

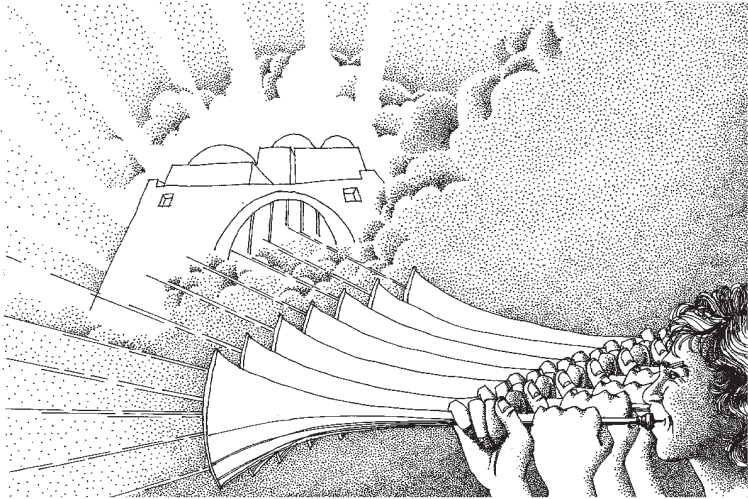
Lesson 10

The Future: Revelation, Reward and Rest

The Bible has much to say about the fulfillment of God's plan for His people. In his first message following Pentecost, Peter declared that in the future God would restore all things (Acts 3:21). Later, in very moving terms, the apostle Paul revealed the nature of what lies ahead for Christians (Romans 8:18-25). Creation, he stated, awaits the unveiling of God's redemptive program.

Ever since the fall of man, nature has been under the tragic effects of the curse. Man also has groaned beneath the burden of forcing a meager living from sin-cursed, stubborn earth. His body has suffered the effects of disease and decay. With ears attuned to the voice of his Maker, man (along with the rest of creation) awaits the blessed statement: "No longer will there be any curse" (Revelation 22:3). The time is coming when God will deal with the source of all these problems. The wicked, including Satan, will be judged, and Jesus will come to take the righteous to be with Him in heaven. That is the blessed hope of the believer!

In this lesson we will discuss the fulfillment of Bible prophecy and the future consummation of God's program. As you consider these important matters, may the hope imparted cause you to examine yourself closely and purify yourself from anything that would hinder you from being ready for our Lord's return.



lesson outline

The Blessed Hope

The Tribulation

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Millennium

The Judgment of Satan and the Wicked Dead

The New Creation

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- State the order of the end-time events and the significance of each event.
- Explain the purpose and process of the Tribulation.
- Discuss the evidence for and purposes of the Millennium.
- Understand the importance of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for believers and non-believers alike.

learning activities

1. As background for this lesson, read Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, and Revelation 19. Be sure also to find and read other Scripture references as they are given in the lesson. Do the lesson and self-test as usual.
2. Review Lessons 8-10 carefully. Then answer the questions in Unit Student Report 3. When you have finished, send your answer sheet to your ICI University instructor.

key words

abominable	desolate	Sabbath Year
sacrilege	dispersion	(sabbatical year)
blasphemy	extinction	time frame
confrontation	imperishable	vindicated
consummation	perishable	
deify	renovation	

lesson development

THE BLESSED HOPE

Objective 1. Write short definitions of terms related to the blessed hope.

In his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul declares that the gospel of the grace of God has appeared to all people. It confronts them with a moral choice: whether or not they will say *No* to ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled and godly lives in this present age, as they wait for the *blessed hope*. That *blessed hope*, he states, is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-14). His appearing shall also bring about the destruction of all authority that is opposed to God. As we begin our study of “last things,” or end-time events, we will first direct our attention to the *blessed hope* of the believer.

In the final hours before His death, our Lord revealed to the 12 disciples the basis for the believer’s hope. He spoke of His Father’s

house with its abundance of rooms. He told them He was leaving to prepare a place for them (and for all who believe in Him). Also, He assured them that as surely as He would leave them, so would He return to take them to live with Him (John 14:1-3).

This message of hope was confirmed by the angels who appeared following Jesus’ ascension. They said, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The apostle Paul, by divine revelation, declared that believers eagerly await the “redemption” of their bodies (Romans 8:23), which will be changed at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20-21).

The Scriptures indicate that the coming of the Lord includes two aspects: 1) a coming *for* believers, and 2) a coming *with* them. His coming *for* believers is called the Rapture, and His coming *with* them is referred to as *the Revelation*. As we develop the theme of end-time events, we shall discuss these two events. Let’s consider first the Rapture and the reward of believers and then their relation to other events.

- 1 (Choose the best answer.) The *blessed-hope* refers to
 - a) the revelation of Christ when He comes *with* His own.
 - b) the rapture of believers when Christ comes *for* them.
 - c) all of the end-time events.

The Rapture of Believers

When God in His sovereign wisdom determines that the task of spreading the gospel has been completed, He will initiate the *consummation* (the point at which something is made complete or perfect) of His program.

- 2 Compare Matthew 24:14 with Matthew 24:36. According to these verses, what can we know about the time of Jesus’ return for those who belong to Him?

