

Introduction

*1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 3 **Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.** Revelation 1:1-3 New International Version*

The Lord wants us to read about and to understand what He has said about the future. The book of Revelation describes the end of our journey, which began when we went to God in prayer, asked Him to forgive our sins, and asked the payment of His Son's sacrifice on Calvary pay the sin debt we owed. According to Revelation 21:1, our journey will end upon a New Earth.

Until He comes back for us, however, Jesus Christ expects us to be studying His divine word and growing spiritually. Just as some people mature faster and advance further in this life, so those who are born again spiritually have different rates of spiritual growth and maturity.

You are responsible for your spiritual growth.

"1 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly-mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready." 1st Corinthians 3:1-2

Our advancement in spiritual understanding is contingent many times upon our desire to grow in the service and knowledge of Christ's kingdom. Our

advancement is also contingent upon our seeking out those who are able to share and increase our understanding of the deeper things of God's word and of God's plan for the future.

Dear reader, I pray this series of papers will prove helpful in your service to our Savior and you have matured spiritually to the point it is understandable. I suggest that before you examine this and the following papers on future things, you ask our Lord to bless you with the Spirit of Understanding (Isaiah 11:2) so you may understand God's word, God's will, and God's way.

This paper is a work in progress and it is our intend to continue to expand it until we have explained, according to the scriptures, the main events which will transpire in the future. We intend to discuss the events from the catching up (the Rapture) until the saved go into eternity on the New Earth and the lost will be banished to the Lake of Fire where they will pay their sin debt for eternity. We invite you to contact us frequently so you may receive regular updates as these papers progress.

Understanding the proper sequence of the events of future things is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle with pieces that have been cut identically but have different colors or different shades of the same color or pieces that share a side or two that have been cut identically. At first, a piece may fit well but as we attempt to add other pieces, we realize we have attempted to put the piece in the wrong place. (2nd Timothy 2:15; 2nd Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 15:4)

Jesus Christ lists some of the conditions that will exist in the world just before the catching up (the Rapture). One of the outstanding conditions is listed in Matthew 24: 37-39. *“37 For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 In (those) days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered*

the ark. 39 They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be (also) at the coming of the Son of Man.” The New American Bible

Jesus said people would be involved with their daily lives and would be so busy they would not give any thought to their future beyond this life. They will not be able to discern the events transpiring around them that are preparing the world to receive the soon coming anti-Christ.

The apostle Paul also listed conditions that will exist just before the catching up. If you are interested in one of the main occurrences that will set the stage for the Tribulation, we invite you to read our paper entitled “Decline Of The United States” on this web site.

We have the privilege to be living in a marvelous time. If we look around us, we can see a fulfillment of 2nd Thessalonians 2:9-12 as well as the fulfillment of other prophecy.

"⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2nd Thessalonians 2:9-12 New King James Version

The truth of this scripture is based upon the foreknowledge of God. Since God knows all things that will happen in the future, He knows the names of everyone who will come to Him in prayer, repent of their sins and those who will ask that the payment the Messiah gave on the cross, pay the sin debt they owe (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 64:6; James 2:10; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:8-13; Romans 8:1-39). The scripture printed above (2nd Thessalonians 2:9-12) says in the last days God will allow those who He knows will never accept His Son as their Savior to be

deluded (Revelation 13:7-8). Because of the strong delusion, they will believe any and every lie of Satan and his demons. When the Anti-Christ is projected upon the scene, many of those men and women will lend their support to help catapult him to international prominence very quickly. Satan is methodically and successfully placing people in every media, every school (even our "Christian" schools), and every government. If he can, he even places them within churches. These people are either possessed or momentarily controlled by his demons.

I know we do not like to consider the possibility the leaders within our churches and within our associations and conventions could, at times, embrace and proffer error. Even Jesus could not prevent the leaders of the church in Jerusalem from doing this.

"23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."" Matthew 16:23 New International Version

This explains why we have so many people in the world who are working so hard to deny God and to destroy all reference to Christ. It also explains why some of our churches and some of our "christian" schools have begun to depart from the faith once entrusted to the saints.

"3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. 4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." Jude 1:3 NIV

"1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-

control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them." 2nd Timothy 3:1-5 NIV

"1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron." 1st Timothy 4:1-2 NIV

As we draw nearer to the catching up (the Rapture), we can see prophecy fulfilled before our eyes. One of the few prophecies left to be fulfilled is the establishment of the city of Babylon as a major worldwide trading center. By the time you read this paper, the city may have already been rebuilt. It will be destroyed in one day near the end of the tribulation (Revelation chapter 18). We know Saddam was rebuilding the city for over twelve years before we removed him from power in Iraq. If the stock market were ever moved from Baghdad in Iraq to Babylon in Iraq, the things listed below would be traded in the city or through the religion that was initiated in that city soon after Noah's flood.

