

Loris First Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #44 – Events Preceding the Second Coming of Christ

Note: Most information based on pages 312-319 of the book “Major Bible Themes” by Lewis Sperry Chaffer.

Major Events of the Present Age

As the present age of grace unfolds, many prophecies are being fulfilled.

1. The general character of the age is presented in seven parables in Matthew 13.
 - a. In the parable of the sower, which is introductory in nature, the varied reception to the truth of God is described.

Matthew 13:1-9 *“That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then He told them many things in parables, saying: ‘A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.’”*

- 1) Truth sometimes falls on the hard, beaten path where it is destined to be eaten by the fowls.
- 2) Other falls on ground that is too shallow and stony, and while beginning to spring up it is killed for lack of roots.
- 3) Other falls on good ground but is infested with thorns, which choke it.
- 4) Only a portion of the seed falls on good ground and brings forth fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold.

Matthew 13:18-23 *“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”*

- b. The parable of the tares sown among the wheat indicates the danger of false profession which will not be judged until the time of harvest.

Matthew 13:24-30 *“Jesus told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”*

Matthew 13:36-43 *“Then He left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, ‘Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.’ He answered, ‘The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.’”*

- c. The parable of the mustard seed indicates the rapid growth of Christendom from a small beginning to a large movement.

Matthew 13:31-32 *“He told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.’”*

- d. The parable of the leaven speaks of evil intermingled with the good meal until the whole is permeated.

Matthew 13:33-35 *“He told them still another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.’ Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; He did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: ‘I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.’”*

- e. The hidden treasure of Matthew 13:44 probably refers to Israel hidden as to its national entity in the present age, but nevertheless bought by Christ in His death.

Matthew 13:44 *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”*

- f. The pearl of great price (vv. 45-46) seems to speak of the church as that for which Christ died, a major feature of the present age during a period when Israel's national identity is somewhat hidden.

Matthew 13:45-46 *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”*

- g. The final parable of the dragnet (vv. 47-51) illustrates the separation of the saved from the unsaved at the end of the age.

Matthew 13:47-51 *“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ‘Have you understood all these things?’ Jesus asked – ‘Yes,’ they replied.”*

- 2. In general, Matthew 13 speaks of the entire period between the first and second comings of Christ without reference to the rapture or the particulars of the church as the body of Christ. It describes the sphere of profession of faith and the mingled picture of good and evil.
 - a. The dual development of both good and evil throughout the age, climaxing in judgment and separation, characterizes the period.
 - b. There is no justification for postmillennialism, with its concept that the kingdom of God will finally triumph through preaching of the Gospel and human effort.
 - c. On the other hand, there is no ground for pessimism, because God will fulfill His purpose.
 - d. Some seed will fall on good ground and bring forth fruit. There will be wheat among the tares and good fish among the bad.
 - e. The over two thousand years since Pentecost have demonstrated the accuracy of this great prophecy of Matthew 13.
- 3. A similar picture of the present age with focus on the end of the age is found in **Matthew 24**. There, in verses 4-14, nine signs of the end are given: (Complete Scripture passage below).
 - a. False Christs (v. 5),
 - b. Wars and Rumors of Wars (v. 6),
 - c. Famines (v. 7),
 - d. Pestilences (v. 7),
 - e. Earthquakes (v. 7),

- f. Martyrs (vv. 9-10),
- g. False Prophets (v. 11),
- h. Abounding Iniquity and Cooling Fervor for Christ (v. 12),
- i. The Gospel of the Kingdom to be Preached in All the World (v. 14).

Matthew 24:4-14 *“Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. 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. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. 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.’”*

4. Another feature of the present age will be the growing apostasy on the part of the unsaved within the professing church. 2 Peter Chapters 2 & 3 summarizes the progression in four categories:
 - a. Denial of the person and deity of Christ (2:1)
 - b. Denial of the work of Christ that He bought us when He died on the cross (2:1),
 - c. Moral apostasy over departure from moral standards (2:2-22),
 - d. Departure from the doctrine of the second coming of Christ and the judgments related to it (3:1-13).
5. Other passages contribute to the doctrine of apostasy in the New Testament

1 Timothy 4:1-3 *“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.”*

2 Timothy 3:1-9 *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.”*

Jude 3-19 *“Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people. For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them. Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion. These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, ‘In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.’ These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.”*