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In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 we read that believers will be “caught up” (raptured) to meet the Lord in the air and to be taken to the dwelling place promised in John 14:1-3. In

1 Corinthians 15:50-52 Paul indicates that the physical bodies of all believers will be changed as their mortal bodies are transformed instantly and made ready for heaven. This event will occur suddenly. Wherever a believer may be, he will be “caught up” suddenly. The Bible compares this sudden event to the coming of a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

The message for believers is clearly this: They must be alert and self-controlled as they live from day to day, realizing that the judgment of God will come upon those who reject God’s offer of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). The hope of believers, then, is 1) deliverance from the coming wrath of God; 2) the privilege of seeing their Lord; and 3) being made like Him (1 John 3:2).

3 Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and fill in the blanks to complete these statements:

- a** Two classes of believers will be raptured: the
and the
- b** The hope of believers in the return of the Lord is based upon
.....
- c** The apostle Paul indicates that unbelievers grieve because they have no in the resurrection of the body and eternal life.

A close examination of 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 indicates that at the Rapture certain changes will occur. At the moment of the Rapture, living believers will instantly be changed from “mortal” to “immortal.” This means they will never die. Those believers who have died in Christ will first be resurrected, and then they will be changed from “perishable” (capable of decay or destruction) to “imperishable” (that which will never decay). Since flesh and blood—that is, our present physical bodies—cannot inherit the kingdom of God, the indication is that they will be changed into some kind of *glorified* bodies. We don’t understand everything about these glorified bodies, but we do know they will never again experience pain, sickness, or death, and they will be eternal.

While the Rapture will take place suddenly, and no one but God the Father knows the exact time, we are given some hints as

to when it will occur. Jesus stated that there would be signs or disturbances in the heavens which would cause anguish and distress among the nations. In addition, there will be famine, disease, and war to accompany the heavenly signs (see Luke 21:10, 25-28). These events simply signal the approach of the end. Believers recognize from these that their union with Christ is nearing, as well as their *reunion* with beloved friends and relatives who have already gone to be with the Lord.

4 Briefly explain what will happen to the physical bodies of both living and dead believers at the moment of the Rapture.

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The Reward of Believers

Various biblical references indicate that believers will be rewarded on the basis of their Christian behavior (see Matthew 16:27; 2 John verse 8; Revelation 22:12). Paul, speaking to the members of the Corinthian church, said, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10). The word translated *judgment seat is bema*, and is understood better as a *reward reviewing stand*. A good illustration of this stand was the kind on which judges of an Olympic contest stood to review the games so that they could reward the victors. The purpose of this *review* is for each believer to give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:10-12).

Our judgment by God is a review of our Christian service. It is not so much the *quantity* of works but the *quality* of what we’ve done for God that will be examined. What has been the motive for our service? Has it been selfless devotion to Him, or have we served simply to draw attention to our talents, abilities, and resources? The Bible clearly reveals that the quality of our work will be reviewed, and service that survives the test as *quality service* will be rewarded. Service that is motivated by selfishness and pride will not be rewarded (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

Although the time of this review is not identified specifically, some Bible scholars believe that it will take place following the Rapture. While those who have rejected God’s salvation are undergoing a time of the greatest wickedness,

anguish, and chaos ever known on earth, faithful servants of the Lord will be honored in His presence.

5 (Choose the best answer.) Scripture teaches us that every believer will give account of his service to God and that each one will receive

- a) the same reward whether his service is great or small.
- b) a reward based on both the quantity and quality of his service.
- c) a reward based on the motives or quality of his service.
- d) either reward or punishment.

6 In your notebook, write a short explanation of each of these terms:

- a** The believer's glorified body
- b** The revelation of Jesus Christ
- c** The Rapture
- d** The *blessed hope*
- e** The judgment seat of Christ

THE TRIBULATION

In the Olivet discourse, which is recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, Jesus responded to questions the disciples asked: 1) When will the present temple buildings be destroyed? and 2) What will be the signs of Your coming and the end of the age?

The answers Jesus gave to these two important questions are blended together so much that it is difficult to determine which part of his answers refers to the destruction of the temple and the dispersion (scattering) of the Jewish people, an event soon to take place, and which referred to the signs that will precede the return of Jesus at the "end of the age."

We are greatly helped in understanding Jesus' response by His reference to the prophecies of Daniel, which tell about certain end-time events (Matthew 24:15). In connection with this, we will benefit from a review of the history of the Jewish people and their relation to the events we are now considering. God has provided

us with a general outline of future events that concern the Jewish people and their capital city, Jerusalem (Daniel 9:24-27). This outline is based upon a time frame that included the past history of the Jews as well as their future. Read Daniel chapter 9 in preparation for our discussion of these events.

An Overview of the Jew in Bible History and Prophecy

Objective 2. *Given a list of prophetic events from Daniel 9 and Amos 9, select those which have already taken place.*

