

LESSON 12

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME AND ITS END - CREATION, CHRIST AND THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the history of the world and its future, from a Biblical perspective. Over the last six decades, scientists, educators and political leaders of our society have largely rejected the Bible. They have adopted the view that this world was *not* brought into existence by the creative work of God, but by a mindless process of evolution. And if undirected and purposeless evolution is true, then there can be no God, no such thing as sin, and no reason for the Son of God to come and die for mankind. We are left to believe we are just animals without purpose or meaning to life.

Many churches have given into the pressure of so-called 'scientific evidence', that allegedly proves the self-creating powers of the universe. Consequently, they have been forced to reason that certain parts of the Bible are fictional stories that require interpretation. This has resulted in a denial of both the power of God and the truth of his Word. The church has subsequently been stripped of its relevance and authority to proclaim truth, and it has become a defeated relic of a bygone era. The final result is tragic: society has now broken from its moral moorings and has drifted into carnality, hopelessness and self-destruction. This is the reason that:

- More teenagers die in Australia now from suicide than any other cause.
- The most dangerous place for a baby to live today is in their mother's womb – because of government funded abortions.

- Half of all new marriages end in divorce.
- Our children's minds are saturated with images of violence and lust put there by prime time T.V. – images that would have shocked and disgusted a previous generation of adults.
- Homosexuality is considered 'normal' behaviour and such a lifestyle is encouraged even in early primary school years.
- The most prescribed drugs for women in Australia are anti-depressants.

There is a raging battle for our hearts and minds, and those of our children. The war is concentrated upon establishing a '*humanistic*' world-view that:

- Denies the existence of God.
- Defines truth by people's own invention.
- Demands that there are no moral absolutes.
- Reduces people to mere animals.
- Believes there are no eternal consequences for how we live. That death results in annihilation – there is no existence after death.

Humanists now fill our schools, universities, courts, media and governments. Whether you have been aware of it or not, you have been subtly conditioned to believe elements of this world-view, as you have attended school/university, read magazines and newspapers, listened to music, watched T.V. programs, youtube videos and Hollywood movies, and heard the speeches of political leaders.

This study will cover aspects of the world-view called **'theism'**.

Theism states that:

- A Creator God does exist.
- The Bible is God's unique revelation to mankind.
- He has established certain physical, moral and spiritual laws.
- Men and women were created in the image of God; they are eternal beings and will stand before the judgement seat of Christ when they die.
- After death we will spend eternity in either heaven or hell.

Theism asserts that the beginning and early history of the world is revealed in the Bible, and that the present world system will end when Jesus Christ returns. Theism was once the traditional view of our society. Our government, legal and moral structures were all founded upon this view in previous centuries. (Our laws are now gradually being changed to allow for practices that were once regarded as illegal based upon the Bible's moral code.)

It is vital that you understand what you believe and why you believe it, because the course of your life – and your eternal destiny – are determined by what you regard to be true.

FROM CREATION TO CHRIST

<i>TIME CAPSULE</i>				
CREATION	THE FLOOD	TOWER OF BABEL	THE OLD COVENANT	THE NEW COVENANT
ADAM	NOAH	NIMROD	ABRAHAM	JESUS CHRIST
4000 BC	2400 BC	2200 BC	1900 BC	30 AD
↑ THE BEGINNING OF TIME				

CREATION**Genesis Chapters 1-2**

Genesis chapters 1 and 2 record the creation of the world. The Bible explains that God created the whole universe in six (24 hour) days and that he rested from his work on the seventh day. The 'creation week' can be determined from the Biblical records to be about 6000 years ago. Everything God created was good. Adam and Eve were made in the image of God. They were made living spiritual beings capable of a union of friendship with God, and they were housed in bodies endowed with faculties in order to engage the physical world God had made for them. In the beginning, they enjoyed perfect relationship with God and the world in which he had placed them, and had given them dominion over. There was no death, no bloodshed, no pain and no suffering.

THE FALL AND THE CURSE**Genesis Chapter 3**

Eve was deceived by Satan (a fallen arch-angel who had led a revolt against God in heaven and was hostile towards God and his creation) to rebel against God. Adam wilfully joined her in that

rebellion, thus they both broke relationship with God. The consequences were disastrous: separation and estrangement from God; immediate spiritual death leading eventually to physical death; the world became subject to a curse and a harsh environment in which to live; and, Satan established his kingdom upon the earth and gained control over the world. (Satan rules over an army of demons who obey his commands to enforce his authority in the earth. They were lesser angels who followed him in his revolt). Death, pain and suffering now enter the world.