6. All these prophecies of encroaching apostasy in the church are being fulfilled beginning with the first century and continuing to the present.
7. The ultimate apostasy will take place after the church is raptured and only the unsaved portion of the professing church is left in the world.
8. The present age, in terms of the purpose of God in calling out His church, will be brought abruptly to its close at the Rapture.
9. This event—nowhere dated in the prophecies of the Old Testament—describes the dramatic removal of the church from the earth as the dead in Christ are raised and living Christians are caught up to heaven without dying.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 *“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, BUT WE WILL ALL BE CHANGED—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, AND WE WILL BE CHANGED. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.’”*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “*Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 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. 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. After that, WE WHO ARE STILL ALIVE AND 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. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”*

10. This event will bring to a close the purpose of God in terms of the church as a separate company of saints, and the departure of the church will set the stage for the major events leading up to the second coming of Christ to the earth to set up His millennial kingdom.
11. Three major periods may be observed between the Rapture and the Second Coming: (a) the period of preparation, (b) the period of peace, (c) the period of persecution.

The Period of Preparation Following the Rapture

1. The event of the Rapture, removing every saved person from the earth, will be a dramatic intervention in human history.
2. It will signal the beginning of a series of events which will rapidly move on to a great climax at the second coming of Christ.
3. Obviously, the removal of all Christians from the earth will have an effect upon world history as a whole and will permit the demonstration of evil in the world and the fulfillment of the satanic purpose in a way never before possible.
4. The first phase immediately after the Rapture will be a period of preparation for the major events which follow it. These events will relate to the three (3) major areas of prophecy, which concern the church, Israel, and the Gentiles.
 - a. *The professing church will remain on earth after the Rapture.*
 - 1) Although the issue of whether the true church will go through the Tribulation has been debated, many expositors believe the church as the body of Christ will be caught up at the Rapture, leaving only the professing church—composed entirely of unsaved individuals on the earth—to fulfill prophecies relating to Christendom.
 - 2) The professing church after the Rapture is symbolized by the harlot of Revelation 17, pictured astride the scarlet-covered beast bespeaking the political power of that time.
 - 3) Her dominion is over the whole world, symbolized by the many waters (Rev. 17:1, 15). From the description it seems clear that the world church now in its earlier form is seen here in its stage of complete apostasy with every true Christian removed.

- 4) Religiously, the period after the Rapture accordingly will be a movement toward a world church and a world religion, devoid of redeeming features of true Christian doctrine.

b. *For Israel the period of preparation will be a time of revival.*

- 1) According to Romans 11:25, Israel's present blindness will be alleviated, and many in Israel will have their eyes opened to the fact that Jesus Christ is indeed their Messiah and Savior.

Romans 11:25 *"I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part UNTIL THE FULL NUMBER OF GENTILES HAS COME IN."*

- 2) In the days immediately following the Rapture, thousands of Jews will probably turn to Christ, availing themselves of Scripture and books on Christian doctrine which Christians leave behind, as well as works relating Scripture to the hope of a Messiah which many Jews already possess.
- 3) They undoubtedly will have an insatiable curiosity to answer the question as to what happened to the Christians who disappeared. Their search will be rewarded and many will be converted.
- 4) As in the first century of the church, the Jews will immediately become the ambassadors for the Gospel, winning both their own people and Gentiles to Christ; the renewed work of evangelism will thereby be undertaken throughout the world.

Revelation 7:4-10 *"Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 FROM ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000. After this I looked and there before me was A GREAT MULTITUDE THAT NO ONE COULD COUNT, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. THEY WERE WEARING WHITE ROBES and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD, Who sits on the throne, AND TO THE LAMB.'"*

- 5) The fact that Jews are already scattered all over the world, knowing many of the world's languages, points them up as natural missionaries to their particular locale so undoubtedly many will be brought to Christ.
- 6) As in the first century, however, not all Jews will turn to Christ and salvation will be only for those who believe.

