

“and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

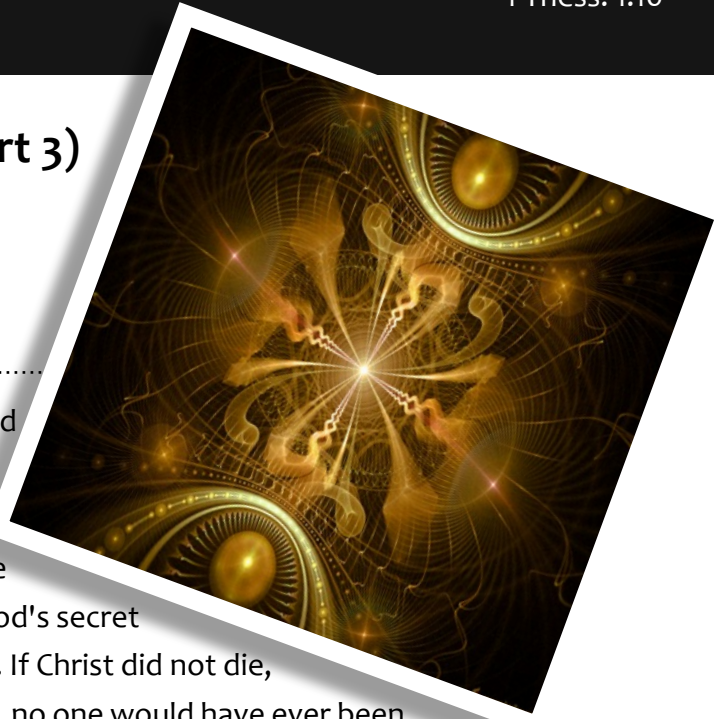
1 Thess. 1:10

Time Travelling with God (Part 3)

Theme: Exploring the future

Review of Lesson 9

The key that unlocks our understanding of the Bible is that God devised a secret plan before He created the world. He did not keep this secret because it would be fun to surprise us, but because if revealed before the right time, there would have been disastrous results. Had Satan and world rulers known God's secret plan (our Age of Grace), they would not have crucified Christ. If Christ did not die, millions/billions of people would not have been saved (in fact, no one would have ever been saved). Christ's death and all that is accomplished in our Age (over 2000 years long) is the blow that has destroyed Satan. So the eternal battle of the ages, between God and Satan, was won by God because He had a top secret plan that totally fooled Satan.



Bible Truth

We can read about time past, now, and time future in the Bible. Based upon past fulfillment of prophecies of the Bible, we can be sure any future prophecies will be equally true and accurate.

Time Travel to the Future

As noted in lessons eight and nine, Daniel's prophecy of 70 weeks (490 years) was all accurately completed in time past, except for one week (seven years). The last week of his prophecy has not occurred because there was an interrupting event between the 69th and 70th week. That event is our Age of Grace during which former prophecies are put on hold until our Age ends. This lesson will look into the future to learn more of what the Bible has to say about that last week

of Daniel. Thus, we can get a glimpse of the future and know what will happen in the end times.

Daniel's prophecy stopped at the end of 69 weeks, on Palm Sunday, because that is when Jesus was hailed as King; after that, things went downhill rapidly leading to Christ's crucifixion. Even after His death God gave Israel chances to repent, but that never occurred. So God had to temporarily set Israel aside and introduce a new age--a mystery (secret) age. (A "Biblical Timeline" is provided at the end of this lesson to help the reader see how this all fits together.)

Daniel's 70th week is interesting because we get to see the future from an indisputable source. That week is very frightening because it basically concerns itself

with the Tribulation which seems to involve the entire world. This lesson will consider prophetic fulfillment to be literal (i.e. it will take place on the earth and the events will be very real). Since the first 69 weeks were completed in this manner, there is every reason to believe the 70th week will be.

