

God's Revelation of the Future

Community Baptist Church
Lesson 1

Adult Bible Fellowship
Spring, 2024

Introduction

Basic Questions

What is God's perspective on the future?

- Isaiah 46:8-11
 - God knows the future because he planned the future and is carrying out his plan. Thereby, he is doing what he has purposed to do. (Cf. Ephesians 1:11)

What can we know about the future?

- We can know whatever God has chosen to tell us!
 - God has revealed significant things to us about his plans.
 - However ...
 - God has not revealed everything.
 - Everything God has revealed is not equally clear.

Why should we study what is recorded about the future?

- Brings glory to God
- Fulfills a basic human longing
- Provides hope, peace, joy, and blessing
- Helps us grow (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 John 3:2-3)

The Rapture of the Church

We are waiting for a Savior

Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:10

Two Important Passages and a Definition

1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Rapture of the Church refers to a future, pre-Tribulation event that will take place entirely and exclusively for the Church, the body of Christ, which includes the following: (1) the resurrection of Church saints, (2) the removal from the earth to heaven of these saints along with those saints already alive, and (3) the changing of all their bodies to be like that of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Participants – Who is included in this event?

- The Rapture is for the Church entirely.
 - All believers currently alive will be included.
 - Church believers who have died will be raised and included in the Rapture.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51
- The Rapture is for the Church exclusively.
 - Believers of earlier times are not raised and included in the Rapture. [The Church was established on Pentecost.]

Timing – When will this event take place?

- Timewise, it will be a pre-Tribulation Rapture.
 - According to this view, Christ will come (almost to earth) and catch away the Church, his Bride, before the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy begins.
- Reasons for a Pre-Tribulation Rapture.
 - It is based on a literal method of interpretation. (Cf. Daniel 9:24 and the 70 Weeks of Daniel)
 - It is based on the purpose for that period.
 - For Israel, serves to prepare the nation for her king. (Cf. Malachi 4:4-5; cp. Luke 1:17)
 - For Israel and the nations, serves as a time of trial, including wrath and punishment. (Cf. Zephaniah 1:14-18; Isaiah 26:21)
 - It is based on the imminence of Christ's coming. (Cf. Titus 2:11-14; Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 1:10)
 - It is based on the Church being preserved from a tribulation period. (Cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Revelation 3:10)

Nature – What is this event going to involve?

1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

The Lord's Descent

- Three "audible" actions
 - The Lord will shout (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
 - The archangel will speak (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
 - The trumpet will sound (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52)

- Three “resultant” events
 - The dead “in Christ” will be resurrected (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52)
 - Those just resurrected and those already alive will be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Philippians 3:20-21)
 - The now all-living Church of Christ will be “caught up” to forever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:52)

The Church’s Change

- We will get new glorified bodies (Philippians 3:20-21)
- 1 Corinthians mentions two significant changes.
 - Corruption will be replaced by incorruption
 - Mortal will be replaced by immortal
- What other characteristics?
 - See 1 John 3:2; Luke 24:16, 31, 39, 41-43

Three Subsequent Events

What happens to the Church between the Rapture and the Return of Christ?

The Judgment of the Church

This is the judgment in which the Church appears before Christ at his “Judgment Seat.”

- Certainty of this Judgment
 - Three passages that refer to this judgment (2 Corinthians 5:9-10; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:5-15)
- Basis for this Judgment
 - Sin is not an issue
 - It will be an assessment of the believer’s works (1 Corinthians 3:5-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10)
- Reasons for this Judgment
 - It serves to motivate us (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)
 - It demonstrates God’s grace (1 Corinthians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 3:14-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
 - It renders the Church, Christ’s bride, spotless (Ephesians 5:27; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

The Marriage of the Lamb

This is the event that brings the bridegroom, Christ, together with his bride, the Church.

- From Ephesians 5:25-32 we understand that a human husband-wife relationship reflects a relationship between “Christ and the church.”
- From Revelation 19:7-9, which speaks of both a marriage and a marriage banquet, it appears ...
 - The Lamb is the Son.
 - The Bride is the Church.
 - The banquet guests are other saints.
- Nowhere is there a statement that identifies the place or time of the actual marriage event.
 - It is suggested that the marriage takes place in heaven and is followed by the celebration of the marriage on earth.

The Church around the Throne

This is the heavenly setting, first seen in Revelation 4-5, where the Church worships God and observes what is taking place.

- John sees (4:1-2) various individuals ...
 - A person, the Father, seated on a throne and having a seven-sealed scroll (4:2, 5:1)
 - Twenty-four “elders” with crowns (4:4, 10; 5:1, 6)
 - Four “living creatures” (4:6, 5:6)
 - A Lamb, the Son, standing before the throne who takes the scroll (5:6-7)
- Who are these “elders?”
 - It has been suggested that these elders are representative of the Church. If this is so, ...
 - The Church is in heaven in God’s presence (4:3-4, 10-11)
 - The Church has been clothed in “white garments” (4:4)
 - The Church has been crowned (4:4, 10)
 - The Church is worshipping (4:10, 5:8, 11, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4)
 - The Church is rejoicing and singing (5:8-10)
 - The Church is observing (5:5-8; 7:13-14; 11:16-18; 14:2-3)