THE FLOOD

Genesis Chapters 6 – 9

The descendants of Adam and Eve sink into sin and depravity. By the ninth generation the world is full of violence and the inclination of every person's heart is only to evil. God is grieved over the people he created. However, there was *one* man – Noah – who found favour with God because he was righteous and walked with God. God informs Noah that he is going to bring a catastrophic judgement upon the wickedness of humankind. He is going to destroy every living thing that dwells upon the land by a world-wide flood. And he instructs Noah to build a huge boat which will save Noah and his family, and to which God will bring two of every kind of land-dwelling animal to repopulate the world after the flood.[1] All the nations of the earth are traced from this one family.

(This flood occurred around 4400 years ago. [2] As we saw in Lesson 10, the geological features we observe all over the earth are the result of this cataclysmic flood and the accompanying tectonic upheavals, volcanic activity and breaking up of the continents. Some locations closer to the earth's poles also show the impact of the snap ice-age that immediately followed the flood.)

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 11: 1-9

In the course of time after the flood, the population increased and all the people on the earth lived in one particular region (near where the Ark came to rest in the middle East). At first, they all dwelt as one community with one language. The descendants of Noah, however, did not walk in his ways. By just 100 years after the flood they had gravitated towards wickedness once again. And they united in their rebellion towards God by building a tower, essentially constructing a stairway to 'heaven', thereby making themselves 'gods' and declaring their contempt for God their Maker.

God chose to break their rebellion by supernaturally confusing their languages so that they were unable to communicate directly with each other. This forced them to separate and isolate themselves into different groups, resulting in 'selective breeding' and the emergence of the different physical characteristics we see in the nations today. The distinct national marks of stature, facial features and skin, eye and hair colour are the result of 'selective breeding' that occurred as a result of this dispersal. Despite the differences we remain of 'one blood'.^[3] There is no superior class of humans. We all come from the same gene pool.

(Looking back over time, we see the peoples' groups across the globe falling into depravity once again abandoning the knowledge of God and his ways, and nations becoming beholden to and identified by particular false religions.)

THE OLD COVENANT

Genesis 15: 1-18

Around 300 years after the Tower of Babel, God found a man (like Noah) who desired to walk with him and chose him to fulfil his plan in the earth. God asked this man, whose name was Abram, to cut a blood covenant with him. This covenant established a powerful and special relationship between God and a man, remarkably bringing them into an inter-union.[4] God intended for that relationship to continue with the descendants of a son (Isaac) born to Abraham in his old age. These descendants were the nation of Israel who were to possess a parcel of land God promised to Abraham – the land of Palestine – and live there in community with God.

The focus of national life for Israel became the temple ('the house of God'), the law prescribed by God to Moses (Israel's prophet/leader who was God's instrument to bring Israel to the Promised Land) and an elaborate system of personal and corporate sacrifices. The latter were necessary to atone for Israel's sin, i.e. the breaking of the law, which represented a barrier to relationship with God. These sacrifices were only a temporary measure and had to be continually performed. They were symbolic of the sacrifice of God's Son ("*the lamb of God*") who was to appear and take away the sins of the world through his death once and for all, and enable a change of a person's heart from stone to flesh i.e. the new birth.

God wanted the whole of Israel to be a "*kingdom of priests*"[5] through which all of the nations of the world would be taught about God and have an opportunity to unite themselves to him. Tragically, the nation of Israel rebelled against God. They failed in his objective for them and, despite his patience and continued warnings through a succession of prophets, he overthrew them because they irrevocably broke covenant with

him. As a consequence, they were taken out of the Promised Land by the world empires of that era – the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. God sustained a remnant, however, specifically from the kingdom of Judah in order to bring his Son into the world and establish a New Covenant.[6] During the Medo-Persian Empire, a group of Israelites from that kingdom returned to the Promised Land. During the subsequent Roman Empire, the Son of God (called the *Messiah* in Hebrew and the *Christ* in Greek) appeared.

(Of course, God foreknew that Israel would fail and he used the Old Covenant to demonstrate that people were incapable of freeing themselves from sin. This pointed to the need for a Saviour, who was to be the Messiah/Christ, and for a “*new birth*” which broke the power of sin and changed people’s hearts.)

THE CHRIST AND THE NEW COVENANT

Matthew Chapters 1-2, Luke Chapters 1-2, Matthew Chapters 26-28, Hebrews 8:7 – 9:15

The most remarkable event in history was the appearance of the Son of God. His purpose in coming was to redeem mankind by giving his own life.