"¹After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. ²With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. ³For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries." ⁴Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; ⁵for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. ⁶ Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup.

⁷ Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.'⁸ Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.⁹ "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her."¹⁰ Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: "'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!'"¹¹ "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more—¹² cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble;¹³ cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men."¹⁴ "They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.'¹⁵ The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn¹⁶ and cry out: "'Woe! Woe, O great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls!"¹⁷ "In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!" "Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off."¹⁸ When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?'¹⁹ They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out: "'Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour, she has been brought to ruin!"²⁰ Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you.'"²¹ Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the

size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said; “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. ²²The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. ²³The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world’s great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.²⁴In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth.” Revelation 18 New International Version

HOW DO WE KNOW THE CATCHING UP TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE TRIBULATION AND THE TRIBULATION TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM?

We shared in the beginning that understanding the proper sequence of the events of future things is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle with pieces that have been cut identically but have different colors or different shades of the same color or pieces that share a side or two that have been cut identically. At first, a piece may fit well but as we attempt to add other pieces, we realize we have attempted to put the piece in the wrong place. (2nd Timothy 2:15; 2nd Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 15:4)

According to the testimony of Paul (2nd Thessalonians chapters 1 & 2), Christ will not come to set up His Millennial Kingdom until (1) there will be a falling away first (2nd Timothy 3:1-17; 2nd Thessalonians 2:3) and (2) the Anti-Christ will set himself up in the temple of God in Jerusalem (2nd Thessalonians 2:4; Daniel 11:45).

We find in Matthew 24:3, Jesus Christ was asked three questions.

1-When will Herod's Temple be completely torn down so no stone will be left upon another?

2-What shall be the sign of your coming? This is the same Greek word translated "coming" in Matthew 24:27.

3-What shall be the sign of the end of the world (completion of this course or age or period)?

Jesus answered those three questions in Matthew 24 and 25 (in the order they were asked). It is a clear outline that begins with the events that will happen just prior to the catching up (the Rapture). It spans the period of time we call the Great Tribulation and ends with the judgment of every person who will still be alive when Jesus Christ returns to this earth to set up His 1,000 year reign. Jesus even assures us many of those who have not secured the Holy Spirit as their companion through salvation will do so after they realize they have been left behind (Matthew 25:1-13). Please note it was not too late for the foolish virgins to obtain the oil (a type or picture of the Holy Spirit). It was too late for them to go to the marriage supper. It will not be too late for people to be saved after the catching up but it will be too late for them to leave with the rest of us. Instead of going to the marriage supper (Revelation 19:6-9), they will have to go through the tribulation (Revelation 7:9-17; Revelation 14:9-13). They will also suffer when the wrath of God comes upon this earth and many will lose their lives. *"If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened."* Matthew 24:22 NIV

We find 2nd Thessalonians 2:4 reveals, *"For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way."* This does not mean the Holy Spirit will leave the earth. The Holy Spirit has always been on this earth (Genesis 1:1-2; Genesis 6:3; 1st Samuel

10:10; Ezekiel 11:24; John 3:31-36). If the Holy Spirit leaves this earth at the catching up (the Rapture), who will convict mankind of sin and how will the Father draw that great multitude who will wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb (John 6:44; Revelation 7:8-17)? If the Holy Spirit remains on this earth after the catching up (the Rapture), what is taken away at the catching up? We will answer those questions later in our paper, “The Catching Up (The Rapture)”, which is part of this series explaining future things.

The last days before the catching up (1st Thessalonians 4:16-17) will become a time of loss, affliction and trouble for most of the people living on this earth. In the paper “Decline Of The United States” posted on this web site, we detail how the Lord will bring this about. The procedure is listed in the third chapter of the book of Isaiah. When the third chapter of the book of Isaiah (*Old Testament*) kicks into high gear, the unrighteous will find those in government will be enacting laws and rules that restrict or deny their rights. Eventually they will see their wealth transferred to the government through taxes and/or inflation or will be transferred to others who are manipulating the economy. Even when they go to court because someone cheated them, stole their possessions, or stole their wealth, they will get little or no justice from the judges who sit on the bench. One calamity will follow another as the Lord takes away the things listed in the third chapter of Isaiah and the people will not be able to understand why everything is falling apart. They will not discern that what is happening to them is recompense for their own actions.

“⁷ Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸ For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. ⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”
Galatians 6:7-9 King James Version