Literalism is often misunderstood. Certainly the Bible is full of figurative language (metaphors, parables, visions, etc.). The prophecies of the 70th week use incredibly figurative language to portray in word pictures the real events of the future. Based upon past fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy we know the seven future years will be accurate, literal (real life), and exact in the number of days (not one day more or less). This seven year period is called the Tribulation.

Discuss: Read Psalm 6:6, an example of figurative language in which a bed is swimming in tears. This figurative language powerfully portrays the literal, real tears of David during the nighttime.

After the Rapture, the Tribulation will begin when a seemingly very nice ruler signs a peace treaty with Israel (Dan. 9:27). This sure seems good; peace at last. This ruler will be the peace-keeper the world has always wanted. However, he is really a wolf in sheep's clothing. He is called the Beast (Rev. 13:1) and the Antichrist (1 Jn. 2:18). He is called the Beast because he acts like a beast devouring (figurative for destroying) anyone that trusts in Christ, especially those in Israel. He is opposed to Christ, so he is called the Antichrist. He will be the head of ten nations joined together against Israel and God, but his true nature is not revealed at first (Dan. 7:24).

During the first half of the Tribulation, things on earth will be troublesome (Matt. 24:4-8), as Jesus taught. In the middle of the Tribulation, it seems the Beast is

wounded to death (Rev. 13:3), but the wound is healed and the world marvels. Then the Beast is empowered by Satan (Rev. 13:4) and nothing will seem beyond his power. At that time, his true nature will be revealed when he stands in the Temple and claims to be God demanding to be worshiped. He will require that all people take the mark of the Beast on their foreheads or hands. If a person does not have that mark, they cannot buy or sell, even food; they will most likely die (Rev. 13:16-17). Those who do take the mark are not saved but doomed (Rev. 14:11). The last half of the Tribulation is called the Great Tribulation because things will really get bad then (Matt. 24:21).

The Great Tribulation will be a time of tremendous persecution in Israel (probably for all believers) (Matt. 24:9-12); usually they will die for their faith. This will be such a terrible time that friends and relatives will betray one another if that will help them stay alive. So when Israel sees the "abomination of desolations" (the Beast) stand in the holy place (Temple) (Dan. 9:27), they must flee quickly to the mountains (Matt. 24:15-21) where God will feed and protect them for 1260 days (they will not take the mark of the Beast, but God will feed them).

After the Tribulation ends, there will be a sign of Christ's return in the heavens. **"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, ..."** (Matt. 24:29-30a). This language is figurative; we know from other Scripture that the sun, moon, and stars will still exist. The language seems to portray the results of tremendous warfare; the results of that warfare obscure the heavenly bodies. In this way, His coming is announced with astronomical disturbances which are very clear to all. The time

period around His coming is referred to as the Day of the Lord; a terrible day in which God's wrath is poured out upon those who despise Him. God's Age of Grace will be over; that will be the time of God's wrath (Zeph. 1:15). If you think the Tribulation and Great Tribulation will be bad, this time will be even worse. The Day of the Lord is not one day long, but of unspecified length (Rev. 6:15-17, 19:11-19; Isa. 2:11-12; Joel 2:30-32; Zech. 12:8-9). In this Day, the Lord will destroy the armies of the earth which will be gathered together to fight against Him; the battle is called the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

Figurative Language Interpreted

Now that we have an overview of what will happen, we will look at some verses to see how figurative language is used. Please read Rev. 12:1-6. The woman under consideration is the nation of Israel. This woman is clothed with the sun and has on her head a garland of twelve stars (the twelve stars are a reference to the 12 tribes of Israel). She is pregnant and cries in labor giving birth. It is generally held that this was in time past. Israel is viewed as the mother of Christ, that is, Jesus came out of Israel. A great fiery dragon is right there. This dragon is Satan, who tried to destroy Jesus right from His birth (recall at the time of Christ's birth, Herod, under Satan's influence, had all males under the age of two killed in order to kill Jesus).

