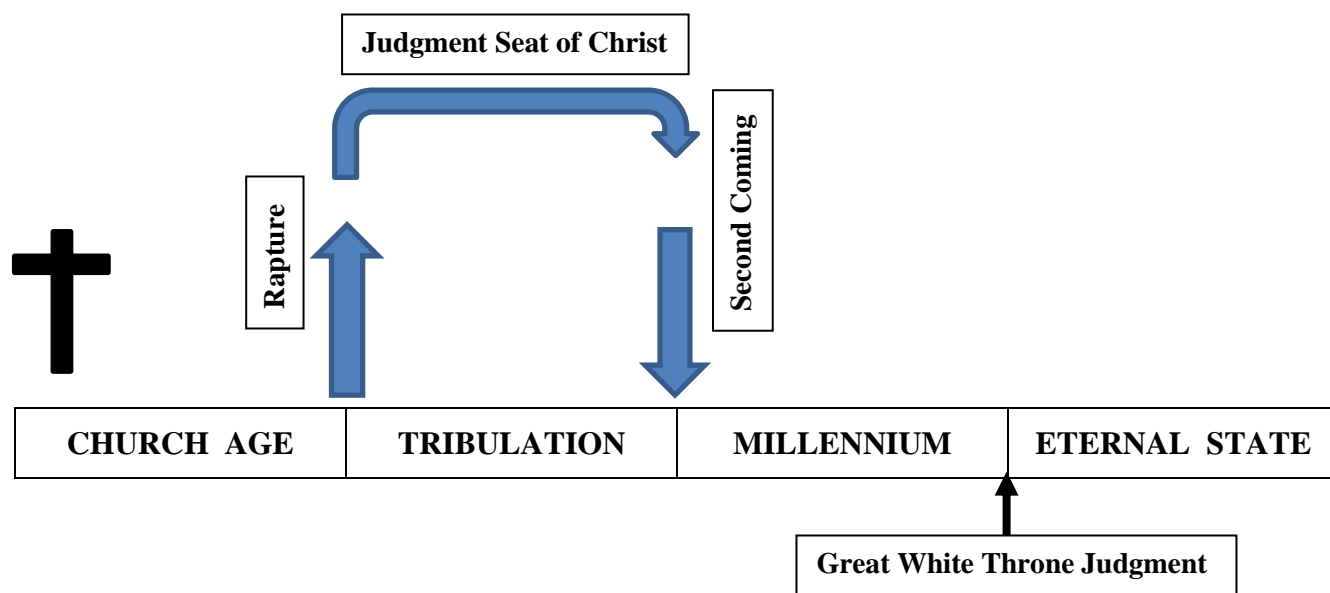


THE RAPTURE, PART 1

If we were to define the idea of biblical prophecy, a very simple definition would be that it is God’s future plan revealed before the events actually happen or come to pass. The theological term for the study of prophecy in what we consider to be the “**last days**” is called Eschatology – a word which comes from the Greek word “*eschatos*” which simply means “last things”. So, Eschatology specifically concentrates on events that occur at the end of God’s redemptive plans for Israel and the church. The following is a very simple diagram of the major eschatological time line of events.



Now, within this timeline of events there are so many events that are occurring. To name just a few of the events, there is the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the revival of the old Roman empire, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, Daniel’s 70th week, a seven year treaty with Israel, the removal of the Restrainer (Holy Spirit), the restoration of Israel, the Judgement Seat of Christ, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the antichrist, the false prophet, the mark of the beast, the abomination of desolation, the two witnesses, the sealing of the 144,000, the battle with Gog and Magog, the battle of Armageddon, the judgment of the sheep and goats, seven seals judgments, seven trumpet judgments, seven bowl judgments, the Great White Throne Judgment, the Lake of Fire, Satan bound for 1000 years, Satan released for short period, creation of new heavens and new earth, the New Jerusalem.

