



Magnolia Bible Church Men's Group - Prophecy Series

Lesson # 13: Series Wrap-up

Putting what we've learned to work for our walk with Christ!

Thursday, December 8, 2016

This is the *very last* lesson in our Prophecy Series. It is hard to believe that a little over 3 months we started on this “merry adventure” in exploring the wonderful world of prophecy. I am sure you will agree that in one sense the concepts we discussed surrounding prophecy are overwhelming, while on the other hand it is amazing to see all that God has already accomplished through “completed prophecies” and astonishing considering what He will do with unfinished prophecies.

In wrapping things up I thought it would be appropriate to hit some “highlights” from our 13-part series by revisiting some of the more interesting subjects addressed in this series. Listed below are the three subjects we will be reviewing.

- The Prophecy Timeline and Key Events
- The Tribulation Period
- The New Heaven and New Earth

The sections below capture some of the main points we have addressed in previous lessons. However, before leaving you to read through the following pages I want to ask you a question – **how has studying prophecy changed your life? Has it changed your life? Do you feel a greater sense of urgency to live for Jesus and focus on bringing honor to Him with the remaining days you have on this planet?** My hope is that you have a resounding “YES” reply to all of these questions.

God's desire is that when we read the Bible *it changes the way we think and the way we live our lives*. Something is wrong when you and I read God's Word and it does not make a lasting change in our lives. I know we all struggle with sin and having a long-term perspective, no matter where we are on our Christian pilgrimage. Thank you for being part of this series. My prayer is that Jesus becomes very real to all of us. As Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:10,

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Keep on keeping on!

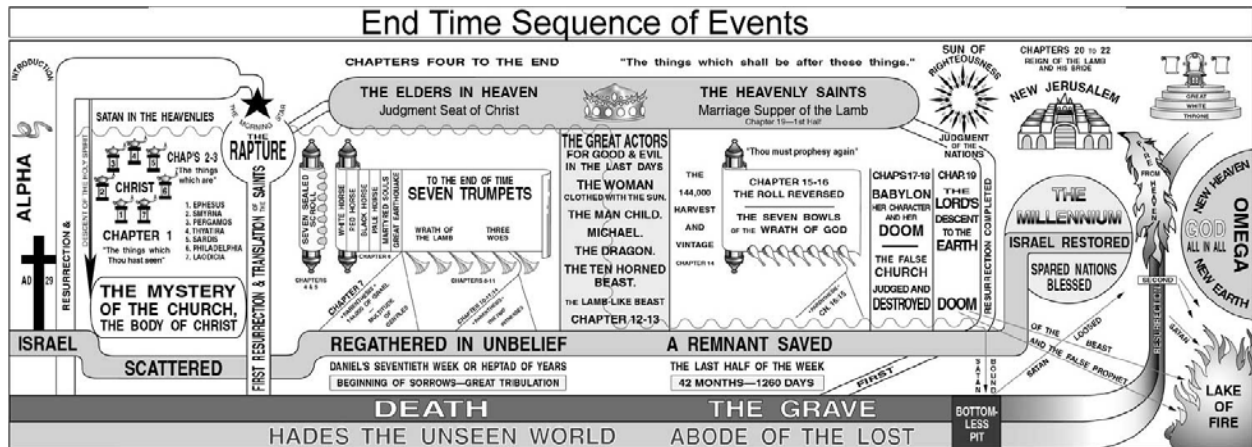
Chris Alexander

The Prophecy Timeline (from Lesson #2)

Like anything dealing with history, studying prophecy requires an understanding of significant events and when they occur. Having a framework related to a timeline helps us better understand the importance of significant events and also what causes differences in opinion regarding Biblical interpretations. Along with the timeline, terminology is also critically important. When we understand what certain words mean, it helps the pieces of the puzzle start to fit together. Listed below are several key terms and concepts that will be used throughout this series. Your goal by the end of this series is to develop an understanding of each term and how they connect to tell a complete story.

- Church Age
- Rapture
- Tribulation Period
- Day of the Lord
- Millennium / Millennial Reign of Christ
- White Throne Judgment

Clarence Larkin (1850–1924) was an American Baptist pastor, Bible teacher, and author whose writings on Dispensationalism had a great impact on conservative Protestant visual culture in the early 20th century. His intricate and influential charts provided readers with a visual strategy for mapping God's action in history and for interpreting complex Biblical prophecies.¹ I have several of his books that contain beautiful illustrations. They are some of my “most prized” books. Copied below is one of his charts presenting many key End Time events.



The Tribulation Period (from Lesson #4)

Needless to say, along with the Rapture and the 1,000-year Period, the Tribulation period is one of the more contested subjects in any prophecy-related discussion. As part of discussing the Tribulation Period, I would like to briefly discuss the Rapture. Among those who believe in the Rapture there are differences of opinion as to when it will occur. Worse yet, there are many within Christendom who do not believe the Rapture will ever occur as they only see Christ's return as a one-time event with His return to the earth (also known as the Second Advent). The traditional position held within the Bible church is that the church is “taken up”, or Raptured, prior to the start of the Tribulation Period; a position known as the pre-tribulation Rapture². **Figure 1** depicts this, along with the other held views on the Rapture.