Ezekiel 20:37-38 *"I will take note of you as you pass under My rod, and I will bring you into the bond of covenant. I WILL PURGE YOU OF THOSE WHO REVOLT AND REBEL AGAINST ME. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living yet THEY WILL NOT ENTER THE LAND OF ISRAEL. Then you will know that I am the Lord."*

Zechariah 13:8-9 *"in all the land...TWO THIRDS IN IT SHALL BE CUT OFF AND DIE, BUT ONE-THIRD SHALL BE LEFT IN IT: I will bring the one-third through the fire, I will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. THEY WILL CALL ON MY NAME."*

b. *Politically in relation to the Gentiles, the time of preparation will involve the Revival of the Ancient Roman Empire.*

- 1) As brought out in Doctrine #42, the feet stage of Daniel 2 and the ten-horn stage of the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7 have never been fulfilled.
- 2) This prophecy, with the added light given in Revelation 13, indicates that the Roman Empire will be revived in the form of ten nations banding together into a confederacy.
- 3) The Common Market in Europe may well be the forerunner of it, but the center of political power would seem to be in the Mediterranean rather than in Europe and probably will include the major nations of North Africa, Western Asia, and Southern Europe.
- 4) Once again the Mediterranean will become a "Roman lake." When these ten nations are joined together, a ruler will emerge described as the "little horn" of Daniel 7:8, who apparently will be a dictator who gains control, first of three, then of all ten nations.
- 5) He will be the strong man politically of the Middle East and will work with the world church to gain world power.
- 6) Once he is firmly established, the stage is set for the second major period, the period of the covenant.

The Period of Peace

1. According to Daniel 9:27, when the dictator of the Middle East emerges as the "Prince that shall come" (Dan. 9:26), he will make a covenant with Israel for a seven-year period. The details of this covenant are not given in Scripture, but it is implied as a covenant of protection.
2. Apparently the dictator desires to settle the controversy between Israel and the nations surrounding Israel; he uses the device of setting up a protectorate for Israel and by this means brings a measure of peace and tranquility to the political situation in the Middle East.
 - a. While there is no indication that this will be a period of complete peace, Israel is made secure, relatively speaking, and apparently is granted privileges in commerce and a freedom from tension which has not characterized her life since the nation was formed in 1948.
 - b. Undoubtedly the changed situation will inspire many more Jews to return to their ancient land, and Israel will prosper financially.

- c. During this period also, the world church will continue to grow in power, working with the ruler in the Mediterranean area to accomplish worldwide religious dominion. In like manner, the evangelization of Israel will continue and many will turn to Christ.
- d. On the other hand, many will also return to Orthodox Judaism.
 - 1) In this period a temple will apparently be built in Jerusalem and Orthodox Jews will renew the Mosaic system of sacrifices which have not been offered since the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70.
 - 2) This is implied in Daniel 9:27, where it is predicted that the sacrifices will cease, a fact supported by Daniel 12:11 which speaks of the daily sacrifice being taken away.

Daniel 9:27 *“He (i.e. “the Antichrist”) will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ HE WILL PUT AN END TO SACRIFICE AND OFFERINGS. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”*

Daniel 12:11 *“From the time that THE DAILY SACRIFICE IS ABOLISHED and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.”*

- 3) Obviously, sacrifices could not be stopped unless they had been reactivated, and reactivation of the sacrifices requires a temple in Jerusalem.
 - 4) Exactly when the temple will be rebuilt no one knows, but it will be in operation apparently during this time of peace.
3. The tranquility of the Middle East will be shattered, however, by a dramatic event described in Ezekiel Chapters 38 & 39, an attack upon Israel by Russia and her allies.
- a. Although interpreters of Scripture have disagreed in their analyses of this event and their placing of it in the chronology, according to Ezekiel 38, it comes at a time when Israel is at peace and at rest; a period which corresponds to the situation following the covenant with the Roman ruler.
 - b. The attack, moreover, is more than an assault on Israel because it challenges the whole covenant relationship between the Mediterranean ruler and Israel and is, in effect, a Russian bid for control of the Middle East politically and commercially.
 - c. Because it is a surprise attack, however, there is no record of armies being marshalled against the invaders.
 - d. Instead God intervenes supernaturally to save His people and wipes out the invading force by a series of catastrophes described in Ezekiel 38:18-23.

Ezekiel 38:18-23 “declares the Sovereign Lord. In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. I WILL SUMMON A SWORD AGAINST GOG (i.e. “Russia”) ON ALL MY MOUNTAINS, declares the Sovereign Lord. Every man’s sword will be against his brother. I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

4. This war shatters the period of peace and prepares the way for the next and final period.

The Period of Persecution

1. The destruction of the Russian army not only ends the peace of the preceding period, but brings a dramatically changed world situation.
2. Apparently, at that time there is a balance of power between (1) the ruler of the Middle East and the nations aligned with him, and (2) Russia and the nations aligned with her.
3. With the Russian armies temporarily destroyed, the ruler of the Middle East seizes the opportunity to proclaim himself a world dictator.
 - a. Overnight he seizes control politically, economically, and religiously.
 - b. He proclaims himself ruler over every kindred, tongue, and nation

Revelation 13:7 “It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. AND IT WAS GIVEN AUTHORITY OVER EVERY TRIBE, PEOPLE, LANGUAGE AND NATION.”