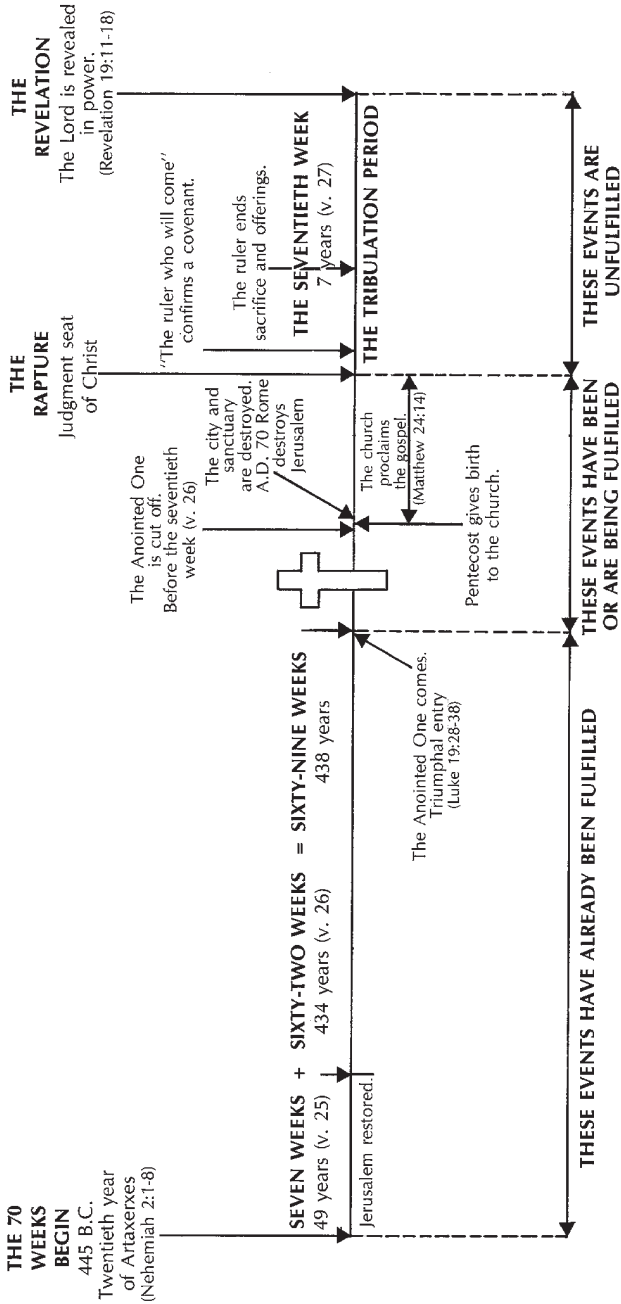
Daniel's Vision

The Scriptures tell us that, because of the Jewish people's failure to observe the Sabbath of the land every seven years, God had decreed that they would remain in the land of their enemies for seventy years. (Compare Leviticus 25:2-7 and 26:14-16, 31-35 with 2 Chronicles 36:21 for an explanation of the Sabbath Year and the results of not observing it.) The indication is that for 490 years the people had failed to keep the required Sabbath Years. The key to this short but highly significant prophecy of Daniel 9 revolves around a similar period of the seventy "sevens" or seventy "weeks" of years referred to in verses 24 to 27.

The nation of Israel was accustomed to "weeks" of years, for every *seventh* year was a *sabbatical* year of rest for the land (Leviticus 25:3-4). The great jubilee of social and economic adjustment which took place every fiftieth year was based upon a multiple of this important *week of years*—seven sevens, or weeks, of years (see Leviticus 25:8-9). During this fiftieth year all debts were canceled, slaves were set free, and land estates were returned to the original owners.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS IN PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE

"Seventy 'sevens' (weeks) are decreed for your people (the Jews) and your holy city (Jerusalem)." **Daniel 9:24-29**



How unusual it was that when the 70 years of captivity were almost over, an angel should be sent to reveal through Daniel the beginning of a new period in God's dealing with the Jewish people. As you will see from Daniel's prophecy, this period would extend for the same number of years as the number covered by the violations of the sabbatical year, or *490 years* (that is, seventy sevens of years). Let us review briefly the facts that are given in Daniel's vision, and then we will look at the interpretation of the vision.

1. The prophecy concerns Daniel's people, the Jews, and his holy city, Jerusalem (v. 24).
2. The prophecy involves a time period of seventy sevens or weeks of years. This represents a time period of 490 years.
3. The activities to be completed in this time period include:
 - a. The finishing of transgression
 - b. The ending of sin
 - c. The atoning for wickedness
 - d. The anointing of the most holy (or *a* most holy One)
 - e. The bringing in of everlasting righteousness (v. 24)
4. The time period involved initially is seven sevens (49 years) and sixty-two sevens (434 years), making a total of sixty-nine sevens (483 years—see v. 25).
5. The time *begins* at a very precise point: the proclamation of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.
6. The initial time period ends with a very specific event: the coming of the Anointed One, and His being cut off soon thereafter (vs. 25-26).
7. Two rulers are in view: the *Anointed One* (Jesus) and the *ruler who will come* (the Antichrist), whose people will destroy the city and the sanctuary (vs. 25-26).
8. A final seven (or week of) years then comes into focus in which the *coming ruler* (Antichrist) will make a covenant with the Jewish people to cover the seven-year period. However, halfway through this time period, after three and one-half years, this coming ruler will break the covenant, stop Jewish religious activity, and desolate (ruin, make empty) the temple, before he meets his end.

7 Based upon the preceding information, we can conclude that the time periods covered in Daniel's vision are based upon the number of

- a) times Jewish people failed to observe their sabbatical year.
- b) rulers who would take control over the Jewish people.
- c) weeks in a year.

Interpretation of the Vision

Let's proceed with the interpretation of this remarkable vision, which begins with Daniel 9:25:

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. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing (vs. 25-26).

Notice that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1-8). A careful review of historical records indicates the date of 445 B.C. for this decree. The city was indeed rebuilt in times of trouble. Then, after another 434 years the Anointed One appeared precisely as prophesied. Biblical scholars have calculated very carefully that exactly 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes, Jesus, the Anointed One, made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem at the conclusion of His earthly ministry (Luke 19:28-38). Then, within a few days, He was *cut off* by the events of the crucifixion.