As noted, Satan will indwell a powerful ruler called the Antichrist. Revelation 12:1-6 speaks of a dragon (Satan) who uses the Antichrist to carry out his plans. The Antichrist is often referred to as a beast having seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 13:1). The seven heads seem to refer to seven past world empires that were set against God and Israel (empires like the Babylonian, Median-Persian, Grecian, and Roman). The 10 horns refer to the 10 kings/nations of the future

that hate God and are part of the Antichrist's empire. The reference to Satan casting a third of the stars of heaven to the earth is most likely a reference to the remote past when Satan caused one-third of the angels to rebel with him when he revolted; they were all cast to the earth.

In time past, this dragon (Satan) stood before the woman (Israel) who was ready to give birth in order to devour her Child as soon as He was born (Jesus' birth). She bore a male Child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron (clear reference to Jesus, Psa. 2:9). Her Child was caught up to God and His throne (Christ's ascension). This is where the break between the 69th and 70th week occurs; this break in prophecy is where we are today. That is, between the ascension of Christ and Daniel's 70th week. Next, in this prophesy, the woman flees into the wilderness where she has a place prepared for her and is fed by God for 1260 days. This is as figurative as you can get; yet when these verses are compared to the rest of the Scripture the interpretation is very straight forward, i.e., literal and real.

Discuss: Is the Tribulation part of God's plan or is the Bible merely predicting what will happen? (Answer to follow.)

The Purpose of the Tribulation

The book of Revelation confirms the Tribulation's length by stating that the last half of the Tribulation will be 1260 days. Thus, the whole Tribulation is twice that (2520 days); exactly equal to seven prophetic years (Rev. 11:3, 12:6). In the middle of the Tribulation, Israel must flee into the wilderness for protection. **"Then the woman (Israel) fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days** (Rev. 12:6, parenthesis added). The

Tribulation is a special time of severe suffering and trial on Earth. Why would God allow such a time? The answer is that it has been specifically designed by God to accomplish the "impossible."

What is the impossible thing the last seven years (Tribulation) of Daniel's prophecy will achieve? The Tribulation is called a furnace of affliction which will purify a polluted people. Just as silver and gold are refined and tested by melting them in fire to drive off the impurities and to purify them, so Israel has to be purified. **"I will ... refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested ... And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God' "** (Zech.13:9). The Tribulation is the only way to do it; it is a time of severe trial and suffering that will finally draw Israel to the Lord. We do not wish any of this for Israel, but we know God knows best.

When they finally do believe and when He comes again, one will say to Him, " **'...What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends' "** (Zech. 13:6b). This shows how shocked they will be when they realize what they did to their own Messiah--those wounds were put there by them. What is impossible is that Israel (an unbelieving,

polluted, sinful people) will be purified and restored to a "new" condition. Israel is now an adulterous former wife; she will be restored to the condition of a pure virgin. This is impossible in human terms, but not with God. This new and restored Israel will then be worthy to become His bride--a pure virgin (Rev. 19:7).

Discussion: Can God use the terrible events in your life for good (Rom. 5:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:12)?

Help for Those in the Tribulation

In Lesson 4, *The Word of God--New Testament*, the books of the New Testament were discussed including their placement (location) in the Bible. The location of the books of Hebrews through Revelation come after Paul's books (Romans through Philemon). Most likely they are exactly where they should be in the Bible because they provide special help for those living after the Rapture. These books are very profitable for us to read and study. However, they seem to have a very special message for those in the future that have to come to grips with who Christ was/is and what He accomplished when He came the first time. The believers of that time need to know what lies ahead for them, since they must suffer through those final years.

Life Applications

This final lesson on *Time Traveling with God* provides some interesting applications.

1. Future: God has revealed what will happen on the world scene in the future; it is not pretty. After our Age ends, there will be frightening times upon the earth including the Tribulation and the terrible Day of the Lord. While our Age continues, there may be good and wonderful times, but after our Age ends, so does all that.

