

The Doctrine Of Future Things

Titus 2:13-15

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In Titus 2:13-15, Paul tells Titus, "...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you."

Who doesn't like a thrilling conclusion to a great story. Have you ever watched a movie and been disappointed with the conclusion at the end? Sometimes my wife and I watch a movie, and when it comes to the end, it just stops. We'll look at each other and say, "Is that it? That's the end?! What a dud!" Sometimes I've had entire movies ruined because of the ending. I think I've wasted all that time to come to that conclusion.

But when it comes to God's grand climax in the Bible, you won't be disappointed. Someone said, "History is His story, and it's going somewhere." It starts with Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And it ends with Revelation 22. There will be "a new heaven and a new earth." God is doing a new thing. As Christians, we have a glorious future and hope.

Now the question is, "How will it unfold?" The answer is found in the Bible. In order to understand what the future holds, we must look to the Bible, to God's Word.

I want to give you six future events, in chronological order. Number one on God's prophetic calendar is the rapture of the church. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13, Paul says, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren..."—there are many Christians who are ignorant about this doctrine—"...concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope."

So the first thing we see is the problem of the rapture. Paul is writing to the believers in Thessalonica. He had taught them that the Lord was coming back to take the church home. He taught them what we believe to be the imminent return of Christ for the church in what we call "the rapture." And some of their brothers and sisters in the Lord had died, which in this passage is the word "asleep."

By the way, the word "asleep" is a metaphor for death. And it only refers to Christians, it only refers to the body—the soul doesn't sleep—and it only refers to a short period of time. The resurrection is a great awakening when our bodies are resurrected, and we'll be "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air," and it's also for those who "are alive and remain." So it refers to those Christians who have died or sleep in Jesus, and it's only a temporary state.

Paul doesn't want them to "sorrow as others who have no hope." Titus is referring to the "blessed hope." But if you don't know Jesus Christ, and you don't have the hope in Christ, then you have no hope.

I can't imagine what it would be like to bury a loved one without the hope of seeing them again in heaven. Outside of Christ, there is no hope that we would ever again see or be reunited with our loved ones who have died. So Paul doesn't want them to "sorrow as others who have no hope."

Notice in this verse the pillars of the rapture, verses 14-15. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep..."—or "died"—"...in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep."

The Thessalonians were worried that their loved ones who had died would miss out and be at a disadvantage over those who were alive when the Lord returns in the rapture. But Paul said not to worry about that. If they believed that Jesus died on the Cross for our sins, "that Jesus died and rose again," then "God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus," verse 14. Paul was telling them this "by the word of the Lord," so they didn't have to worry. "We who are alive and remain...will by no means precede those who are asleep."

There are three pillars of the doctrine of the rapture in verses 14 and 15: in verse 14, the Crucifixion of Christ and the Resurrection of Christ; and in verse 15, the revelation of God's Word. So the Scripture reveals this doctrine called "the rapture."

So you have the problem of the rapture, verse 13; the pillars, verses 14-15; and now you have the plan, in verses 16-18. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God." So the first thing that happens is that Jesus comes back in the clouds. He doesn't come down to the earth, so this is not the Second Coming. He won't send anyone else; He'll come.

The second thing that happens is the resurrection of the dead. "And the dead in Christ will rise first." A lot of people are perplexed by this. They ask, "How are they going to rise first if they already went to the Lord? How then are they risen now?" The resurrection in this verse is only referring to their physical bodies. The moment a Christian dies, "To be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord." But our bodies are awaiting the resurrection at the rapture of the church.

The first Resurrection was of Jesus Christ; He's our prototype. Then there is the rapture, when we will be resurrected. And the saints of the Old Testament will be resurrected at the end of the tribulation. So the dead in Christ will be resurrected; their bodies will be reunited with their spirits.

Verse 17, "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up..."—this is the rapture of the living saints—"...together with them..."—that is, "those who have been resurrected"—"...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." There will be a reunion. "And thus we shall always be with the Lord." Paul is teaching the rapture here.

Some people say that the rapture is not in the Bible. But here it is: the words "caught up" in the

Greek is the word “harpodzo.” In the Latin Vulgate translation, it would render that “rapturous.” That’s where we get our word “rapture.” The word simply means “caught up” or “snatched up.”

So there will be the return of Christ, there will be a resurrection of the dead in Christ, there will be the rapture of the living in Christ and then there is a reunion with those who have died and gone before together with Christ in the cloud.