Next in Daniel's vision the angel told him that the people of the coming ruler would destroy the city and the sanctuary after the Anointed One was cut off (v. 26). This part of the prophecy was fulfilled very accurately in 70 A.D. when the Roman army destroyed the city of Jerusalem, broke down its walls, burned the sanctuary (temple), and then pried apart the very stones of which it was built (Matthew 24:2). It was at this time that the Jewish nation, Israel, ceased to exist as a sovereign (self-governing) nation. Its people were scattered to the ends of the earth, and the long-term purposes God had foretold (Daniel 9:24) were seemingly postponed.

The events of the last seven or the seventieth week of years in Daniel’s vision have not yet come to pass. It is this final period in God’s program for the Jewish nation that concerns us particularly in terms of the end-time. We must, therefore, examine what has happened to cause a break in the time frame that God established. We will start with the early days of the Jewish nation.

Briefly, God made it very clear to the nation of Israel as it entered into the Promised Land that *obedience* to His laws would bring benefits (see Deuteronomy 28:1-14). He also stated clearly the evil that would follow His peoples’ *disobedience* (Leviticus 26:14-45; Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The Bible indicates that, because of their disobedience and seemingly incurable sinfulness, God finally permitted His people to be dispersed (scattered or sent out) from their land. Then He made the land desolate (Isaiah 6:11-12; 17:9; 64:10). Earlier, 70 years of captivity had not served to turn the people back to God. Therefore, with the dispersion brought about by the Roman conquest, the Jewish people became “wanderers,” and they suffered untold misery as they sought for a place of refuge from hostile Gentile nations.

Thus, Israel, the *chosen nation*, was deprived of the Promised Land for a time. God in His love and mercy had indicated that He would not forsake His people completely (Leviticus 26:43-45), but that He would recall them from the very ends of the earth (Isaiah 11:11-12). He would use various means to gather them, to attract them from their adopted homes to the land He had given to their “father” Abraham for in everlasting possession (Jeremiah 16:14-16).

8 What event (a fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy) took place and marked the end of the Jewish nation, causing the people to be scattered to the ends of the earth?

.....

The Return to Israel

Interestingly enough, at the beginning of this present century, after centuries of horrible persecution, many Jewish people found that they were not now so detested. Therefore, they settled down in relative contentment in various parts of the

world. As a result, they tended to lose sight of their ancient attachment to the Promised Land.

However, one Jewish leader in Europe, Dr. Theodore Herzl, was uneasy as he witnessed the rise of persecution in Russia near the end of the nineteenth century. Believing that things might get much worse for his people, he attempted to interest them in the idea of establishing a national homeland in Palestine. His efforts to establish the modern “Zionist Movement,” however, met with little success. Jews in Germany, for example, said, “We know nothing of Zion. Germany is our Palestine and Munich is our Jerusalem.”

As the world moved toward war in Europe, Jews found life becoming more and more difficult. Then, during World War I, the Zionist Movement brought pressure upon the British government, which led to the eventual release of the *Balfour Declaration*. This document pledged British support for the establishment in Palestine of a homeland for the Jewish people. When the British took control of the Holy Land following the war, Jewish immigration to Palestine was encouraged. Many Jews returned to coexist alongside of the Arab people who had been living on the land for centuries.

Soon World War II threatened, and persecution of the Jews began in earnest. In Europe it became so intense that many Jews came to realize that their only hope of survival was to get out of Europe and return to their ancient land. Following the end of World War II, masses of Jews left their adopted homes for Palestine. By the middle of May, 1948, the returned Jews proclaimed the birth of the modern state of Israel. Soon the prophecy of Amos 9:14-15 began to be fulfilled literally:

I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land that I have given them, says the Lord your God.

The land had been seemingly worthless for nearly 2000 years. God had said that it would blossom as a flower (Isaiah

35:1-2). Isaiah's prophecy has been fulfilled most accurately. The waste places have been reclaimed, and the ruined cities have been repopulated, rebuilt, and strengthened (Ezekiel 36:33-36; see also Isaiah 61:4).

One historian has noted that World War I prepared the Promised Land for the Jewish people; World War II prepared the Jewish people for their land; and a coming war will prepare the Jewish people for their God.

Those who keep up-to-date concerning problems in the Middle East are aware that, with the return of the Jews to their ancient land, many of the long-time inhabitants of the land, the Palestinians, have been displaced and have become refugees in large numbers to other Middle Eastern countries. This has been a cause of increased tensions and strife between the Jews and their Arab neighbors. As we will see later, this is a factor that will contribute to the eventual fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Middle East.

With this prophetic picture in mind, we now turn to the substance of Daniel 9:27, which concerns the "coming ruler" and the completion of the things God decreed in verse 24.

9 Circle the letter preceding the prophetic events which have already taken place, as explained in this section:

- a** The exile of the Jews for 70 years because of disobedience
- b** The restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem following the 70 years in captivity
- c** The coming of the Anointed One
- d** The coming of the Antichrist
- e** The cutting off of the Anointed One
- f** The people of the coming ruler destroy the Holy City and the temple
- g** The end of the Jewish nation as a sovereign nation
- h** The prophecy in Amos 9 that the nation of Israel would once again be restored and the people would return to make gardens and plant vineyards
- i** The covenant between the Jewish people and the *coming ruler* which is broken after three and one-half years

Daniel's Seventieth Week

Objective 3. *Select true statements concerning events of the period of the Antichrist and the battle of Armageddon.*

We have seen that, following the cutting off of the Anointed One, the nation of Israel came to an end. In this same time frame, the church was born and began its God-given mission. The apostle Paul declares in Romans chapters 9–11 that God did not reject Israel completely. However, in the meantime He has challenged the church to act as His instrument of evangelism as believers share the gospel with the people of the world. In the interval between the cutting off of the Anointed One and the future consummation (completion) of God's program as it concerns Israel, the church has continued to function.