2. Deliverance: Those who trust in Jesus Christ in this Age will be taken to Heaven (in the Rapture) before the terrible times begin. The Rapture is the believer's deliverance from the wrath to come. Once our Age of Grace ends, the prophetic plan reveals there will be a time of great wrath with suffering, trials, and tribulation.

3. Israel: As we approach the last days, it is important to realize God is not "done" with Israel. Israel was temporarily set aside during the Age of Grace, but once our Age ends, God will continue with His chosen nation. God has a special plan to break the stubborn heart and unbelief of those in Israel. The terrible events of the future will be what bring Israel to her knees in faith. She will be converted and become the bride of Christ (a pure virgin). For the prophetic plan to take place, the people of Israel must exist, have a homeland, and rebuild the Temple.

4. Peace: As we approach the end of our Age, things will start going poorly in the world (2 Tim. 3:1-5). After the Rapture, peace will be taken from the earth. There is a day coming in which a very charismatic leader will sign a treaty with Israel only to be revealed

as the grand deceiver. The believer today will not see this, but we should be skeptical of those leaders who proclaim they will bring peace by nature of their own power (versus relying on the Lord).

5. Where is the USA: The Bible mentions many of the nations involved in the final days. They are in the Middle East and from the North, South, and even the East of Israel; but there are no references to a great power(s) from the West (North America, South America) or Australia. It may be that these nations (including the USA) will at that time be second or third world nations. It may be, and no one knows, that the Rapture will take so many believers that these nations become unimportant in world affairs, or they may become part of the Antichrist's empire. Finally, it is possible that these nations will still be world powers and will participate in the final days, but are not named since no one knew these nations existed when the Bible was written.

6. What are the 10 nations: The Antichrist will head up an empire of 10 nations (joined for a purpose). Fulfilled prophecies indicate all of the previous prophesied empires were somewhat centered around Israel. The same is most likely true in the future; so it seems the 10 nations will come primarily from the Middle East (perhaps some from northern Africa and southeastern Europe).

7. Who is the Beast/Antichrist: No one knows. When a great ruler signs a peace treaty with Israel, that will be a clue; people will clearly know when he goes into the Temple and claims to be God.

Take 2 Heart

Summary

The 70th week of Daniel will be exactly seven years long and fulfilled in the future. That week is called the Tribulation because it will be a very difficult time on the Earth. The Tribulation begins when a powerful ruler signs a peace treaty with Israel. This ruler is called the Beast (because he acts like one) and the Antichrist (because he is opposed to Christ). The first half of the Tribulation will be bad enough, but in the middle of the Tribulation the true nature of the Antichrist will be revealed when he goes into the Temple and claims to be God demanding to be worshiped. Anyone who will not take the mark of the Beast will be persecuted and/or killed. The Lord will announce His Second Coming after the Tribulation with astronomical disturbances which are very clear to all. The time period around the Second Coming is referred to as the Day of the Lord. The Age of Grace will be over; then God's wrath will be seen. This all is designed by God to accomplish the impossible--that is to bring Israel back to Him in true faith.