- c. And Daniel predicts that this world ruler (i.e. “the Antichrist”) “shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it to pieces” (Dan. 7:23).

Daniel 7:23 “He gave me this explanation: “The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and WILL DEVOUR THE WHOLE EARTH, trampling it down and crushing it.”

- d. He likewise seizes control of the entire world economically, and no one can buy or sell without his specific permission.

Revelation 13:16-17 “It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, SO THAT THEY COULD NOT BUY OR SELL unless they had the mark, which is THE NAME OF THE BEAST OR THE NUMBER OF HIS NAME.”

4. For Israel it is also an abrupt reversal, as the ruler breaks his covenant with her and overnight becomes her persecutor. This introduces what Jeremiah 30:7 describes as the time of Jacob's trouble.

Jeremiah 30:7 *"How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. IT WILL BE A TIME OF TROUBLE FOR JACOB, but he will be saved out of it."*

5. Elsewhere, the same period is described as the Great Tribulation:

Daniel 12:1 *"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. THERE WILL BE A TIME OF DISTRESS such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered."*

Matthew 24:21 *"For then THERE WILL BE GREAT DISTRESS, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."*

Revelation 7:14 *"I answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he said, 'These are they WHO HAVE COME OUT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

6. Israel's trials begin with the sudden stopping of their sacrifices (see Daniel 9:27 and 12:11 above).

a. Israel, accordingly, is advised by Christ to flee at once to the mountains.

Matthew 24:15-20 *"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. Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath."*

b. It will be a time of unprecedented trouble for Israel, and thousands of Jews will be massacred

Zechariah 13:8 *"'In the whole land,' declares the Lord, TWO-THIRDS WILL BE STRUCK DOWN AND PERISH; yet one-third will be left in it.'"*

7. The Temple itself will be described and an idol of the world ruler set up in it.

Revelation 13:14 *"Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them TO SET UP AN IMAGE (i.e. "an idol") in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived."*

a. At times the ruler himself will sit in the Temple to be "worshiped".

2Thessalonians 2:4 *"He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, PROCLAIMING HIMSELF TO BE GOD."*

b. This is the “abomination of desolation” described in connection with the stopping of the sacrifices.

Daniel 9:27 “*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.*”

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.*”

c. The world ruler will also set himself up as “god” and demand that everyone worship him under pain of death:

Revelation 13:8, 15 “*All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world...The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image TO BE KILLED.*”

8. This final period will begin in the middle of the seven years originally planned for the covenant and, accordingly, will last for forty-two months:

Revelation 11:2 “*But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city FOR 42 MONTHS.*”

Revelation 13:5 “*The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority FOR FORTY-TWO MONTHS.*”

Daniel 7:25 “*He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for A TIME, TIMES, AND HALF A TIME.*”

Daniel 9:27; *He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ (i.e. “3 – ½ years) he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.*

Daniel 12:11-12 “*From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.*”

9. Because of his complete blasphemy and persecution of both Jew and Christian, the world ruler of the Mediterranean—often referred to as the Antichrist and described in Daniel 9:26 as “*the prince that shall come*”—will become the object of fearful divine judgment. All this is described in Revelation chapters 6 thru 19.

- a. Details of these events are recorded in the breaking of the seven seals (Revelation 6:1—8:1), the sounding of the seven trumpets (Revelation 8:2-21; 11:15-19), and the outpouring of the seven vials or bowls of the wrath of God (Revelation 16).
- b. Unprecedented judgments will take place on the earth. Christ has described it in Matthew 24:21-22 as a period so terrible that if not stopped or terminated by the second coming of Christ it would have resulted in the extermination of the entire race.