And notice how Paul ends this, verse 18: “Therefore comfort one another with these words.” The rapture is a comfort; we won’t be going through the tribulation, I believe. We have the expectation and hope that Christ will come to take us up to heaven.

The rapture is not the same event as the Second Coming. The Second Coming happens at least seven years after the rapture. The Second Coming happens when Christ comes with the church; the rapture is Christ coming for the church. So the church is first “caught up...to meet the Lord in the air,” and then we come back with Him in the Second Coming.

The rapture is a New Testament mystery, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. This is another classic passage on the rapture. Paul says, “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” Then he goes on to say, “For this corruptible...”—referring to our bodies—“...must put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’”

So this is a mystery. And because it’s a mystery, the rapture is not taught or seen or appears in the Old Testament. A mystery is something we cannot know unless God reveals it to us. And He has revealed it, but He revealed it to Paul in the epistles. Jesus mentions it also in John 14 when He said, “I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

So the classic passages on the rapture are 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15 and John 14.

The rapture will only involve the church, it doesn’t involve the Old Testament saints, it doesn’t involve anyone outside of Christ and the rapture is imminent. It could happen at any time. Nothing must happen before the rapture of the church.

The Old Testament period of Daniel’s 70-week prophecy, mentioned in Daniel 9:24-27, starts in Nehemiah 2:7-8, where letters of command are given to authorize the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The 70-sevens or 70, seven-year periods total 490 years. There is a period of time described in the prophecy, which starts in Nehemiah 2 and goes to the coming of Messiah, where it says that “Messiah shall be cut off...”—which is the Cross—“...but not for Himself,” for the people. That period of time is 483 years to date, so that part of the prophecy has been fulfilled. There are only seven years left on the original 490 years.

This prophecy of Daniel contains the “ABCs” of Bible prophecy. You can’t really understand prophecy unless you understand Daniel’s prophecy. This prophecy also refers to the nation of

Israel, the coming of Messiah, God's purpose and plan for Israel and the culmination of God's purpose and plan for all the world. And it includes the last seven-year period known as "the tribulation." It goes up to the Second Coming. But this part of the prophecy hasn't happened yet. So we are still in the period called "the church age," which is a parenthesis in God's purpose and plan.

I like to think of it like this: God has a giant stop watch. In 445 BC when King Artaxerxes, in Nehemiah 2, gave the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, God started His stop watch. Then it would be 490 years before Christ would come again to establish His kingdom. But when Jesus was crucified, God stopped His watch, and we have a pause in what I like to think of as a parenthesis—the church age, which has existed now for over 2,000 years. Jew and Gentile all becoming one. The church started on the day of Pentecost and will end at the rapture of the church. Then we will see the last seven-year period unfold, known as "the time of Jacob's trouble" or the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy.

I don't believe the church goes through the tribulation. This is where Christians can disagree. I don't think it's Scriptural or Biblical that the church will go through the tribulation. Let me give you five reasons why I think the church will not go through the tribulation.

Number one is Paul's reasons, in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Paul had taught them the Lord was coming at any minute to rapture them. They were thinking their loved ones who died will miss the rapture. Rather, if Paul had taught them they were going through the tribulation, why would they be upset that their loved ones had died and were with the Lord? They wouldn't have been upset. So it is consistent with the purpose for which he wrote 1 Thessalonians 4; that he is comforting their hearts by saying, "I do not want you to be ignorant," that they would not be at a disadvantage. If they thought they were going through the tribulation, they wouldn't be upset that their loved ones had died, because they would miss that terrible "day of the Lord" and gone to be with the Lord before the tribulation.

Number two, the doctrine of imminency is lost if you believe the church is raptured in the middle of the tribulation or at the end of the tribulation. You would be looking for the Antichrist, for the tribulation, for signs and wonders instead of looking for the coming of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches in the New Testament that we, as Christians, are to be looking for and anticipating the coming again of Jesus Christ. We might see the signs of the tribulation and know that the coming is near, but no one knows the day or the hour. The doctrine of imminency is lost.

Number three, Christians are not appointed to wrath, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. Verses 4-5 say, "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness." God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation.