Gospel

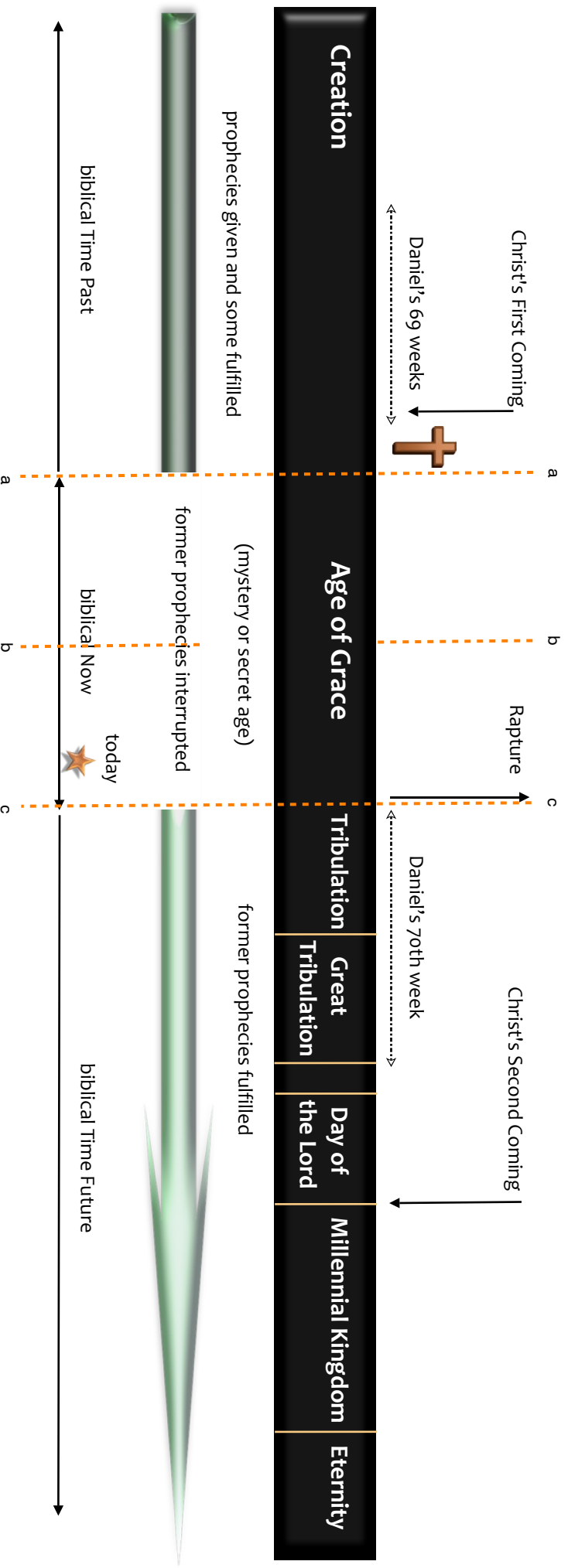
The believer in our Age of Grace will be delivered from these terrible times to come by the Rapture "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thes. 1:10). Faith in Jesus Christ assures us of a heavenly home and deliverance from the coming wrath. If you want a new start in life, you can be made new and restored to a pure condition (spiritually) by faith in Him.

Encouragement

Each teen that trusts in Christ deserves a pat on the back. It is not easy in today's world to be a believer, but think of how incredibly hard it will be after the Rapture. Those who do trust in Christ have the assurance they will never be forgotten or experience more than they are capable of handling. They can be confident that God is always with them and will take them home before the dreaded last days come.

A Biblical Timeline

An Overview of the Age of Grace and Coming Events



Notes:

1. In this timeline, time begins on the left and proceeds to the right. Most Old Testament events are not shown.
2. The events shown are not to scale. The intent is to show when different biblical events occur. ★ marks the presumed location of today on the timeline.
3. The Great Tribulation is the last half of the seven-year Tribulation.
4. The Rapture marks the end of the Age of Grace after which the Tribulation begins.
5. This page requires two folds; when folded correctly, the Age of Grace disappears. This enables the reader to see what former believers knew (before the secret Age of Grace was revealed), Eph. 3:1-11. By making the Age of Grace disappear, it is easy to see how former prophecies flowed in time but are now interrupted by the Age of Grace.

How to fold this page: Place the page on a flat surface with the writing upward (as if you were reading it). Make a fold on line b-b by bringing the right hand side of the page to the left. Then part of the page will be right side up and part with the back side up. Next, make a fold along line c-c by taking the part that is back side up and folding it to the right on c-c, the entire page will then have the writing up. If done correctly, **line a-a and c-c will lie on top of each other and the Age of Grace will not be seen (this is how those in previous ages saw the biblical events).**