Matthew 24:21-22 *“For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, NO ONE WOULD SURVIVE, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”*

- c. Wars, pestilence, famines, stars falling from heaven, earthquakes, demon possession, and great disruption of natural forces in the world apparently destroy a majority of the world’s population.
10. The resulting disorder brought on by these disasters creates opposition to the world ruler of the Middle East.
- a. He is unable to fulfill his promises of peace and plenty.
 - b. As a result, worldwide revolution takes place and major portions of the world rebel against his authority.
 - 1) This climaxes in a gigantic world war described in Daniel 11:40-45 and in Revelation 9:13-21; 16:13-21.
 - 2) The nations of the world are locked in struggle, the battle seesawing back and forth with great armies from the South, great armies from the North, and a huge army from the Orient descending on the Holy Land to fight it out.
 - 3) At the height of this conflict, Jesus Christ returns in power and glory to bring to judgment the wicked men gathered in this struggle and to establish His own millennial kingdom.
(read Revelation 19:11-21; Revelation 20:1-6)

Summary

1. Taken as a whole, the events leading up to the second coming of Christ are described in considerable detail in both the Old and New Testaments.
2. The period is a dramatic sequence of tremendous events unequalled in any other portion of history or prophecy.
3. Many indications that the world is moving on to just such a climax makes all the more pointed the teaching of Scripture concerning the immanency of the Lord’s return for His own at the Rapture.

Loris First Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #44 – Events Preceding the Second Coming of Christ

1. Read Pages 1-13 from the Doctrine#44 Study Guide by next Wednesday.
2. Answer the following Questions about “Events Preceding the Second Coming of Christ” as you read:

a. Major Events of the Present Age

- 1) The general character of this “age of grace” that we are currently living in is presented by Jesus in seven parables that He taught which are all recorded in what Chapter in the Bible? (page 1, top)

- 2) In His parable of the sower, what ultimately did Jesus “describe”?
(page 1, top-middle; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)

- 3) What does Jesus’ parable of the “tares” sown among the “wheat” indicate?
(page 2, top; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

- 4) What does Jesus’ parable of the “mustard seed” indicate? (page 2, middle; Matthew 13:31-32)

- 5) What does Jesus’ parable of the “leaven” speak of? (page 2, bottom; Matthew 13:33-35)

- 6) What does the “hidden treasure” of Matthew 13:44 probably refer to? (page 2, bottom)

- 7) What does the “pearl of great price” seem to speak of? (page 3, top; Matthew 13:45-46)

- 8) Jesus' final parable of the "dragnet" illustrates what? (page 3, top; Matthew 13:47-51)

- 9) In general, Matthew 13 speaks of the entire period between the first and second comings of Christ. What "characterizes" this period? (page 3, middle)

- 10) Why is there no ground for "pessimism" in the present age? (page 3, middle)

- 11) How many "signs" did Jesus provide in Matthew 24:4-14 "pointing to the "end of this present age"? (page 3, bottom – page 4, top)

- 12) What is another feature of this present age of "grace" that Peter summarizes in 2Peter chapters 2 & 3? (page 4, middle)

- 13) According to 1Timothy 4:1, "*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will do*"... "what"?

- 14) The ultimate "apostasy" of the church will take place when? (page 5, bottom)

- 15) The present age of grace will be brought abruptly to its close "when"? (page 5, bottom)

- 16) According to 1Corinthians 15:51-54, Paul reveals a "mystery" (of heaven, not known by the world) that not all "Christians" will sleep (i.e. "die"), but we "all" will be "what"?

- 17) True or False. According to 1Thessalonians 4:13-18, Christians who are “alive” when the Lord comes to “rapture” His church will be taken up at the same time that Christians who have already “died” in Christ.
- 18) What are the three major periods that may be observed in the prophecies of Scripture about the time on earth between the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ? (page 6, top)

b. The Period of Preparation Following the Rapture

- 1) What is something the “removal” of all Christians from the earth will “permit”? (page 6, middle)
- 2) What are the three (3) major areas of prophecy that the events of the “Period of Preparation” relate to? (page 6, bottom – page 8, middle)
- 3) What is the composition of the “professing church” that is left behind after the rapture of the church to fulfill the prophecies relating to Christendom? (page 6, bottom)
- 4) How is the “professing” church after the Rapture symbolized in Revelation 17? (page 6, bottom)
- 5) True or False. The period after the Rapture will be a movement toward a world church and a world religion which will promote true Christian doctrine and unite the world around the truth and the love of God. (page 7, top)

- 6) True or False. After the Rapture of all true Christians of God's "church" (i.e. "the body of Christ"), God will alleviate Israel's current blindness to the gospel as a nation. This will open their eyes up to the fact that Jesus Christ is indeed their Messiah and Savior.
(page 7, top; Romans 11:25)