Scriptural evidence points to the fact that the church is awaiting the coming of the Lord to catch it away (1 Corinthians 15:50-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). It appears, however, that the coming ruler is being restrained or held back from his wicked plans by the Holy Spirit, who works through the church (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). As soon as the church is raptured, or caught up, this man of lawlessness will be revealed. Then God will direct His attention to Israel once again, as the events of the seventieth week move forward toward fulfillment.

We have noted that Daniel 9:24-27 concerns the Jewish people. As Jeremiah previews this period of time, he compares Israel's experience to the anguish a mother endures as she gives birth to a child (Jeremiah 30:1-11). No other period in history will compare to this one in terms of suffering; it is the "time of trouble for Jacob" (v. 7). This means "the time of trouble for the nation of Israel." How will all of this trouble come about?

The Antichrist

Daniel 9:26, you may recall, speaks of the coming ruler, while verse 27 reveals his activities. Note carefully that he will confirm a covenant with many for "one seven" (seven years). Apparently Middle East tensions between the Jews and their Arab neighbors will continue until a major crisis develops, undoubtedly threatening world peace. At this point, the *coming-ruler* (the Antichrist) will

step forth to establish peace. His diplomatic achievement will be hailed as a major triumph, and the people of the world will acclaim him as one without equal (Revelation 13:4).

Israel will look to this peacemaker to guarantee her peace. Freed from the concern to maintain a high state of military preparedness, the Jewish people will be able to turn their money and energy toward peaceful purposes: developing the land, raising their living standard, and finding homes and jobs for the many displaced people. The making of the peace covenant will identify the *Peacemaker* as “the man of lawlessness” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

For a time things will go well in the entire region, but in the middle of the covenant the ruler will break his word (Daniel 9:27). The biblical text says that he will ban Israel’s religious and civil rights. In place of their orthodox worship, he will set up an *abominable sacrilege* (a hateful and terrible violation of a place consecrated to God) in the temple. Since he will deify himself (claim to be God) and demand worship (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4, 8-11; Revelation 13:13-15), it appears that he will set up an image of himself in the temple and require Jews to worship it or die. He will be assisted by a special agent whom we might call his “minister of propaganda.” This false prophet will perform miracles and have a powerful, evil influence over people (Revelation 13:13; 16:13).

Jesus referred to this crowning act of blasphemy, calling it “the abomination that makes desolate.” He gave this warning: “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel...Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matthew 24:15-16). In powerful, symbolic language we learn of the horror the Jews will experience as the evil systems of the end-time try to destroy the nation of Israel (see Revelation 12:13-17; Daniel 12:1, 6-7).

During this same time period there will also be much chaos and difficulty for non-Jews, for three series of judgments will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth. Revelation chapters 6, 8, 9, 15 and 16 describe the increasing wrath of God that will be visited upon the kingdom of the “coming ruler” as time progresses.

As this evil ruler seeks to strengthen his power, he will use a worldwide system of controls over finance and credit. Through this means, he will be able to force people to accept his leadership, because no one will be able to do business unless he accepts the mark of identity required by this ruler (Revelation 13:16-17). As he works toward the establishment of a worldwide government, he will meet with resistance. Thus, war is a characteristic of the last half of his seven-year rule.

Ezekiel, under prophetic inspiration, indicates that a northern confederation of nations will descend on the nation of Israel, which is enjoying the security provided by the “lawless one.” The godless multitude in this battle group expects to destroy Israel; however, it does not count on God’s concern for His people. As the attack occurs, God defends His people and almost totally destroys the invading force (Ezekiel 38 and 39). Other forces also stir themselves up, and the “lawless one” is forced to defend his claims to rule.

Armageddon

Daniel, too, notes that opposition will spring up in various places. This forces the “lawless one” to keep on the move to crush his opposition (Daniel 11:40-45). His one-world government will evidently be torn by dissension (disagreement) as the end approaches. As the time of the end draws near, God will call the armies of the world together to the greatest and final battle of history, at a place called *Armageddon* (Revelation 16:16).

However, at Armageddon the issue will not be decided by the sophisticated weapons of man, or the size of the armies, or the dedication of the warriors. *God will surprise the gathered armies as He invades from outside the planet.* The result will be awful beyond description (see Revelation 19:19-21).

Not only will arrogant men defy God at this battle, but they will also at this point be on the verge of destroying Israel. However, as our Lord Jesus Christ comes upon the scene, several things happen. As Israel beholds the destruction of her enemies, she suddenly experiences a change of heart (see Zechariah 14:4-5, 12-15). The One (Jesus) who is leading the battle is none other than the One their fathers rejected. Now this pierced One brings a mighty

deliverance. With His appearing the Jewish people who have survived are broken by a contrite spirit (Zechariah 12:10-13:1), and they welcome Him who comes in the name of the Lord. More of the elements of God's program noted in Daniel 9:24 are now brought into focus, as we shall see in the next section.

10 Which of these statements are **TRUE** concerning events of the period of the Antichrist and the battle of Armageddon?

