

Is There Good News in this World of Wickedness and War?

The Best is Yet to Come

Good News

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As one considers the national situation and international developments, it is easy to be discouraged. The believer, however, has every reason to be encouraged. If he is even somewhat acquainted with the biblical predictions concerning the glorious future of the saints, he should be elated. For Christians, the best is yet to come. However, many Christians are unaware of the blessed future foretold for them in the prophetic Word. Thus they are perplexed and pessimistic about the future, when, in fact, they should be sources of encouragement for others. We are to be able to give to others a reason for our hope (I Pet. 3:15).

Some time ago I spoke in a church on the East coast where prior to my arrival the new pastor, to become acquainted with his congregation, asked them how many of their parishioners could think their way through some of the major end time events. Out of a congregation of 150, only three folks raised their hands. We miss out on numerous blessings by being ignorant of the future, especially of events and activities of believers. The news for the saints is all good. Let me suggest seven prophecies relating to our glorious destiny.

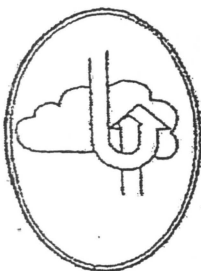


1. The Readiness of the Saints:

Presently the believer is to be active for the Lord. He is to live as if the Savior were coming back today but to work as if the Lord were to tarry another 100 years. The Lord admonishes His servants, to "occupy till I come" (Lk. 19:13). While the believer carries out the Great Commission and his divinely assigned tasks, he should live with a spirit of eager expectancy. The fervent prayer of every dedicated believer should issue in the expectant, "Perhaps Today!" as he looks for the blessed hope of the rapture (Tit. 2:13; Phil. 3:20-21). It is wonderful news that the Lord might come back within the near future!

2. The Rapture of the Church:

The first disclosure of that glorious event was made by the Savior in the night before His crucifixion. He informed His disciples that He must leave them to build their heavenly home. As soon as that habitation is ready, He would return for them to take them there (John 14:1-6). Twenty years after this promise, Paul gives a detailed sequence of events surrounding our Savior's return for us. At this glorious event the Savior returns in the clouds with the saints who have gone before. He resurrects the bodies of the dead saints and translates the living saints into His presence without



them having to die. This event will occur prior to the Tribulation, giving us cause for great comfort (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:9; 1 Cor. 15:51-52).

3. Rewards for the Believers:

Immediately after the rapture the Savior rewards church age believers at the judgment seat or bema (2 Cor. 5:10). At this time the Savior, our Bridegroom, decorates the Bride for the next event, the marriage of the Lamb. The issue at the bema is not the believer's **sins** but his **service**. It is not, as some teach, a "Protestant Purge-atory." The Christian is judged as a sinner at the cross, as a son during this life and as a servant at the bema. God makes a firm promise: "their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more" (Heb. 8:12; cf. Jer. 31:24). In fact, "then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5). What could be more glorious than to hear our Savior say to each one of us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"? To me that makes the bema not a time of regret but rejoicing. It is the believer's finest hour as the Savior finds something good to say about each one of us.



4. Rejoicing at the Marriage of the Lamb:

While there rages a time of unprecedented tribulation on earth (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 4-19), the saints, i.e. the redeemed of the Church age, will enjoy a time of unimaginable celebration in heaven. As the long separation between the Savior and the earthly saints has ended, the Bridegroom will reward His Bride, then present her "without spot and wrinkle" (Eph. 5:27) to the Father. At the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9) Christ and His Bride are eternally joined. From the moment of this blessed union on, the Bride will eternally share in the prerogatives and prominence of Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom. The Church age saints will share a uniquely intimate position. Where Christ is, we will be. What He is doing, we will be doing (Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 2:9).



5. The Return With Christ:

After the bema and the Marriage of the Lamb in heaven, the Bridegroom will return with His Bride to earth. The Apostle John describes the spectacular scene as heaven opens and a white horse emerges "and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True . . . and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:11, 14). As the King of kings returns with His armies, the invaders of Israel are engaged at the campaign of Armageddon. When they see us descending with our leader, they will direct their weapons against us. We will witness their swift destruction as a sword of judgment proceeds out of His mouth (Rev. 19:15, 21). Through Christ we will be victorious over all our enemies!



