world through the 144,000 (Revelation 7:4), the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3), and an angelic announcement (Revelation 14:6,7). It is thought that heaven will be populated by more people converted during the tribulation than all other periods of time together (Revelation 7:9-14, 14:15,16).

4. Revelation 16:16

The next End Time event on earth is the battle of Armageddon. This battle occurs on a large plain some 60 miles north of Israel at the end of the Tribulation. It is between the rebellious survivors of the Tribulation and Jesus and his angelic army. MarArthur states, "God's patience is exhausted with sinful, rebellious mankind." The outcome is swift, devastating and complete (Revelation 19:11-21). It is an event that marks the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium.

5. Revelation 20:2-6

The next end time event is the Millennium. The Millennium is a literal thousand year period of time. It follows the battle of Armageddon and is marked by the physical presence of Jesus Christ as ruling King. It also entails the absence of antichrist, and peace and prosperity among people. The inhabitants are the few redeemed who survived the Tribulation and the glorified redeemed who return to earth with Christ. Two-thirds of Messianic prophecies are fulfilled during this time. It will also include the complete fulfillment of key Old Testament covenants. *Premillennialists understand that the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant giving to Abraham's descendants the land from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates has never been fulfilled but will be fulfilled in the coming millennial kingdom (Gen. 15:18). The promises of the Davidic Covenant also necessitate the establishment of the millennial kingdom for their fulfillment (2 Sam. 7:12-16).*²

¹ Ryrie, Charles C. (1999-01-11). *Basic Theology: A Popular, Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (p. 540). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

² Ryrie, Charles C. (1999-01-11). *Basic Theology: A Popular, Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (p. 523). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

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6. Revelation 20:11-15

The next end time event is the Great White Throne judgment. All unredeemed have died. The Great White Throne is the final sentencing of eternal judgment for all unredeemed souls, who by their works, proved their denial and unbelief (Daniel 7:9,10, Matthew 16:27, 25:31-46, John 5:28, 29, Daniel 12:2). MacArthur states, *“Each unsaved dead person’s thoughts (Luke 8:17, Romans 2:16), deeds (Matthew 16:27), and words (Matthew 12:37) will be compared to God’s perfect, holy standard (1 Peter 1:15,16).”*

7. Revelation 21:1

The next end time event is Eternity (Revelation 21, 22:1-9) Eternity, also called the *new heaven and earth*, is a completely new creation of God. The entire universe has been destroyed and remade and will last forever! The new heaven and earth is the permanent dwelling place for the redeemed from all ages. Sin is not present. There is no longer any separation between God and man. God is present with man. God’s people will finally experience ultimate and everlasting fellowship with God. God’s glory is such that there is no need for any sun. He illuminates everything. There is no trace of any of the fallenness of the first creation. There is no suffering or death. It is perfect. It is as God originally intended creation to be. It is everlasting.

The new Jerusalem is the capital of heaven and the place where God dwells. It is a place of unmatched brilliance and the center of worship. Its size and dimension is described in three dimensions. It’s a cube! Even if only a quarter were inhabited it would easily accommodate 20 billion people. It is the dwelling place of the redeemed. The River and Tree of life serve as reminders that heaven is for the redeemed alone.

All of what is described about eternity is meant to encourage the redeemed. It is meant to uplift all who are downtrodden due to the fallen state of this world. It is meant to inspire those who endure persecution and martyrdom. It is meant to provide hope to all who follow Jesus Christ. It is intended to bring unequalled fulfillment and endless joy. (Job 19:25-27, Psalm 17:15)

Which verse was most meaningful to you? Explain.