- a** Other names for the Antichrist are *coming ruler* and *man of lawlessness*.
- b** The Anointed One referred to is Jesus Christ.
- c** When the church was born, God completely rejected the nation of Israel.
- d** Before the coming ruler appears, the church will be "caught away" or raptured.
- e** Israel will be spared the trials and tribulations of the end times.
- f** The Antichrist will fulfill a seven-year peace covenant with Israel; this will be a period of great peace and prosperity worldwide.
- g** The Scriptures indicate that the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and violate the holy temple.
- h** The Antichrist will gain control over the whole world and force his identity mark upon everyone who wishes to do business.
- i** The first ones to strike during the battle of Armageddon are the gathering armies with their powerful weapons.
- j** Jesus will eventually be revealed to the Jewish nation as their Lord.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Objective 4. *Explain what conditions will bring about the revelation of Christ, and describe the outcome of the two opposing leaders.*

The Conditions

While the events of the Tribulation Period are occurring, believers are with their Lord. As the tide of wickedness rises and the sinfulness of man reaches its peak, the second aspect of the Lord's coming will occur: His revelation to the peoples of the world and to the assembled armies of the earth (Revelation 1:7;

19:11-21). On this occasion, believers come *with* the Lord as He returns to the earth (Colossians 3:4).

At this time, then, two conditions will have reached unbearable levels. The first is *the godlessness and selfishness of man*. That is why two angels cry out that the harvest is ripe (Revelation 14:15). The time for the judicial harvest has come. God, who has given man the freedom to make choices, will no longer permit him to follow his twisted passions. The doubters and unbelievers who challenge the very idea of a holy God will be silenced. The sin problem must be resolved forever. In response to the declaration of the two angels, another angel will, figuratively speaking, swing his sickle on the earth, gather the grapes, and throw them into the great winepress of God's wrath (Revelation 14:19).

The second condition that God will not tolerate any longer is *the persecution of Israel*. As we have seen, the "lawless one" will have as his primary goal the extinction (total destruction) of the Lord's brethren. However, God will not stand by forever while this evil purpose is being carried out. The time will come for His intervention, which will help to bring about His return to earth.

11 (Choose one answer.) The figurative language in Revelation 14:19 means that a time is coming when God will

- a) destroy all plant life on earth.
- b) bring final judgment upon sinful people who reject Him.
- c) rapture the church.
- d) cause wicked men to destroy themselves.

The Event

At His first coming Jesus appeared as the suffering Servant. He arrived at a little-known village with no ceremony or special recognition. Only a few shepherds beheld the glory that appeared on a lonely Judean hillside when the heavenly multitudes welcomed His birth (Luke 2:8-15). However, at His second coming He will appear in the *same* country with glory and great honor. He will not plead with men this time. He will come to destroy, to conquer, and to impose His authority by force.

The heavenly armies will be visible to human sight as they accompany Jesus, their Leader. They will take part in the

confrontation (face-to-face meeting) between our Lord and the forces of the *lawless one*. Let us note briefly what will be accomplished at the revelation of our Lord:

1. The immediate goal will be to conclude the war of rebellion that has broken out on a worldwide scale (Revelation 16:12-21; 19:11-21).
2. Our Lord will reveal Himself as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Satan, who until now has laid claim to the Kingdoms of this world, will be removed, and Jesus, the rightful King, will assume His kingly office.
3. Jesus will cause the leaders of the satanic forces to be powerless as He speedily confines them in the fiery lake (Revelation 19:19-21).
4. Of course, as we have noted, the saving of Israel will be a high priority. The event of our Lord's return will result in the Jewish people turning to God in repentance and sorrow. A spiritual renewal will occur unlike anything in history: These spiritually blinded people will lose their stony hearts and receive hearts of flesh with the power of the Spirit to enable them to keep their Creator's laws (Ezekiel 36:26-27).
5. Finally, our Lord's coming in glory will result in the establishment of a worldwide kingdom of righteousness, the thousand-year Kingdom Age or Millennium. The clearest indication of the conditions upon which entrance into this kingdom are based is found in Matthew 25:31-46. It appears that the treatment accorded to the Jews, the Lord's brethren, will determine this (see Matthew 25:40, also Genesis 12:1-3). The Millennium will be our next subject to consider.

12 What two extreme conditions will bring about the revelation of Jesus Christ when the redeemed of the ages will return to earth with Him?

.....

13 What will be the outcome for the rulers of the two opposing forces when they meet face-to-face this final time?

.....

THE MILLENNIUM

Objective 5. *Recognize the purposes and describe the characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom.*

Purposes of the Millennial Kingdom

The Bible speaks of an age of righteousness and peace, justice and abundance, in connection with the second coming of our Lord (Isaiah 2:1-4; 65:20-22; Micah 4:1-5). In Revelation 20:1-7, the period of time is said to be 1000 years. We get the word *millennium* from the Latin *mille* (thousand) and *anum* (year), which means simply “one thousand years.” However, the Kingdom is referred to in the Bible in a number of ways. In the Lord’s prayer it is spoken of as the “coming kingdom” (Matthew 6:10), while in Luke 19:11 it is called the “kingdom of God.” Revelation 11:15 refers to the “kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” Daniel 7 calls it “an everlasting dominion and an indestructible kingdom” (v. 14).