The Son of God came down from his throne in heaven and permitted himself to take on the form of a man. He was born of a virgin showing that he was truly man, and truly God. He grew up in a carpenter’s shop amongst a rejected class of people in Israel, and at the age of 30 he began a ministry which shook the nation, and ultimately – through his followers – the world. Over the three years of his earthly ministry, he demonstrated the remarkable power of God in various miraculous signs and wonders, and he healed everyone who was under the power of the devil who came to him.

His time upon the earth climaxed in his crucifixion and resurrection. It is this event upon which our faith rests: if there was no resurrection, our faith would be useless. But Jesus did rise from the dead, as confirmed by eyewitness accounts recorded in the Bible, and now he sits at the right hand of God.

The sacrifice of Jesus reunited God and those who received him, and began a new age. The “*new birth*”—made possible through the New Covenant – created a whole new kind of people: a people who bore the image of God in whom Christ lived by the Spirit of God. They did not come from one nation but from all nations. They became a people chosen by God, empowered by God, and loved by God. The age of the church, which is the ‘body of Christ’, had begun.

FROM CHRIST TO THE PRESENT

TIME CAPSULE

THE EARLY CHURCH	THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH	THE REFORMATION	THE RESTORATION & REVIVAL	THE APOSTASY
THE APOSTLES	THE PAPACY	MARTIN LUTHER	JOHN WESLEY	
30 AD	400 – 1700 AD	1500 AD	1500 – 1900 AD	Present

THE EARLY CHURCH

The Apostles fulfilled the commission of Jesus Christ and the message of salvation was carried to the ends of the earth (i.e. the known world at that time). By 100 AD the church was a movement of some 500,000 believers meeting in local assemblies scattered throughout Africa, Asia and Europe. At this time, a great persecution descended upon the church, through the Roman Empire, which continued until 300 AD. Many Christians suffered torture and died horrible deaths, at the hands of the Romans. (Approximately 10 million Christians were martyred during this era.) The church, however, emerged strong and the number of believers had risen.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Under the Roman Emperor Constantine the persecution stopped. However, he unleashed a more deadly influence upon the church in the form of pagan beliefs and practices. He pronounced himself the earthly head of Christ's kingdom and in 380 AD he made

Christianity the State religion of the Roman Empire. Over the following centuries the State Church, called the “Roman Catholic Church”, increased in influence and power. The head of the Church – the Pope or Papacy – effectively became the new line of Emperors who ruled over the same region as the old Roman Empire which had collapsed in the late 5th century.

By the end of the first millennium, the Roman Catholic Church had become the dominant political force in the known world. But by then, it had also become a completely godless institution. Its doctrines and practices were so far removed from Scripture that the Catholic Church had to stop its members from reading the Bible and discovering the truth! The Bible was forbidden to be owned or read by anyone except a priest, and he was trained to interpret the Bible according to the perverse teachings of the Church.

During this time, there were various groups of Bible-believing Christians who would not accept the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. They were declared ‘heretics’ and were severely persecuted. Once again Christians suffered torture and martyrdom for their faith. (It is estimated that at least 50 million Christians were martyred during the millennium rule of the Catholic Church.)

The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church is called by many 'Christian' but that is far from the truth – it is a cult like the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses.

*Catholicism preaches a **false gospel** – salvation is through works (the sacraments) and not through faith in Christ alone.*

*It presents a **false Christ** – the eucharist, where magically the body and the blood of 'Jesus' appear, transformed from the wafer and the wine.*

*It practices a **false baptism** – only those who submit to the Pope and are baptised into the Catholic Church (not Christ) are declared saved (provided, of course, if they live past infancy into adulthood that they dutifully perform the sacraments).*

*It believes in a **false 'scriptures'** – the Catholic Church defines the 'Word of God' to be the Bible together with the 'Traditions' of the church. (The Traditions are completely antagonistic to the Bible and form the basic directives for most of the corrupt practices Catholics.)*

*It operates under the control of a **false priesthood** – the Papacy, archbishops, bishops and priests who stand between God and the people.*

*It worships a **false Godhead** – the Catholic Church deifies Mary; they worship and pray to her, declaring her to be the Mother of God, a title never found in the Scriptures, thereby making her equal to God.*

THE REFORMATION

In 1517 a Catholic priest by the name of Martin Luther began a movement – called the *Protestant Reformation* – in which he and others protested the corrupt beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. At first, he tried to reform the Catholic Church by restoring the authority of Scripture, and had no intention of breaking from the Church. However, he was declared a heretic because of his stand and he was forced to run. Friends helped him escape to his home town where he was protected by the sympathetic prince of the region. There, Luther established the first Protestant church – called the Lutheran church – which rejected Catholic Church doctrines and practices incompatible with the message of the Bible.

