



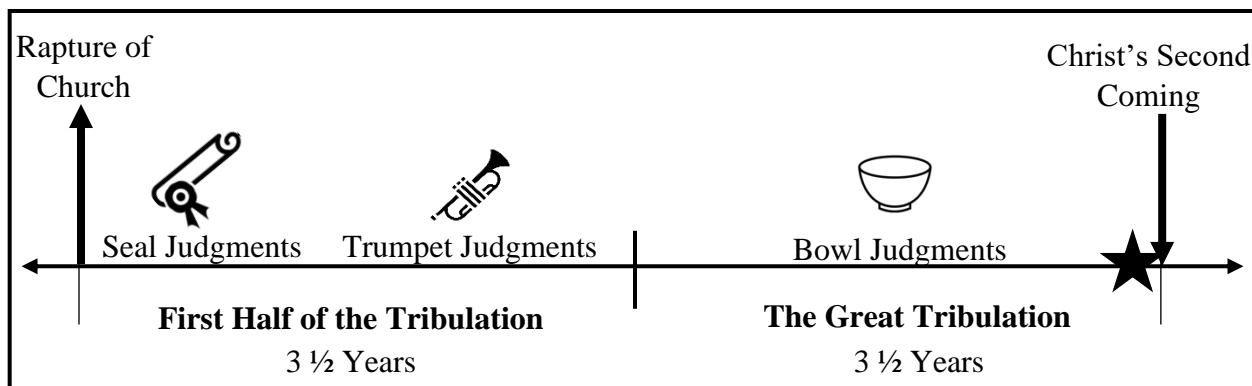
Eschatology – A Study of the End Times

Lesson 20: The Seven Year Tribulation Period, Part 7

Introduction

In the previous lesson, we began looking at what is going to take place at the end of the great tribulation, namely, the battle of Armageddon. Although the final battle will be a great slaughter of the world’s armies, the campaign of Armageddon will actually occur in eight different phases. In phase one, the armies will assemble for war at Mount Megiddo. In phase two, Babylon will be destroyed. In phase three, Jerusalem will be attacked. In phase four, the antichrist will move to attack the remnant of Israel. In this lesson, we will look at the details of the final four phases and what is going to take place at Christ’s second coming.

Timeline of Tribulation Judgments



Background of the Final Events

In order to understand what is going to take place in the latter half of the tribulation period, we must understand what the apostle Paul said in Romans regarding Israel. In Romans 9:31–32, Paul said, “but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.” The stone that they stumbled over is Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

Israel rejected their Messiah when He came 2000 years ago. In that rejection, there has been a hardening of Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. Paul said in Romans 11:25, “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in

your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” Israel sought a relationship with God by keeping the Law instead of by faith in Christ. They rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah and refused to turn to Him in faith because He did not fit their preconceived ideas about the Messiah. Therefore, they have stumbled over Jesus Christ and have been hardened toward Him. However, that hardening is temporary, and they will turn to Jesus as their Messiah when He returns. This background is helpful in understanding the final four stages of the campaign of Armageddon.

Phase 5: Israel Is Endangered and Regenerated¹

At this point in the campaign of Armageddon, Jerusalem has been attacked and ravaged. The nations of the earth have been gathered together by the antichrist in an effort to wipe out Israel. However, there is a Jewish remnant in the wilderness under the safe protection of God. This remnant will most likely be in Bozrah which is 80 miles south of Jerusalem (Dan. 11:36–45; Micah 2:12).

In phase five, the armies of the antichrist are gathered in the desert wilderness and are ready to attack the Jewish remnant that has fled for safety. The Jewish remnant will know of this attack against them, and in desperation they will turn to Christ to save them. Their spiritual blindness will be removed, and they will call out to their Messiah for salvation (Zech. 12:10.)

Hosea 6:1–3 indicates that the Jewish leaders, who once led the Jewish people to reject their Messiah, will now call for the nation to repent. Hosea says,

“Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us; He has wounded *us*, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth.”

The Jewish remnant will be urged to repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. This remnant will do this and be saved.

The prophet Joel speaks of a day when Israel will be spiritually awakened. Joel 2:28–29 says, “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.” It seems that Armageddon is the historic context where this will take place.

Israel will not only confess their national sins (Jer. 3:11–18; Hos. 5:15), but they will also confess their individual sin (Zech. 12:11–14) and be saved, fulfilling Paul’s prophecy of Romans 11:25–27. According to Zechariah 13:7–9, some two-thirds of the Jewish people will lose their lives during the tribulation. However, one-third—the remnant— will survive, turn to the Lord, and be saved (Is. 64:1–12).

¹ The following is adapted from *The End Times in Chronological Order* by Ron Rhodes.

Phase 6: The Second Coming of Messiah

The second coming of Christ will be a universal experience in the sense that every eye will witness the event. Revelation 1:7 says, “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.” Jesus also referred to this in Matthew 24:30 where He said, “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.”

The prayers of the Jewish remnant will be answered, and the Messiah will return personally to rescue His people from danger as they call out to Him. The very same Jesus who ascended into heaven comes back just as was promised (Acts 1:9–11). Old Testament prophetic Scripture reveals that Jesus will return first to the mountain wilderness of Bozrah, where the Jewish remnant is endangered (Is. 34:1–7; 63:1–6; Hab. 3:3; Mic. 2:12–13).

The second coming of Christ will be accompanied with magnificent signs in the heavens. He will come as the King of kings and Lord of lords with many crowns on His head—crowns that represent absolute sovereignty. His eyes will also be like blazing fire (Rev. 19:11–16).