What are the purposes of this kingdom? First, in the beginning God established a moral order on earth which was subjected to the temptation of Satan, and the earth fell under bondage to this same evil spirit. Therefore, it is necessary that God’s glory be vindicated (defended; proved to be true or right) through victory over this satanic dominion. With the effects of the curse lifted and Satan bound, man will be free to observe the love, justice, and care of the Lord as He rules in equity and truth. As a result, man will give loyalty to the Lord. In His kingdom of goodness, our Lord will demonstrate that men’s needs have been supplied, that justice does exist, and that peace and harmony are possible on earth.

Second, the Kingdom Age is necessary to fulfill prophecy. God promised David that his descendants would rule forever (2 Samuel 7:8-17; Psalm 89:3-4, 19-37; Jeremiah 33:14-26). As we have seen, there has been an interruption in this rule; the prophecy still awaits fulfillment. In the fullness of time Jesus was born of Mary of the family of David, but He has never ruled on the throne of David in Israel. This prophecy, therefore, awaits fulfillment in the future. (See also Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45; and Romans 8:18-25 for related prophecies.)

Characteristics of the Kingdom

Numerous Scripture references add to our knowledge of the government and spiritual conditions that will exist in the reign of the Anointed One. Let's review them carefully.

1. It will be a literal reign on earth (Zechariah 14:9)
2. It will include all people remaining on earth (Psalm 73:8-11; Daniel 7:14; Matthew 25:31-32).
3. With the effects of the curse removed, the land will be highly responsive to food production. There will be no famine or scarcity of food (Isaiah 35:1; Micah 4:1-4).
4. The law of the Lord will be obeyed by all people. This rule, while kindly and good, will also be firm. Perfect judgment and justice will be the result. Anyone who refuses to obey will be punished (Psalm 2:9; Isaiah 11:4; 65:20; Zechariah 14:16-19).
5. The *subjects* of the King in this earthly kingdom will apparently be those who survive the Tribulation, both Jews and Gentiles.
6. Peace will be a primary characteristic of this kingdom led by the Prince of Peace. Without Satan's evil influence, there will be no more war (Isaiah 11:6-7).
7. Apparently redeemed believers will help administer the affairs of the Kingdom. The apostles will rule over Israel, and it appears that David will be resurrected and will serve as a vice-regent under our Lord (1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 5:10; Matthew 19:28; 25:31; Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24-25).
8. The animal kingdom will undergo a very marvelous transformation. The savage animals will become tame, and the tame will be unafraid. They will live together peacefully (Isaiah 11:6-9).
9. People will have a desire for God and spiritual things. They will study the Word of God so that His knowledge will be apparent everywhere (Isaiah 2:3; 11:9; Zechariah 8:20-23).

14 Which of these are purposes of the Millennial Kingdom?

- a) To give Satan and the wicked dead a last chance to repent and come to God
- b) To fulfill prophecy concerning the descendants of David
- c) To defend God's glory and establish that His way is the only true and right way

15 In your notebook, state the condition of the following characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom.

- a** The animal kingdom
- b** The law of the Lord
- c** The place of the Kingdom
- d** Redeemed believers who return with Christ
- e** King David
- f** The Jews and Gentiles who survive the Tribulation
- g** The Word of God and spiritual things
- h** Food production

THE JUDGMENT OF SATAN AND THE WICKED DEAD

Objective 6. *Explain why Satan will be released briefly following the Millennium and the purpose of the Great White Throne Judgment.*

The Final Deception of Satan

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released from his confinement (Revelation 20:7-10). He will go immediately throughout the whole earth to deceive people once more, encouraging rebellion against the Lord. Multitudes, we are told, will join his ranks and prepare to fight against God's people in their capital city.

You might ask, "How is it that people who have lived under the kind rule of King Jesus could turn on Him and be made to believe they can succeed in opposing Him?" You must remember that, during the Millennium, Satan will be bound. People will be required to follow the Kingdom's laws. While they will be obedient to our Lord, many will not choose to accept His saving grace. God will not force them to receive the Savior. Thus, at the end of the Kingdom, many apparently will not have trusted Christ

for salvation. Then when Satan appears with further delusion—the big lie—they will have the opportunity to revolt. They will have the privilege of exercising their right to choose.

This rebellion will be worldwide and it will grow until Satan actually directs his forces against the camp of God’s people. However, God will send fiery judgment upon the rebels and they will be burned up. Their leader, Satan, will be bound forever and confined in the lake of fire with the beast and the false prophet, where they will suffer the consequences of their rebellious spirits.

The Great White Throne Judgment

Following this final satanic rebellion, the time for judgment will arrive. It will be an awesome moment as all creation is moved at the majesty of God’s presence. All of those who have died without accepting God’s salvation will be resurrected to stand before the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15). All those who died in Christ, you will recall, were resurrected when the church was raptured (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Those who stand before the Great White Throne will be judged on the basis of their works and whether their names are in the book of life. As judgment proceeds, there is a review of each one’s works. Then examination is made to see if his name is in the book of life. Since these people died without accepting God’s salvation, their names will not be found in the book of life. On the basis of perfect justice, each unbeliever will then receive the sentence of eternal confinement in the lake of fire. The banishment is not only to eternal fire but also to a place of darkness and horror. Jesus spoke of this awful horror and indicated that it would cause people to weep and gnash their teeth (Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). In this way, then, God brings an end to evil and banishes it forever.

16 Complete these sentences.

- a** The reason Satan will be released briefly following the Millennium is to.....
- b** The purpose of the Great White Throne Judgment is to
.....

