

What Does the Bible Say About End-Times?

The book of Revelation was written by John during a time when the early church was going through extremely severe persecution by Nero (he would flay Christians alive). God originally gave this vision of the future to John, first, to give hope to the persecuted early church.

Many of the teachings are debated by theologians (and the terminology can get very confusing).

Systematic Theology: Phil and I take a systematic approach to the study of scripture. This means we take the Bible as a whole to interpret passages, Old Testament and New Testament. The Bible is like a huge jig-saw puzzle and the pieces need to fit correctly to properly interpret the scripture. Some theologians will build their case on one passage or reading, this is where various theories conflict. Note, Phil's biblical studies consist of Tennessee Temple (Independent Baptist), John Brown University (Inter-Denominational), and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, providing a well-rounded background in biblical studies. His role as military chaplain also helps him understand and respect the various views of theology.

Rapture: Greek for *caught up*, when Christ comes for the believers, 1st coming of Christ (after His ascension).

1 Thessalonians 4:15–17, *According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

Theologians have different theories of when the rapture takes place. Some believe before the tribulation, some believe half-way through the tribulation, and others believe at the end. Still others believe our present time is the tribulation period.

Some theologians call this the "Second-Coming" of Christ, others disagree. In the rapture, Jesus does not set foot on earth, he raptures the church. Phil and I do not consider this event the second-coming of Christ but first (after His ascension).

Phil and I are **Pre-Tribulation** the passage found in Revelation 3:10 helps clarify other passages: *Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.*

(God spoke these words to the Church of Philadelphia (brotherly love). While some believe these words were for a literal early church, others believe this passage represents the true believing church and/or the different time-periods of church, while others believe it's both, the early church and the true believing church.) Because the book of Revelation is full of symbolism, it goes to reason that the Church of Philadelphia would represent the true believers church (and perhaps a literal church as-well).

As far as signs of the end-time, we see the fulfillment of all the signs prophesied. However, we are waiting on the timing of world situations to where satan's anti-Christ is accepted as the one world leader after all of the true believers are raptured (according to our understanding of the rapture, see below).

Tribulation: 7- years of suffering with 3.5 less bad and 3.5 extremely bad. The *Great Tribulation* is taught in several books of the Bible, including Daniel, Zephaniah, and Revelation. Several misconceptions exist regarding the anti-Christ and the Tribulation period. This webpage discusses the Tribulation and addresses the misconceptions:
<https://christinprophecy.org/articles/the-great-tribulation> [Click Here](#)

Armageddon: This is the final battle before the "Great Day of the Lord." It is found in Revelations 16: 13-16, *Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.*

¹⁵ "Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed." ¹⁶ Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

Note: *Battle of Armageddon* also found in Rev. 19: 17-19

Revelation 16 discusses 7 "Bowls of God's Wrath." The *Battle of Armageddon* is the sixth bowl. (From our understanding of scripture, we believe believers will not be on earth during this time, this all happens after the rapture of the true church. Why would God pour out His wrath on His children? He wouldn't, it goes against everything the scripture says about God's relationship with His children. Yes, He disciplines us and allows us to go through test, He does not have wrath against us.

Second-Coming of Christ: This is the time Christ returns again after the Battle of Armageddon and sets His foot on Mount Olive.

Zechariah 7:1-14: *A day of the LORD is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls. ²I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. ³Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. (The Battle of Armageddon) ⁴On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. ⁵You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You*

will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

Revelation 19:11-21 ¹¹ *I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. [Second Coming of Jesus] With justice he judges and wages war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter."^[a] He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

¹⁷ *And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."*

¹⁹ *Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. [Battle of Armageddon] ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.*

Millennium: (Millennium, Latin for 1,000 years) This happens after Armageddon and the Second-Coming, when satan is bound for 1,000 years. The Christians get their rewards and reign either in heaven or on earth. Today, there are four major views: *Amillennial* (St Augustine, Catholics, others), *Historical Premillennial Protestant* (Fuller & Trinity Evangelical Divinity, others), *Dispensational Premillennial* (Dallas Theological Seminary, David Jeremiah, Charles Stanley, others), and *Postmillennial* (less popular today after WWII ruined their millennium).

Phil and I support a mix of Historical Premillennial view and Dispensational Premillennial.

Historical Premillennial defined: Christ will reign for a thousand years (whether years are symbolic or figurative, uncertain) following His second- coming; saints will be resurrected at the beginning of the millennium, nonbelievers at the end, followed by judgement.

Scripture: Revelation 20: 1-10

Chart: Here's link to a chart overviewing the 4 views https://www.fivesolas.com/esc_chrt.htm

Satan's Release: After the 1,000 years satan is released for a short period.

Scripture Revelation 20: 8- 9: *and when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, ⁸ And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

Final Battle: Scripture (Revelation 20:8-9) indicates some type of battle between Satan and Jesus (the saints are there as backup reserves). Whether Gog and Magog are literal or figurative, is uncertain.

Lake of Fire: Satan is eternally defeated! Satan and his demons are cast into the Lake of Fire!

Revelation 20:10-11 ¹⁰ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Second Resurrection & Final Judgement: The second resurrection refers to the unbelievers who passed away and were not resurrected during the rapture. The final judgement is described by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46.

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. (Matthew 25:31-32)

Also Revelation 20: 11-15 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.*

New Heaven and New Earth: God makes all things new! (Revelation 21:1) Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea (large mass of people).

New Jerusalem: ² *I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

⁵ *He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

4 Areas of Agreement: All four major theories of end-times all agree in these areas. 1.) The great red dragon in Rev. 12:3 represents Satan. 2.) The second death in Rev. 20:6 represents Spiritual death and eternal separation from God. 3.) The new heavens and earth found in Rev. 12:1 represents a new order; redeemed earth. 4.) New Jerusalem represents God dwelling with His saints in the new age after all other end-time events. (From *Holman Book of Biblical Charts, maps, and reconstructions, Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993, pgs. 92, 94.*)

Christian Eschatology: I would compare Eschatology to a treasure map searching for the hidden treasure. You could spend a life-time studying the end-times and still have questions or be proven wrong in the end. The Bible is a book of faith. God gives us clues for the end-times. For Phil and I, we see enough clues to hope for the rapture before the Tribulation period. If that is the case, many things described (Mark of the Beast, 144,000 saints, horrific suffering, etc) will happen after the true church departs in the rapture. Revelation was given to John, first, to the first century Christians hope as they went through horrific suffering under Nero. Christians suffer severely today in many parts of the world. One fact all Christians agree upon, Jesus wins, we win too when we put our trust in Him. As believers, **we are not without hope!** God's Word, His Son, His Holy Spirit gives believers a solid foundation "like an anchor to our soul" (Hebrews 6:19)." If you have not put your trust in Him, you can do that right now! Here's a lovely song that you can sing to Him as a prayer [click here](#). (TheSalvationPoem.com, Matt & Sherry MacPherson)

*Jesus you died upon the cross,
And rose again to save the lost.
Forgive me now of all my sin,
Come be my savior, lord and friend.
Change my life and make it new,
And help me lord to live for you.*