Comparison of Christian Tribulation Views

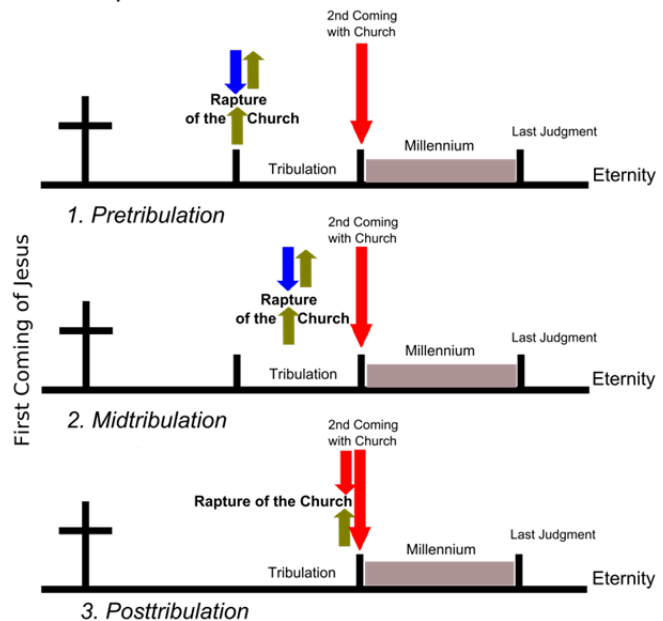


Figure 1: Three views regarding the timing of the Rapture (pre, mid, and post)

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarence_Larkin

² The pre-tribulation Rapture doctrine originated in the eighteenth century, with the Puritan preachers Increase and Cotton Mather, and was then popularized in the 1830s by John Darby. Pre-tribulation rapture theology was popularized extensively in the 1830s by John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren, and further popularized in the United States in the early 20th century by the wide circulation of the Scofield Reference Bible. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapture>).

The start of the Tribulation Period is a covenant made between the Antichrist and the nation of Israel (Daniel 9:24-27). The seven year period that follows this signing is also known as Daniel's 70th Week. Descriptions of the events that occur in the Tribulation Period are detailed by John in Revelation 6- 19.

One might be compelled to ask – what is the purpose of the Tribulation Period? Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum identifies three sound explanations as to why God has planned this future event, as discussed in the following text.³

Reason #1 Gentile Judgment: Before the Lord can personally rule on earth in the Person of Jesus Christ He must first judge the world in order to prepare it for His righteous rule. The first purpose for the Tribulation Period is to put an end of wickedness and wicked ones (Isaiah 13:9; 24:19-20); a punishment in history upon the whole world for its sins against God is in a way similar to that of the global flood during Noah's days (Matthew 24:37-39).

Reason #2 World-Wide Evangelism: The seven-year Tribulation Period will be a time of phenomenal evangelistic outreach. It will be a time unlike any previous period of history as discussed in Revelation 7:1-17. During the first half of the Tribulation Period, God will evangelize the world via the 144,000 Jews and thus fulfill the prophecy found in Matthew 24:14.

Reason #3 Conversion of Israel: One of the most important purposes of the tribulation will be the conversion of Israel. The Tribulation Period will be a time in which God, through evil agencies, prepares Israel for her conversion and acknowledgment of Jesus as their Messiah, resulting in the Second Coming of Christ. The Bible teaches us that God will use tribulation to bring His elect people to faith in Jesus as their Messiah. It appears that God will accomplish this goal by first returning Israel to the land before the Tribulation Period, "I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out (Ezekiel 20:34). The re-gathering before the Tribulation Period is what God has been doing since 1948 with the modern state of Israel.

The New Heaven and New Earth (Lesson #9)

One of the most striking aspects at the end of Revelation is God's remaking of Heaven and Earth, as well as Jerusalem. Provided below is Revelation 21, verses 15 through 21.

¹⁵ The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. ¹⁸ The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰ the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

³ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, (Tustin, CA: 1982).
<https://www.raptureready.com/featured/ice/PurposeForTheTribulation.html>.

As indicated in the **RED** highlighted text above, the dimensions of the new Jerusalem will be 1,500 miles by 1,500 miles. Putting that in context, 1,500 miles is the approximate distance from Houston to Los Angeles, which is shown graphically below overlaid on the map of the United States. The bottom line – *this is going to be one big town!* As Jesus said in John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many mansions."



Questions for Consideration

1. Provide definitions, or descriptions, for the following terms. Feel free to use outside resources and commentaries, or refer to previous lessons. This should be a review for you.
 - Church Age
 - Rapture
 - Tribulation Period
 - Millennium / Millennial Reign of Christ
 - White Throne Judgment
2. Using the line provided below, identify the following events on the timeline. Note that the cross represents Christ's resurrection that ushered in the "Church Age" (some argue it started at Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2).
 - Church Age
 - Rapture
 - Tribulation Period
 - Jesus 2nd Coming
 - Armageddon
 - Thousand Year Reign
 - White Throne Judgment
 - Eternity