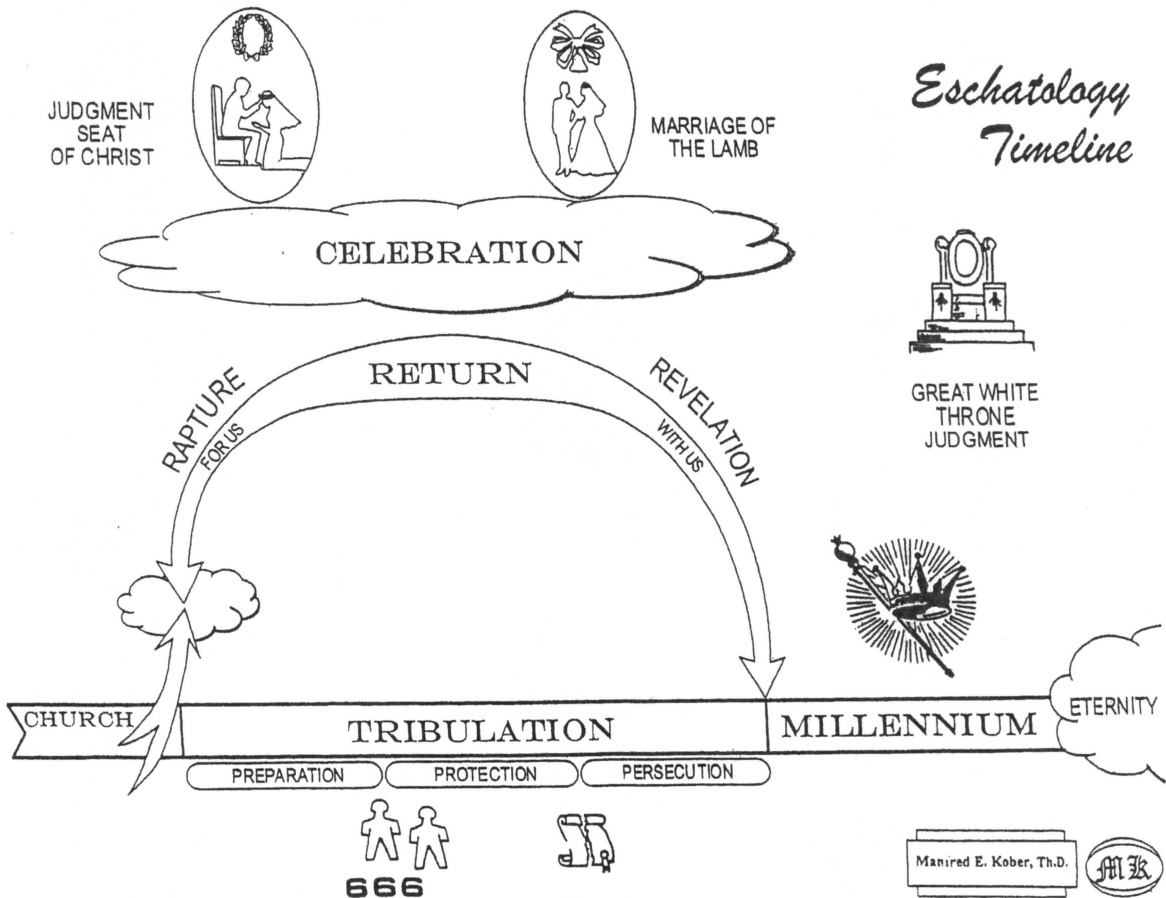
6. The Rule With Christ:

Another reason to be optimistic about his future relates to our future activity of ruling. Our rule with Christ includes, among many other activities, dining with Christ and exercising dominion with Christ. The Savior promised His disciples that He would eat and drink with them in the Kingdom. The believer's resurrection body, like Christ's, does not need food for sustenance, but can enjoy food (Acts 10:41). There appear to be at least two meals at the beginning of the Millennium. One is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb or some other meal with the Bride (Rev. 19:9; Mt. 26:29; Lk. 14:15-24; 22:30) with all the saints of all the ages present. The other meal seems to be for the entire world at the coronation of the Savior, featuring the best food and finest drink (Is.24: 23; 25:6). Every believer, whether spiritual or carnal, will participate in Christ's rule. Dominion is promised to every Church age believer (and tribulation martyr, Rev. 20:4) as part of the benefits of salvation. Those who have been committed to the Savior and consistent in their service apparently will receive greater responsibility (1 Cor. 6:2-3; Lk. 19:16-19).