Leaders of other European countries identified with Luther and joined him in his revolt against the Catholic Church. Soon the Reformation began to effect the economic, political, and social spheres of all Europe. The rule and power of the Roman Catholic Church was broken.

THE RESTORATION & REVIVAL

Luther and the other Reformers restored the truths that the Bible alone was the word of God, that salvation was through God's grace and faith alone, and that all believers were priests. Subsequently, other truths were restored to the church including water baptism (for believers, not infants), and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

From the 18th to 20th centuries, the message of the gospel was carried by Christian missionaries to the furthest reaches of the earth. Major revivals occurred in many countries, for example, in the U.S. (known as the Great Awakening), England (through John Wesley and the Methodists), Wales, the Pacific Islands, and more recently Africa. Many people from all countries around the world

became Christians. Christianity became a dominant influence in the world – especially through England and its colonies. Australia was founded as a Protestant Christian nation being an English colony. All of its social systems – the family, schools, hospitals, prisons, legal code and governments – were based upon Christian ideals.

THE APOSTACY

The Bible speaks of a time just prior to Jesus' return when there will be a general departure from God and a denial of the truth.[7] All the evidence points to this happening at this very moment in time. Jesus prophesied:

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.”

Luke 17:26-30

Noah's day was characterized by violence, in Lot's day it was homosexuality. We are witnessing a rising trend of both throughout the world. Jesus also prophesied:

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and

lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Luke 21:25-28

In the Bible's prophetic books, "*the sun, moon and stars*" refers to governments, kings and ruling bodies, and the "*sea*" refers to the nations of the world. Already, we can look back at the last century which has been described as the bloodiest century of all time with two world wars and the destruction of tens of millions through the rise of Communism, as part fulfilment of this prophecy. The reinstatement of Israel in 1948 as a nation state in the land of Palestine after nearly 2000 years, together with the re-emergence of Islam and its hatred of Israel, is further evidence that we are living in the time close to the return of Christ.

A BRIEF LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Matthew 24: 1-44

God has a definite plan for the world. The Bible explains much about this plan, and focuses upon one great event – the second coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus first appeared upon the earth to die and suffer for mankind – he came as the **sacrificial Lamb of God**. His second appearance upon the earth will be to claim his own, to judge the wicked and to usher in a new age – he will come as the **conquering Lion of Judah**.

In Matthew 24, Jesus foretold TWO significant events:

- (1) the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem, and
- (2) the sign of his coming and the end of the age.

Matthew 24:1-44

24:1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 2 “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

4 Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to

come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

9 “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

15 “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand— 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. 23 At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.

26 “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. 27 For as

lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

29 “Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

30 “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

32 “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33 Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. 34 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

36 “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and

the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

The first of these events is described from v5-22. "*Wars and rumours of wars*", "*famines and earthquakes*", persecution of Christians and the preaching of the gospel to the "*whole [known] world*", all occurred in the time leading up to the overthrow of Jerusalem. In 70 AD after a long and terrible siege, the Roman general Titus sacked the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and carried off the survivors into slavery – this was the "*abomination that causes desolation*". Approximately 1 million Jews were slaughtered. The Christians remembered Jesus' warning and the Roman historian Josephus records that they had escaped before the final siege when they saw the Roman army encircling Jerusalem, "*flee(ing) to the mountains*".

Luke also records what Jesus communicated to his disciples at that time on the Mount of Olives, adding further detail:

"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress

in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

Luke 21:20-24

The “*times of the Gentiles*” have now been fulfilled. Jerusalem had been under the control of Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) nations, predominantly Muslim, from 70 AD until 1917 when it was liberated by English forces during the First World War. The Jews finally gained control of the whole of Jerusalem after the Six-Day War in 1967.

Concerning the second coming, which is described from Matthew v23 onwards:

- The event will be dramatic so that there will be no question as to his identity (v. 26-27).
- The reference to effects upon the sun, moon and stars is prophetic language meaning that political systems upon the earth will be in disarray or that they may have collapsed (v. 29).
- Christ will come on the clouds with great power and the wicked shall mourn (v. 30, Acts 1: 11).
- At the sound of the trumpet, the angels will gather up the believers (v. 31, 1Corinthians 15: 50-53).
- Only the Father knows when that day shall be, however, there will be signs that the time is near (v. 32-33 & 36).
- The wicked will be taken away in judgement and the righteous saved – just as in the days of Noah (v. 37-41).
- The day will be unexpected (v. 42-44).
- Therefore, we should be always ready for that day (v. 44-51).

When Jesus returns he will establish his throne and rule the earth forevermore (see Daniel 7: 13-14).