Number four is the promise to the church in Philadelphia, in Revelation 3:10. In it is a direct promise that they will not go through the day of testing or trial known as the tribulation. "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial

which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

Number five, the church is not seen on earth in Revelation 6-18. In Revelation 6, when the Antichrist comes on the scene, the tribulation starts, and he makes a covenant with Israel for one week, or seven years, the church is already in heaven. In Revelation 1, John sees a vision of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 2-3, he is writing the seven letters to the seven churches there on earth. In Revelation 4-5, the church is in heaven. Revelation 4:1 opens with John saying, “I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, ‘Come up here.’” I believe that’s the rapture recorded for us in the book of Revelation. Then the tribulation starts in chapter 6 and runs to chapters 18 and 19 with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

So the chronological order of Revelation would indicate that the church does not go through the tribulation. The church is never seen or mentioned or addressed in Revelation 6-18. How important that is. The number one thing that happens is that the church is raptured or “caught up...to meet the Lord in the air.”

Another point: I don’t believe the rapture is only for “super saints.” I believe it is for the saints, the saved. If you are born again, if you are a Christian, you will be raptured. Some people teach a “partial rapture,” that you have to be “really spiritual” to get raptured. That would be a frightening thought. How spiritual is “really spiritual” to get raptured? If you’ve been born again, you will be “caught up...to meet the Lord in the air.” But that doesn’t mean that you should be carnal or sinful; you should be living holy lives.

One of the reasons why I believe the imminency of Christ is important is that John says, “Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” So you’ll be living a pure life, you’ll be motivated to “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” You’re going to be living a holy life. It’s so very important.

The second, sequential future event is the emergence of the Antichrist. The Bible indicates that the Antichrist will be revealed, starting at 2 Thessalonians 2:1. After the church is removed in the rapture, Satan will reveal “the man of sin...the son of perdition,” the Antichrist. He is known by different names. The term “Antichrist” means that he is against Christ. He comes as a “pseudo-Christ,” in place of Christ.

Verse 1 says, “Brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled...”—something had upset them—“...either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ...”—or “the day of the Lord,” which is a title for the tribulation period—“...had come.”

What had happened here is that somebody had prophesied by the so-called “spirit”; they had supposedly received a word from the Lord. Somebody had falsified a letter saying that they were in the tribulation and signed Paul’s name to it. So the Thessalonians were upset. Why

would they be upset? Because evidently Paul had told them the opposite.

Paul had taught them the Lord would rapture them before the tribulation. The reason they were upset was because they were in danger of being deceived, thinking that they were in the tribulation period, which is the phrase “the day of the Lord.” It is a term or title for the tribulation period. Some believe it spans the entire seven years and the millennial kingdom age. So they thought they were actually in the tribulation, so they were shaken and upset.

Notice verse 3: “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day...”—that is, “the day of the Lord” or “the tribulation”—“...will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.” So these two things have to happen before the tribulation comes. “The falling away,” which is the apostasy, has to happen. Some believe this is a reference to the rapture of the church, or a falling away of the church in apostasy. And “The man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,” which is a reference to the Antichrist.

Let me give you some verses that describe this Antichrist: Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, which is Christ’s Olivet Discourse, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 and Revelation 13. In Revelation 13, he is called “the beast,” who deceives the world by the power he gets from Satan, and the Antichrist has a companion called “the false prophet.” So the Antichrist is found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Let me give you a survey of the Antichrist. Number one, he comes to power through the revived Roman Empire, Daniel 7:3-8. This revived Roman Empire occurs after the rapture. The Antichrist then takes over the whole world. The world becomes unified. So globalism today flows right into the Antichrist coming and ruling the world, a one-world government.

Number two, the Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel for seven years, Daniel 9:27. In the 70-week prophecy, Daniel mentions that the Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel for one, 7-year period, which is the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy. That’s the 7-year period of the tribulation.

But the Antichrist brakes the covenant after three-and-a-half years. In the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, which is part of the covenant he makes with Israel, the Antichrist sets up an image of himself. He commands everyone to worship the image of this beast. Then he institutes economic control; you have to have a mark on your right hand or on your forehead to be able to buy or sell.

It doesn’t sound too far fetch even today. It will be a cashless society. The world becomes one, and there is no cash anymore. You just have a number on your hand or forehead, which can be lasered. The number is “the number of a man: his number is 666.” So this is the Antichrist’s control of the whole world.

The Antichrist then breaks the covenant with Israel and commits “the abomination of desolation.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4-5 describes it. “...who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing

himself that he is God.” So this “man of sin...the son of perdition” is now revealed or unveiled. This “abomination of desolation” is also spoken of in Daniel 9:27. And Jesus mentions it in Matthew 24:15. So this is when he erects his image in the temple and commands everyone to worship him.