- 7) True or False. After the Rapture, just as in the first century of the Christian church, the Jews will become the ambassadors for the Gospel, winning both Jew and Gentiles to Christ during the 7-year Tribulation Period. (page 7, middle; Revelation 7:4-10)

- 8) What fact about the Jews points to them as being natural missionaries to the whole world during the Tribulation Period? (page 7, bottom)

- 9) True or False. After the Rapture, when the Jews as a "nation" recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah, all Jews and members of the tribe of Israel will put their trust in Him and be saved.
(page 7, bottom; Ezekiel 20:37-38; Zechariah 13:8-9)

- 10) True or False. The "feet stage" of Daniel 2 and the ten-horn stage of the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7 will be fulfilled after the Rapture of the church when there is a "revival" of the Ancient Roman Empire. (page 8, top)

- 11) When the "ten horned" political power based in Europe rises during the Tribulation Period, what will the "little horn" of Daniel 7:8 become? (page 8, middle)

c. The Period of Peace

- 1) After the Rapture of the Church, the "Antichrist" (i.e. "Prince of the people who shall come") will sign a key peace treaty with "what" nation that starts God's clock for the 7-year Tribulation Period?
(page 8, bottom-middle; Daniel 9:26-27)

- 2) True or False. The “little horn” dictator mentioned in Daniel 7:8 cleverly uses the controversy between Israel and her surrounding nations as device to set himself up as a protectorate of Israel and by this means he brings a measure of peace and tranquility to the political situation in the Middle East. (page 8, bottom)

- 3) During this “period of peace” during the 7-year Tribulation Period, what is going on with the “world church” that is left on the earth after the Rapture? (page 9, top)

- 4) During the “period of peace” during the 7-year Tribulation Period, the Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt and Orthodox Jews will renew “what” that has not occurred since the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.? (page 9, top; Daniel 9:27, 12:11)

- 5) What “shatters” the temporary tranquility of the Middle East during the “period of peace” of the 7-year Tribulation Period? (page 9, middle; Ezekiel 38-39)

- 6) True or False. Since “Gog’s” attack on Israel (see Ezekiel 38-39) is a violation of the protection agreement made with Israel, the Antichrist will muster his revived Roman Empire armored forces to destroy “Gog and Magog’s” armies. (page 9, bottom; Ezek 38:18-23)

d. The Period of Persecution

- 1) After the Russian armies are supernaturally destroyed by God when they try to invade Israel, what does the “ruler of the Middle East” (i.e. “The Antichrist”!) seize this opportunity to do?
(page 10, middle; Revelation 13:7; Daniel 7:23)

- 2) According to Revelation 13:16-17, once the Antichrist has control of the entire world’s economy, what must a person do to either “buy” or “sell” anything?

- 3) The last half of the 7-year Tribulation Period is called “what” according to Jeremiah 30:7? (page 11, top)

- 4) The last half of the 7-year Tribulation Period is also called “what” according to Revelation 7:14?

- 5) What “sign” did Jesus give to the Jews to look for in Matthew 24:15-20 as the beginning of the “massive persecution” of the Jews during the 7-year Tribulation Period?

- 6) What actually is the “abomination that causes desolation” that Jesus and Daniel spoke about?
(page 11, bottom; Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-20; Revelation 13:14)

- 7) According to 2Thessalonians 2:4 and Revelation 13:8, 15, what is something that the world ruler (i.e. “the Antichrist”) does and then “orders” under the threat of death? (page 11, bottom – page 12, top)

- 8) How long does the final “persecution period” of the 7-year Tribulation Period last?
(page 12 middle; Revelation 11:2, 13:5; Daniel 7:25, 9:27, 12:11-12)

- 9) True or False. Unprecedented judgments will take place on the earth during the “Great Tribulation Period” that Jesus described as being so terrible that if God does not choose to “cut them short” by the second coming of Christ, the entire human race will be exterminated.
(page 13, top; Revelation 6:1-8:1, 8:2-21, 11:15-19; Matthew 24:21-22)

- 10) God’s judgments on the earth destabilizes the “Antichrist’s” power and ability to maintain peace and prosperity, so a huge world war begins on earth which is “stopped” by what supernatural event?
(page 13, bottom; Revelation 19:11-21)