(Note: We cannot be absolutely certain about all the details of the future. The Bible gives us some information that we interpret to the best of our ability as we rely upon the Holy Spirit. At the time of Jesus' first coming, people did not fully comprehend the prophecies that he fulfilled until after the events. Therefore, we should be cautious in our interpretation of the prophecies about his second coming. Nevertheless, there is sufficient information for us to forecast the major events with some confidence. After all, God has recorded these future events in his Word and the Holy Spirit's role is to instruct us, revealing truth to us.)

RESURRECTION

1Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1Corinthians 15:12-58

When Jesus returns the *physical* resurrection of believers will take place. At the sound of the trumpet Jesus will descend from heaven, and the bodies of believers will be transformed instantly to *immortality*. Our bodies will be like the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. Believers will be caught up in the clouds to meet him – the resurrected dead first, followed by the living – to be with him forever!

JUDGEMENT

Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15, 2Corinthians 5:10

Every person will be judged by Jesus Christ. There are two judgements:

- The Judgement Seat of Christ (at his return), and
- The Great White Throne (at the end of 1,000 years – called the Millennium – *after* his return).

The *nations* will be judged when Christ returns. Certain nations will be destroyed (*“goat”* nations) and the people of those nations will immediately face eternal punishment. The nations that remain (*“sheep”* nations) will be ruled by Jesus for 1000 years, during which Satan is bound and forbidden access to the earth. At the end of the 1000 years (referred to as ‘the Millennium’), Satan is released and he leads the nations in one final revolt against Jesus. This ultimate rebellion is put down and Satan is cast into the *“lake of fire”* forever.

The wicked who are dead will be resurrected at the end of the Millennium and appear before the Great White Throne. They are judged and also thrown into the *“lake of fire”*.

The righteous followers of Jesus Christ, will not be judged for salvation (see John 5:24). However, *“... we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad”*[8]. This is a judgement for rewards: we will all be rewarded according to how we have lived out our lives upon the earth (see 1 Corinthians 3: 10-15). (This judgement will be probably based on our love for God and his truth, our obedience to the Holy Spirit, our fruitfulness produced by faith in his Word, our faithfulness under trial and persecution, and our care for the poor – see 1 Thessalonians 1:3, Matthew 25:14-30, Galatians 2:10. James 1:27.)

A NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

Revelation 21, 2Peter 3:7

After the second judgement, heaven (which is called *“the new Jerusalem”*) will come down and be united with the earth. The whole earth will be consumed by fire and then recreated like the Garden of Eden, in the way God had originally made for Adam and

Eve. There will be no death, no sickness, no torment or sadness. God will forever live amongst his people in a new world and a new age where time will be no more.

APPENDIX – WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST?

It is quite likely you have heard of ‘the antichrist’, ‘the mark of the beast’, ‘666’, ‘the apocalypse’ and ‘Armageddon’. These terms have been used in books and movies about ‘the end of the world’. These ideas have been borrowed from the Bible, however, they are twisted and woven into fictional stories.

The Bible does contain important information about the end of this age and these passages of scripture are commonly referred to as ‘end-time’ prophecies. We have already examined one of those prophecies – Matthew 24. The other major passages include certain chapters in Daniel and the book of Revelation. There are other (minor) prophecies contained in many other books about the future God has planned for the world. In fact, the term “antichrist” does not appear in any of the major end-time prophecies. It is used only by the apostle John in two of his letters. Information contained in other passages of scripture are interpreted as relating to the antichrist.

“Antichrist” can mean not only “against Christ” but also “to stand in the place of Christ”. Martin Luther identified the papacy (the term used for the office of the Catholic pope) as the antichrist at the time of the Reformation. The Pope is called the ‘*Vicar of Christ (or God)*’ which literally means one who is a substitute for, or who stands in the place of, Christ on this earth. This title in Latin, “VICARIVS FILII DEI” appears on the Pope’s coronation crown and has a numerical value of exactly 666.[9][10] Many Popes have claimed to be God – see box below. Other titles claimed by the Pope are ‘Lord of Lords’, ‘King of Kings’ and ‘Prince of Peace’ – all titles ascribed in the Bible to the Lord Jesus Christ. Martin Luther said:

“We are not the first ones who applied the anti-Christian kingdom of the Papacy: this many great men have dared to do so many years before us and that frankly and openly under the greatest persecution. The Papacy is the Antichrist”.