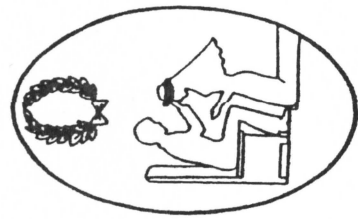


7. Residence in the New Jerusalem:

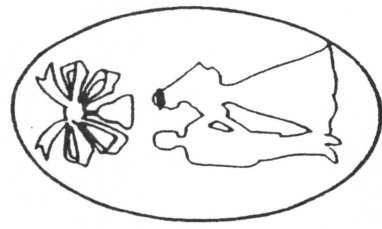
After the thousand-year reign of Christ, the Lord will remove every trace of sin from the universe by creating a new heaven and new earth. The New Jerusalem which Christ is presently constructing for us in heaven will at that time descend to earth. Every believer will dwell in that celestial city for all eternity. We will be joined by the triune God, the holy angels and all the saints of all the ages (Rev. 21:1-5; Heb. 12:22-24). Christ's millennial reign will continue into the eternal state. The Church will share in that rule and will thrill at the privilege of serving Him by ruling with Him forever and ever (Rev. 22:1-5). What a glorious destiny! If you have ever trusted in Christ as Savior, it is your destiny as well!



The Future and The Saint

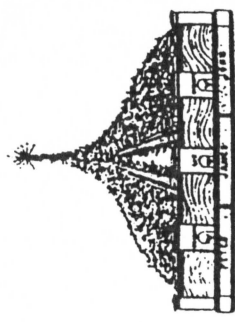


3 Rewards for the Believer
1 Cor. 3:11-4:5



4 Rejoicing at Marriage of the Lamb
Rev. 19:7-8

CELEBRATION



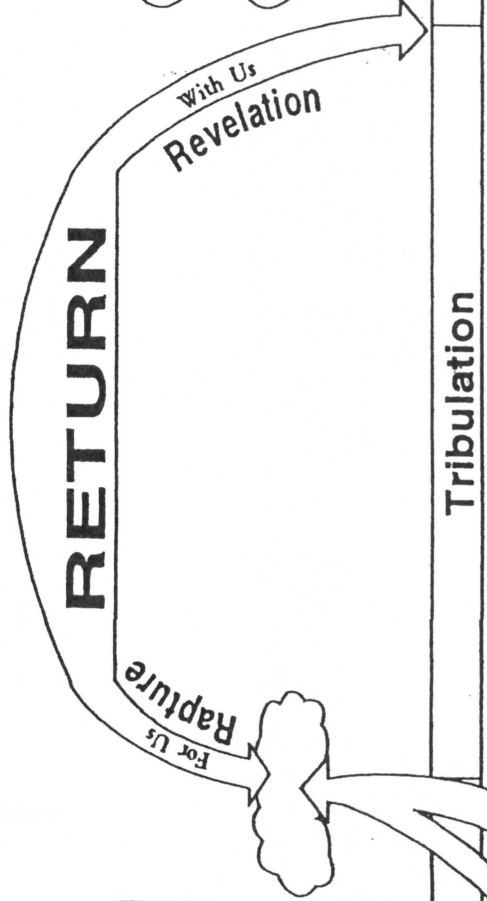
THE HOLY CITY
NEW JERUSALEM

1 Readiness of the Saints
Phil. 3:20

5 Return with Christ
Rev. 19:4-16

6 Rule with Christ
1 Cor. 6:2-3

7 Residence in the New Jerusalem
Rev. 20:1-5



2 Rapture of The Church
1 Thess. 4:13-18

Tribulation

Millennium

Eternity

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