THE NEW CREATION

Objective 7. *State the basis upon which you expect to be a part of the new creation which God will establish.*

The apostle Peter, in writing about the present world order, says that it will be burned up. It appears that the earth will undergo a renovation (change or renewal) by fire (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:7). However, the apostle says that, following this upheaval, we are looking for “a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:10-13). Thus, God will finally bring His loyal people to His glorious and eternal creation.

While the Millennium will be a truly Golden Age, the believer will move beyond this into the new age where God the Father becomes all in all. In this new creation, God will establish His residence on earth. The city He has prepared defies description (1 Corinthians 2:9-10); it is beautiful beyond anything we have yet seen (Revelation chapters 21-22).

Eternal life, someone has observed, is not something without change or variety, nor is God going to retire when His program is complete. He is the God of the living, and we are to be like Him! He created a vast universe which appears to be in a state of continual renewal. In the age to come, we who now see a poor reflection will have eternity to study the wonders of His ongoing creation (1 Corinthians 13:12). We can join the song of the elders around the throne as they ascribe praise to our God:

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.

—Revelation 4:11

We may look back over the history that has unrolled since the angels said that Jesus would come back again (Acts 1:11). So much has happened! So much prophecy has already been fulfilled. Events have pushed the world forward to the moment where we now stand: *we are at the edge of the last phase of*

God's program. We rejoice, for we are closer to the day of final redemption. We must always keep in mind that the new creation awaits us, with Jesus as King! "Behold, I am coming soon," says Jesus. "Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book" (Revelation 22:7). Then we, the redeemed of the Lord, respond, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

17 Examine yourself as we conclude this lesson, and state in your notebook the basis upon which you expect to be a part of the new creation which God will establish (see Revelation 22:12-17).

As we come to the conclusion of this study, we must keep in mind that there is an ethical value in studying the Word of God, especially the prophetic Word:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. *Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he [Christ] is pure* (1 John 3:2-3).

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is TRUE. Write **F** if it is FALSE.

- **1** The events which will take place on earth following the Rapture are called “the blessed hope.”
- **2** The Rapture and the Revelation of Christ are two separate events; in the first He comes *for* His own, and in the second they return to earth *with* Him.
- **3** The day and hour when Jesus will return can be determined by studying the lists of “sevens” in Daniel 9.
- **4** Both dead and living believers will be included in the Rapture.
- **5** The Bible indicates that there will be degrees of reward for believers.
- **6** Most of the prophecies in Daniel 9 have already come to pass.
- **7** The *Anointed One who was cut off* refers to the Antichrist.
- **8** The Tribulation Period will last seven years, and half-way through that period the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews.
- **9** Israel was dispersed from the Promised Land because of disobedience.
- **10** The rebirth of the nation of Israel in May, 1948, is a fulfillment of prophecy.
- **11** The Antichrist will bring permanent peace to the world for 1000 years.
- **12** Only the Jewish people will be required to bear the mark of identity of the Antichrist in order to do business.
- **13** Armageddon will be a terrible battle between the Jewish nation and its enemies, in which Jerusalem and all its inhabitants will be destroyed.

. . . . **14** The revelation of Jesus Christ will occur when the persecution of the Jews and the godlessness of mankind reach an extreme condition.

. . . . **15** At the revelation of Jesus Christ, the lawless one and his armies will be defeated, and Jesus will be revealed as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

<p>Be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit Three and return Answer Sheet 3 to your ICI instructor.</p>
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answers to study questions

- 9** The events described in answers **a, b, c, e, f, g,** and **h** have already taken place. Answers **d** and **i** have not yet taken place.
- 1** b) the rapture of believers, when Christ comes for them.
- 10** **a** True.
b True.
c False.
d True.
e False.
f False.
g True.
h True.
i False.
j True.
- 2** His return will take place as soon as the gospel has been preached in the whole world. No one knows the day or the hour.
- 11** b) bring final judgment upon sinful people who reject Him.
- 3** **a** dead, living.
b the Lord's own word.
c hope.
- 12** Extreme godlessness or sinfulness and selfishness of man; extreme persecution of the nation of Israel.
- 4** They will both receive new, glorified bodies, immortal and imperishable.
- 13** Satan and his forces will be removed from power and thrown into the lake of fire. Jesus will take His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- 5** c) a reward based on the motives or quality of his service.

- 14** b) and c) are purposes of the Millennial Kingdom.
- 6** a An immortal, imperishable body which will replace the physical body at the moment of the Rapture.
b When Jesus returns *with* His own people to establish His kingdom.
c When Jesus returns *for* His own: the dead in Christ will be resurrected first; then the living believers will rise to meet Him in the air.
d The second coming of Christ (the Rapture).
e The “reviewing stand” where Jesus will judge the works of believers and rewards will be given based on the quality of their Christian life and service.
- 15** a All animals will live together in peace.
b Will be obeyed; there will be perfect judgment and justice.
c Earth.
d Will rule with Christ.
e Will serve as vice-regent under Christ.
f Will be the subjects of the heavenly King.
g Will be desired and studied.
h Will be plentiful.
- 7** a) times the Jewish people failed to observe their sabbatical year.
- 16** a give the inhabitants of the earth the opportunity to choose for or against God.
b provide for God’s judgment of the wicked based on whether their names are written in the book of life.
- 8** The destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.
- 17** Your answer. The new creation is for all who have acknowledged Jesus as Lord of their life, whose names are written in the book of life, and who look for His coming.

Your Notes