- Pope Nicholas I (858-867) declared that “...the appellation [which means title] of God had been confirmed by Constantine on the Pope, who, being God, cannot be judged by man.”
- Pope Boniface VIII in 1302 wrote “The Roman Pontiff judges all men, but is judged by no one ... I have the authority of the King of Kings. I am all in all and above all ... Wherefore, if those things that I do be said not to be done of man but of God, what can you make me but God?”
- Blasphemous statements are not only reserved for the Popes during the period of the papacy’s political power. Pope Leo XIII in 1894 claimed “We hold the place of Almighty God on earth.” His successor, Pius X, boasted “The Pope ... is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.” In turn Pius XI said in 1922 “You know that I am the Holy Father, the representative of God on earth, the Vicar of Christ, which means that I am God on the earth.”

This is fulfilment of the prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 “the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” (God’s temple is the church not a physical temple in Jerusalem – 2Corinthians 6:16 “For we are the temple of the living God.”)

All of the reformers that followed Luther held the same view. In fact, it was one of two key doctrines that caused many nations to break from the control of the papacy (the other was that the Eucharist did not physically recreate the actual body and blood of Jesus – that was a false Jesus). The whole vast body of eminent Bible scholars from 1383 to 1840, taught that the Pope was the antichrist. John Wesley declared

“The Pope is in an emphatical sense the Man of Sin (the Antichrist), as he increases in all manner of sin above measure. And he is too, properly styled the Son of Perdition, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers, destroyed innumerable souls, and will himself perish everlastingly”.

It remained the dominant view of Protestant Christian leaders from Peter Waldo (1170-1184) through to Charles Finney (1792 – 1875). The Catholic Church set up a ‘Counter-Reformation’ movement to oppose Luther and the Protestants, led by the Jesuits (a military order within the Catholic Church). The belief that the antichrist was the pope was spreading rapidly and countries began to break away from the control of the Catholic Church.

Two Jesuits came up with different stories about the antichrist to oppose the teaching of the Protestant reformers. Jesuit theologian Luis de Alcasar presented the idea that the prophecies concerning antichrist had been fulfilled centuries before in the Roman Emperor Nero – it is called the ***Praeterist*** view. Another Jesuit theologian Francisco Ribera offered the obvious alternative that the antichrist was some future ruler – this is called the ***Futurist*** view. *Antichrist would be a single evil person who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and made the ruler of the entire world.*

The traditional view of the reformers has become known as the ***Historicist*** view. It was the commonly accepted system of interpretation of end-time prophecies amongst the Protestant churches up until the turn of the 20th century. Unfortunately, most Protestant churches today have absolutely no knowledge of the Historicist view.

Most Protestant Bible colleges have adopted the Futurist view as the 'true' interpretation of the end-time prophecies. Consequently, church leaders have only been taught this view, and this is what is communicated to church members. (A best-selling book by Hal Lindsay "*The Late Great Planet Earth*" and the best-selling book/DVD series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. "*Left Behind*" have further popularised the futurist view in recent times.)

The ecumenical movement endeavours to unite all so-called 'Christian' churches – Catholic and Protestant – claiming we all believe the same Bible and believe in the same Jesus. This is a lie. It is essentially an attempt to bring the Protestant churches back under control of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church will not alter any of its teachings but wants the Protestant Churches to change their doctrines to permit this 'reunification'. The Historicist view had to be driven out of the Protestant churches in order for the ecumenical movement to have any chance of succeeding.

To fully explore the end-time prophecies of the Bible and explain the Historicist interpretation and contrast the Praeterist and Futurist views is a book in itself.[11] We are going to examine just one, but vital, passage of scripture from the book of Daniel.

DANIEL'S 'SEVENTIETH WEEK'

The book of Daniel, written around 540-530BC, contains remarkable prophecy that includes the foretelling of the rise and fall of (then) future world empires and gives a specific time for the (first) coming of Jesus. The Jesuit Ribera took a verse from the passage that determines the date that Christ would appear on the earth – referred to as Daniel's "seventieth week" – and said it related to a future ruler, the antichrist not Christ. The whole system of the Futurists' teaching rests upon the foundation of this pernicious interpretation of Daniel's 'seventieth week'. Futurists believe that this week is a period of seven years which occurs right at the end of the age. All of their understanding of Matthew 24, the Book of Revelation and other end-time prophecies, fit within or around the context of this special seven year period. However, careful examination of the Daniel's prophecy reveals a very different interpretation – the way in which Historicists understand – upon which the whole Futurist view comes crashing down.

Daniel 9

1 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—

2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.