And the Antichrist is empowered by Satan, 2 Thessalonians 2:9. “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.” The Antichrist is Satan’s man-of-the-hour. And in verse 10, he deceives many. “...and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

Then he comes to his end, verse 8. “The Lord will consume [him] with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” So at the end of the tribulation, we have the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He will then destroy the Antichrist, “the false prophet” and throw them into “the bottomless pit” for 1,000 years. How marvelous that will be! There will be the coming of the Antichrist, but his end will be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Number three on the list of sequential events that will happen is the tribulation period. The tribulation is taught in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament. It’s called “the day of the Lord,” in Isaiah 13:6, 9 and in Joel 1:15. But look at Matthew 24:21-22. Jesus speaking here says, “There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved, but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” So the worst time in human history—think about that—will be during “the great tribulation.” This is the 70th week of Daniel’s 70, seven-year weeks.

Now what is the purpose of “the great tribulation”? First, its purpose is to punish the sinful, Christ-rejecting world and, second, to prepare Israel for the Second Coming of Messiah. The tribulation in Jeremiah 30:7 is called “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”

The source of the tribulation is God. Isaiah 24:1 says, “The Lord makes the earth empty.” Joel 1:15 says that “It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.” Revelation 14:7 says, “The hour of His judgement has come,” and verse 10 says that it is “the wine of the wrath of God.” So the source of the tribulation is the very wrath of God. It comes from God Himself.

But this time period is not for the church. “God did not appoint us to wrath but to obtain salvation,” 1 Thessalonians 5:9. In Revelation 6-19, as I said, the church is not found on earth experiencing this wrath. The tribulation ends with the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 19:17-21, which is the darkest hour in human history.

The fourth sequential, future event is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. I have great joy when I read that Jesus Christ is coming back. And it’s always darkest before the dawn. You think the world is getting dark? Well, it’s going to get even darker.

The church is called “the light of the world,” and “the salt of the earth,” in Matthew 5:13 and 14.

Can you imagine what the United States would be like when in a moment, every born-again Christian disappears? The flood gates of sin, corruption and wickedness would be opened. I shudder to think of it. All those who truly know Christ are gone, and the sin flood gates are opened and all the iniquity comes. That's why the Antichrist is called "the son of perdition." He is Satanically empowered and deceives people by his lies. So it's going to get darker and darker until the dawning of a new day.

The Jewish day started a sundown. Our day starts at sunrise. When the Jewish day started at sundown, it would get darker and darker, and it ended with the bright, shining coming of the sun. That is what is conveyed with the coming of Christ. The world will get darker and darker until the coming of the new age, the dawn of Christ coming back and establishing His kingdom on earth. So the Second Coming is a major theme in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

At the end of the tribulation is the coming of Jesus Christ, when there will be the battle of Armageddon, in Revelation 19:11-16. I want to read this narrative in Revelation of when Christ returns. This doctrine of the Second Coming is all through the Old Testament. It's not the rapture. And it's all through the New Testament. It's the grand finale of all God's purpose and plan.

John said, "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse." In Revelation 6, the Antichrist came on a white horse—he's a false Christ. "And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns." The word for crowns here is "diadems," or "kingly crowns." "He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God." John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the word."

Verse 14, "And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." I believe these armies coming with Christ is the church, the bride of Christ. We will be coming back with Him.

Verse 15, "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." There are kings, but He is the "King of kings." There are lords, but He is the "Lord of lords."

Some say that the phrase "the Second Coming" is not in the Bible. That's true. And the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible either. But these doctrines are taught in the Scriptures. In Hebrews 9:28, it says, "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." In Matthew 24:29-30, Jesus said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Jesus says that the Second Coming is immediately after the tribulation. So Jesus is coming back at the end of the time of tribulation.

When Jesus was in Jerusalem after His Resurrection, He was on the Mount of Olives with His disciples and was then ascended back into heaven. Acts 1:9 and 11 say, "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Then an angel showed up and asked the disciples, "Why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

So the same Jesus who went up to heaven is going to come back from heaven and will come in the same manner in which He went. His coming will be visible—they saw Him taken up; it will be glorious—God "received Him out of their sight"; it will be personal—the "same Jesus"; and it will be literal—"in like manner."

God shows up on planet earth—again. Think about that. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be the greatest manifestation of God on earth. When Jesus came the first time, He was veiled in flesh, He was a little baby born in a manger in Bethlehem, He was a carpenter in Nazareth, He had "no beauty that we should desire Him," He was humble and He was meek. On Palm Sunday, He came riding on a little donkey.

But when He comes back, what a contrast! He's coming back as "King of kings and Lord of lords." He's coming back not to atone for sin; He's coming back to judge for sin. So the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be the greatest event in human history.