It is important to appreciate that prophecy is much more than God simply knowing what is going to happen in the future, but it is that He actually causes events to happen. Nothing can prevent biblical prophecy being fulfilled just as it has been prophesied. There is not one single event that I just mentioned that will not take place. Once again, nothing can hinder them from happening – no government, no election, no ruler, no nation, no deep state, no global warming, no nuclear holocaust, no antichrist, no demon, no liberal culture – nothing and no one.

There are over 1000 specific prophecies related to Christ and the last days, and nearly one-half of those prophecies have already been fulfilled both **literally and exactly** as the Scriptures indicated they would. Stated another way, **100% of the prophecies related to the first coming of Christ were fulfilled literally**. So, the very literal nature of the fulfillment of already fulfilled prophecy becomes a very

crucial element hermeneutically of how to handle the interpretation of the last days events. In the same way that past prophecies were fulfilled, 100% of the prophecies related to the Second Coming of Christ, to include the rapture of the church, will be fulfilled literally. We will discuss this idea of literal fulfillment in some detail as we migrate through the last days prophecies. Generally, when the Scriptures provide a prophecy, the actual prophecy does not give all of the information that we might want to know and how it all fits into the big picture, but what information it does provide will **always** come to pass **exactly** as prophesied.

Now, in the study of Eschatology what we will find is that prophecy deals with many subjects related to how human history is going to climax in the last days. Without going into any kind of detailed discussion, there are certain principles that we must follow as we proceed to unfold future prophetic events. One of those key elements is that God is sovereign and that He is the One who is directing all of history towards an end that He has purposed. So, the fulfillment of prophetic events is simply the realization of God's sovereign purposes made visible to us. The following is a basic principle that I want you to fully understand so listen carefully. God always tells us what He is going to do before He does it. He does not always give us all of the information about an event, but He does tell us what will happen. For instance, as we begin studying the rapture of the church at the beginning of the Tribulation period, there are only a number of verses related to that event – [1 Thessalonians 4:15-18](#), [1 Corinthians 15:51-53](#), and [John 14:3](#).

What is critical is that we fully realize that God has a very divine purpose for the church age in which we live and He has clearly defined the events leading up to the end of the church age as we know it. Scripture provides us with specific characteristics that exemplify and typify the times in which we live. Many of these characteristics serve as a divine prelude for our understanding of what is known as the “rapture”, the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation, the antichrist, and the Second Coming. One of the most important of the last days events (maybe the most important) was the rebirth of Israel as a nation on May 14, 1948. There is nothing in the history of the world that has ever even come close to matching what God did with Israel. No nation on the planet which had been displaced from its original homeland has ever come back to its homeland after 50 years – not one nation. However, Israel returned to its homeland after 1,878 years of having been fully displaced from it. The regathering of the nation of Israel was prophesied and is necessary for other key biblical prophecies about the final seven years of tribulation as well as the events of [Matthew 24-25](#) to even make sense.

Now, the question that I am sure that every one of you is interested in is very simple – “*Will we as Christians go through the seven years of Tribulation*”. Just with all of the events that are unfolding within our own country, there is tremendous anxiety, fear, and dread of what may happen. People are scared, worried, and very nervous about the days ahead of us. So, whether or not the church, and specifically Christians, will go through the Tribulation is a huge question that we want to answer, and much of the answer depends on the event that we know as the “rapture”. The topic of the rapture will take us a good number of weeks to fully cover. Why? It is because I want to be very complete in teaching on this so that there is no doubt in your mind as to the fact that the church, or those who are legitimately saved, will not go through the seven years of tribulation as described in [Revelation 6-19](#). I want to make sure that we have looked at every Scripture, every passage, and every counter argument to cement into our own minds that God will deliver that generation in which the rapture occurs from the

wrath that He is going to pour out on the entire world. So, relative to the subject of the rapture, there are three main views. So, our task is to try and biblically define which of these three views are correct, and to do so with a high level of confidence in the position that we take.