3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

The Kingdom of Judah had been taken into captivity out of the land of Israel by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar.[12] The city of Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed. Daniel was

one of the Israelites that was deported to Babylon. He was selected to be trained and serve as a high-ranking public servant for the King. Daniel understood from the book of Jeremiah that Judah's time in captivity was drawing to an end and that they would return to the land of Israel (see Jeremiah 23:11-12; 29:10). The reason for their return was to rebuild the temple, and to prepare the way for the Messiah who would usher in the New Covenant. So, Daniel prayed (v4-19) seeking God for Judah's future, and God sent the angel Gabriel with the answer:

4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

"O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, 5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 "Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame — the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. 8 O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. 9 The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; 10 we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. 11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

"Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we

have sinned against you. 12 You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. 13 Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. 14 The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

15 “Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. 16 O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

17 “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. 18 Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. 19 O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill— 21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He instructed me and said to me,

“Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. 23 As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:

24 “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

25 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.

In end-time Bible prophecies, the Historicist approach interprets a day to be a year; generally, Futurists also use this rule. (This rule is confirmed by history which aligns perfectly with fulfilled Biblical prophecy on this basis.) “Seventy sevens” = $70 \times 7 = 490$ years based on the year-for-a-day rule “are decreed” is translated from the Hebrew “*chathak*” which literally means “severed” or “cut-off”.

Now, Judah and Israel were both under God’s “seven times” judgement (Leviticus 26:18). Seven times = $7 \times 360 = 2,520$

years.[13] Starting in 604BC when Jerusalem was taken into captivity by King Nebuchednezzar, the 2,520 year punishment ceased in 1917AD, the very year that the British General Allenby liberated Jerusalem from the Turks during the 1st World War, and Jews were subsequently permitted to return to the land of Israel.

Therefore, this 490 years was a special period of grace taken out of the seven times judgement. For what purpose? To permit the coming of the Messiah: v24 contains six statements that clearly and unmistakably refer to the saving work of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. To *“anoint the most holy”* refers to Jesus the Messiah. The title *“Messiah”* (Old Testament Hebrew) and *“Christ”* (New Testament Greek) are the same and mean *“the Anointed One”*. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at the river Jordan. After his temptation in the wilderness he returned and proclaimed *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”* (Luke 4:18-19). Thus, he announced the beginning of his ministry. The Messiah had come.

25 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we find 4 decrees issued by the Persian kings permitting the Jews to return to Palestine and to rebuild Jerusalem. The principal decree was made by Artaxerxes in 457 BC. This prophecy thus foretells the time of the appearance of the Messiah. After *“seven sevens and sixty-two sevens”* = 69 x 7 or

483 years.[14] 483 years after 457 BC brings us to 27AD, which was the time that Jesus was baptised at the river Jordan. Jesus declared *“The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand...”* (Mark 1: 14-15). The reference to *“times of trouble”* is aptly demonstrated in the records of Ezra and Nehemiah, where both men faced opposition to their work (see especially Nehemiah 4).

26 After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

“...the Anointed One will be cut off” refers to the crucifixion of Jesus. Isaiah uses the same language about the Messiah in 53:8 *“for he was cut off out of the land for the living...”* The *“people”* are the Roman armies which destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in 70AD. The Roman General who led these armies was Titus. He was the *“ruler”* (or *“prince”* KJV) that will come”. Titus was the son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian which made him a Roman prince and heir to the Roman Empire throne.

Daniel’s prophecy begins with the command to rebuild the city and the temple, and it ends with its destruction in 70AD. The Roman armies ravaged the entire city, sweeping all away in a bloody flood, and utterly destroyed the temple. *“War will continue to the end”* refers to the war against the Jews from 66-70AD. In the end, Jerusalem was left totally desolate.

27 (NIV footnote translation) He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And one who causes desolation will come

upon the pinnacle of the abomina(tion) until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolate.[15]

“He will confirm a covenant with many for one seven”. The *“He”* refers to the Messiah, who was to confirm or ratify the terms of the covenant for *“one seven”* = seven years.

In the middle of the *“seven”* when Jesus suffers and dies, he overturns the Old Covenant putting an *“end to sacrifice and offering”*. When Jesus cried out on the cross *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30) the curtain in the Temple was torn from top to bottom (Mark 15:37-38). The Old Covenant was now made null and void being replaced by the New Covenant. Old Testament sacrifices were no longer required and they finally ceased in practice, when the temple was destroyed by the Roman armies, in 70AD.

(The Futurist view says it is the future antichrist who fulfils this prophecy, not Christ. It is this verse which Ribera plucked out and transported way into the distant future. This is needless and wrong. Following the plain chronology, without twisting the scriptures that give no indication to do otherwise, this *“seven”* should immediately follow the *“sixty-two ‘sevens’”*. All of the Futurist’s teaching is founded upon this particular idea of the fulfilment of this ‘seven’.)