The fifth sequential event that will happen in the future is the millennium. The Second Coming will flow into the millennium. We have the church age ending with the rapture of the church; the coming of the Antichrist; the seven-year covenant or the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy, the seven years of tribulation; the Second Coming of Jesus Christ; and when the King comes back, we have the kingdom on earth.

The Lord's prayer says, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." That will be the millennium, when all the prayers of all the saints throughout all the ages are answered. He is coming back to set up His kingdom on earth. We will see the merging of heaven and earth in the eternal state. But first we have this 1,000-year period of the millennium. I call it "the kingdom age."

Now there are differences of opinion by Christians as to whether the Second Coming is before the millennium—this is what I believe, and it's called "premillennialism"—or whether it is at the end of the millennium—it's called "postmillennialism." They believe that the church, rather than Christ, is bringing in the kingdom. Good luck on that! And there is another view called "a-millennialism." That means there is no literal millennialism; we're in the millennialism right now. And these other views are becoming more popular: postmillennialism and a-millennialism.

But if you take a literal, non-spiritualized interpretation to Bible prophecy, the plain meaning of Scripture, which you should take—that God has to keep His promises to Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant, to David in the Davidic covenant—then we are not in the millennium. It is yet future; you can't have the kingdom without the King coming again.

In Revelation 20:1, John says, "I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." In chapter 19, Jesus had already come back in the Second Coming. He had put an end to war in the battle of Armageddon. He had destroyed the Antichrist and the false prophet. The "bottomless pit" is "their abyss" or "the abussos."

Verse 2, "He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more..."—which he has been doing now for quite some time—"...till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while."

I don't have time to go into why he was released. You say, "Jesus, you had him bound! Why did You let him out?!" But it's interesting that those who believe we're in the millennium right now spiritualized the text to somehow say that Satan is bound during the millennium. I don't know how that works. If he's in chains right now, he must have a very long chain, because he's wreaking a lot of havoc.

But think about the 1,000 years with no devil! That will be grand! He'll be bound for 1,000 years. But people born during this time will be allowed to be tempted by the devil at the end for a short season, and then there will be the wrap-up as Satan himself will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...forever and ever." Revelation 20:10.

Again, the doctrine of the millennium is found in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We see Christ coming as premillennial; we can't have the kingdom without the King. And when Jesus comes back, He destroys the Antichrist and the false prophet, and He puts an end to war—no more war. The Bible says in Isaiah 2:4, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." Satan shall be bound.

Then Jesus the King will sit on the throne of David. David had been promised that his seed, who is Messiah, will sit on David's throne forever and ever, Jeremiah 33:17. Jesus will reverse the curse, Isaiah 11:6-7, which says, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." And He will judge all the unsaved dead from His great white throne. At the end of the millennium, is the great white throne judgment, and is the answer to our prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The sixth, sequential, future event is called "the new heaven and the new earth." It is basically

what we call “heaven” or “the eternal state.” It comes after the 1,000-year reign, in Revelation 21:1-8. “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” I’m a little bit bummed out by that, because I love the ocean. But think about the option: you’re either in heaven or hell. And there’s no ocean in hell anyway. Heaven will have wonders, glories and splendors unimaginable.

2 Peter 3 says that God will renovate the earth by fire. He did it once before by the flood; He’ll do it again by fire. So there will be “a new heaven and a new earth.”

Continuing with verse 2, “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” That means it’s beautiful. Brides are always beautiful; I’ve never seen an ugly bride. They’re ready to go. Hebrews 11:10 says that Abraham “waited for the city...whose builder and maker is God.”

I was reading an article the other day about the 10 best cities in California to live in. I thought, This should be interesting. Menifee was not on the list. But they had Los Angeles and San Francisco and San Diego. I thought, Are you serious?! But it’s getting worse.

But I’m looking “for the city...whose builder and maker is God.” That is the one and only best place to spend your eternal destiny: the “New Jerusalem,” where heaven and earth are merged together. It’s like a bride.

Continuing with verse 3: “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’” Praise God!

Verse 5, “Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’” It’s almost like John had to have this to convince him that this is really going to happen.

Continuing with verse 6, “And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.’” This is a reference to Christians. We are overcomers. “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

That was a grand journey; we covered a lot.

How does it end? With “a heaven and a new earth.” So my question is, “Are you looking ‘for the city...whose builder and maker is God’?”

As a Christian, the Bible teaches us that this world is not our home. We are strangers and

pilgrims here. We're sojourners. When the outlook is bad, as a Christian, we have the uplook. We should be "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."