Phase 7: The Final Battle Erupts

At the second coming of Christ, He will confront the antichrist and his forces and slay them with the sword of His mouth. John speaks about this final slaughter in Revelation 19:11–16 saying:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The deliverance that comes to the Jewish remnant will be instantaneous. The antichrist and his armies will be gathered together to attack the remnant, and it will look as if the remnant has no chance of survival. However, when the remnant repents and calls out to Jesus the Messiah, He will come and strike down Israel’s enemy. Christ will defeat all those who stand against Israel, and the antichrist will be slain. This will be the fulfillment of 2 Thessalonians 2:8 which says, “Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.” All the forces of the antichrist will be destroyed, from Bozrah all the way back to Jerusalem and finally ending in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12–13).

Phase 8: Christ Victoriously Ascends to the Mount of Olives

In the final phase of the campaign of Armageddon, Jesus Christ will ascend to the Mount of Olives. Zechariah 14:3–4 says:

“Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.”

When Christ ascends to the Mount of Olives and splits the mount from east to west, it will create a large valley for the remnant of persecuted Jews still living in Jerusalem to escape their enemies and run to their Savior, the Messiah (Zech. 14:5).

At this time, the seventh bowl judgment will finally be unleashed, and the tribulation will come to an end. Revelation 16:17–21 says:

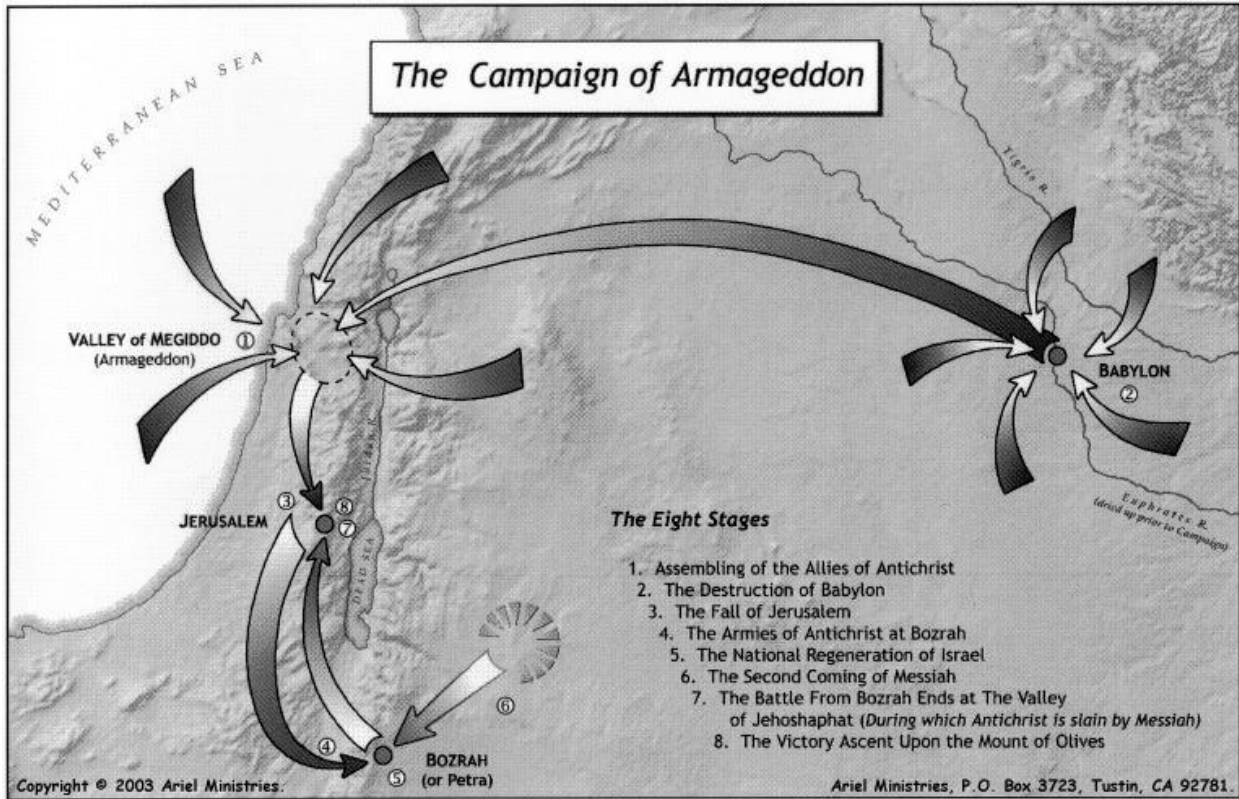
Then the seventh *angel* poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.” And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake *was it, and so mighty*. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

The end of the tribulation will bring about extreme cataclysmic events that will change the earth.

- There will be a global earthquake. The mountains will be leveled, and islands will vanish. The topography of the entire earth will be drastically changed (Rev. 16:18, 20).
- The Mount of Olives will split in half, creating a valley (Zech. 14:4).
- A spring of water will flow year-round from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean and Dead Seas (Zech. 14:8).
- Jerusalem will be elevated, and the surrounding region flattened into a plain (Zech 14:10).
- Jerusalem will be split into three areas (Rev. 16:19).
- There will be a horrific hailstorm, and the sun and moon will be darkened (Joel 3:14–16; Matt. 24:29; Rev. 16:21).

What is the purpose of these cataclysmic events at the end of the tribulation? John MacArthur states, “The physical changes will prepare Jerusalem for the central role it will play during the millennial kingdom, when Christ will reign there as King (Ps. 110:2; Isa. 2:3; 24:23; Mic. 4:7).”²

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Revelation 12-22* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), 152.



Application:

1. Run to Christ in times of trouble. Just as Israel will run to Christ in the tribulation, we can run to Christ in times of trouble knowing He is there for us.
2. Praise God for His unconditional promises. He has promised to redeem Israel. He will accomplish their salvation, not because they are good, but because He is good.