This ‘seven’ is usually referred to as ‘Daniel’s 70th week’ (the first ‘seven’ plus ‘sixty-two sevens’ equals 69. Thus, the last ‘seven’ is the 70th.) It is easily understood to relate to the time of Christ. It began with the baptism of Jesus in 27AD and concluded in 34AD with the stoning of Stephen – a total of seven years. Up until the time of Stephen’s death the New Testament had been offered to the Jewish nation, and his death – the death of the first Christian martyr – at the hands of the Jewish leaders marked their final

rejection. Now persecution broke out upon the church, and the gospel began to spread to other (Gentile) nations.

The last part of the verse predicts the judgement of God upon the Jews, Jerusalem, the Temple and the land for the rejection of the New Covenant. The “one” again points to Jesus, who will make Jerusalem and the land desolate until the consummation of the appointed time, at the end of the age. During the time of the desolation, there would be an overspreading of the area with abominations or foreign powers with their strange armies and pagan practices of worship.

Jesus warned in Matthew 24:15-16

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel— let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

Luke 21:20-24 enlarges upon this:

“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

Jesus was alerting his faithful followers to the fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecy, warning them to flee. It was recorded by the Jewish

historian Josephus that the Christians had fled the city before its final siege by the Roman armies under the command of Titus.

Just before his crucifixion Jesus lamented over Jerusalem and said *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, **your house is left to you desolate**”* (Matthew 23:37-38).

Finally, *“the times of the Gentiles”* ended in 1917. Jerusalem was liberated from Muslim control and the land of Israel (or Palestine) came under English jurisdiction. In 1948, the people of Israel were declared to be a nation with the right to possess the land and in 1967 (a 50-year Jubilee period from 1917), Jerusalem was handed by the British back to the Jews. It is truly remarkable that a remnant of Jewish nation was sustained as a distinct people group, scattered throughout the world, for almost 2000 years without a claim to their own home land, yet have now have re-emerged as a sovereign nation possessing the land of Israel. It is a sure sign for us that Christ’s return is drawing near.

See also <http://newchristiancourse.com/dispensationalism/>
and
<http://newchristiancourse.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/The-Historicists-Approach-2024-update.pdf>

Lesson 12 Footnotes

[1] God brought seven pairs of certain kinds of, what are described as, “clean” animals. (See Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 for a list of those animals.)

[2] See

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2012/03/09/feedback-timeline-for-the-flood>

[3] See [creation.com](http://www.creation.com) and [answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org) for evidences of the formation of nations and descent of all people’s groups from one set of parents.

[4] One of the features of a blood covenant is the compounding of the party’s names. Abram’s name was changed to Abraham, inserting part of God’s name *Yahweh*, and God became known as “the God of Abraham”.

[5] Exodus 19:6

[6] The nation of Israel had divided into two kingdoms: the kingdom of Israel to the north and the kingdom of Judah to the south. The former was taken out of the land by the Assyrians, the later by the Babylonians. A remnant of the Babylonian captives returned to rebuild the temple and make way for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus was prophesied to be a descendant from the tribe of Judah.

[7] 2Peter 3:2, 2Timothy 3: 1-4

[8] 2 Corinthians 5: 10

[9] Revelation 13:18: “This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man’s number. His number is 666.”

[10] V=5, I=1, C=100, L=50, D=500, all other letters =0. VICARIVS = 5 + 1 + 100 + 0 + 0 + 1 + 5 + 0 = 112. FILII = 0 + 1 + 50 + 1 + 1 = 53. DEI = 500 + 0 + 1 = 501. Therefore, VICARVIS FILII DEI = 112 + 53 + 501 = 666

[11] For the Book of Revelation alone see *Four Views of Revelation: A Parallel Commentary* by Steve Gregg.

[12] The nation of Israel had divided into two kingdoms after the reign of King Solomon. The northern kingdom became known as the Kingdom of Israel with its capital at Samaria. The southern kingdom became known as the Kingdom of Judah with its capital at Jerusalem. The kingdom of Israel had come under God's judgement during the earlier Assyrian empire and the people captured and deported out of the land.

[13] A "time" in Bible prophecy is a period of 360 years. Revelation 12:1, 6 refers to a period of 1,260 days. In Revelation 12:14 the same time period is referred to as a "time, times and half a time" therefore one time = 360, times = 2 x 360 = 720, and a half a time = 180, the total being once again 1260.

[14] Tragically, present-day Jews are forbidden by their religious leaders to calculate this date from Daniel's prophecy! The reason is obvious. This date proves that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

[15] The NIV translates the latter half of this verse in the main text as "*And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.*" The translation provided here is that which appears as a footnote in the NIV. The main text translation appears to use some license in order to give credence to the futurist approach. Other versions follow the Hebrew better. The KJV renders v27 "*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it*

desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”