

# LESSON 9 The Future

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Everyone is interested in the future. Books, both good and bad, have been written about what people think is going to happen. Scientists and government leaders are asked for their ideas about what lies ahead for their nation.

People have always been anxious about the future, consulting tea leaves, horoscopes, crystal balls and other forms of fortune-telling. One day a lady came running to me, asking if she could read my palm and tell me my future. She was quite surprised when I told her that I had a little book that told me my future—and it told her future too! Then I gave her a copy of the New Testament.

The Bible is the one source of true predictions. Through His Word God gives us all that we need to know. There is no need to “read” tea leaves, or tarot cards. In fact, these and other forms of “magic” are forbidden by God.

If you have wondered about your future and about what will happen when Jesus comes again, you will be interested in studying this lesson. We will study about future judgments and the time of the Lord’s coming. Even the angels we studied about in the previous lesson are interested in knowing when the Lord will return to earth. Let us look into the Bible and see what it says about our future!

## ***The Plan***

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- A. The Rapture of Believers
- B. The Earthly Rule of Jesus
- C. The Judgment of Unbelievers

## ***The Goals***

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- 1. Explain when and for whom the Rapture will occur.
- 2. Indicate events that define the Christian term *Millennium*.
- 3. Explain what is the Great White Throne Judgment.

## **A. THE RAPTURE OF BELIEVERS**

**Goal 1.** Explain when and for whom the Rapture will occur.

*Rapture* refers to the future coming of the Lord when He will meet His church in the air. No one can tell us when the Rapture will take place because only God the Father knows. Jesus said,

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Matthew 24:36)

But there are signs telling us that the Rapture is drawing near. Jesus said that just before His return there would be an increase in worldliness, wickedness, and violence. False christs and false prophets would arise; there would be earthquakes, famine, and pestilence; wars and rumors of wars. All these signs spoken of in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are happening in our day.

Not everything, however, is negative. In spite of terrible times many people will seek the Lord and find Him. Joel prophesied about this:

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young

men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28–29)

Christians look forward to the Rapture with joy. Those who have died will be resurrected and those who are alive will be changed. All will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. Paul writes,

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. (1 Corinthians 15:51–53)

After the Rapture Christians will be judged and rewarded according to their faithfulness to Christ. Then they will go to the marriage supper of the Lamb when Christ, the Lamb of God, welcomes the church as His bride.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

We know that the blood of Jesus has removed our sins and we will not have to answer for them. But we will be rewarded according to our faithfulness. When trials come our way it is good to remind ourselves that the Lord sees everything.

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of

the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.” (Revelation 19:7–9)

## Application

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**1** According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, which statements are TRUE?

- a)** When the trumpet sounds all the dead shall rise.
- b)** The Lord will come to earth to judge sinners at this time.
- c)** Those who died believing in Christ will be raised to life.
- d)** All believers, dead and living, will be caught up to be with the Lord forever.

**2** What signs do you see in the world today that encourage you to believe for the soon coming of the Lord?

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## B. THE EARTHLY RULE OF JESUS

**Goal 2.** Indicate events that define the Christian term *Millennium*.

The Lord will return with His people to rule over the earth a thousand years. This period of time has been called the *Millennium* (taken from the Latin *mille* meaning “a thousand”).

The Bible talks of this era as a time of great joy and peace on earth. Jude 14 says, “The Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones.”

Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:6)

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. (Isaiah 11:6)

### ***Application***

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- 3** Circle the letter before each statement which completes the sentence correctly. The Millennium in the Bible refers to
- a)** the Lord's thousand year rule on earth.
  - b)** a time of war on earth.
  - c)** all believers ruling with Christ on earth.
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## **C. THE JUDGMENT OF UNBELIEVERS**

**Goal 3.** Explain what is the Great White Throne Judgment.

After Jesus has ruled a thousand years, the wicked dead will be raised to stand before God in Judgment. Then Satan, his angels, and all the wicked will be cast into hell. This judgment is called the Great White Throne Judgment. Several verses from Revelation 20 tell us about this judgment.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in

the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11–15)

Those whose names are written in the book of the living are the believers in Christ. They have nothing to fear because they will be with Christ forever. Revelation 21:2–4 tells us what John saw in a vision.

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

After the Great White Throne Judgment, God’s children will be with Him. He will prepare for them in a new heaven and a new earth.

## ***Application***

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- 4** Eternity with God will be a time of
- a)** remembering our past sins on earth and repenting of them.
  - b)** joy and living with God forever.
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## ***Check Your Answers***

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**1 c) and d)** are true.

**2** Your answer. It might be the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, many people turning to the Lord, or the gospel being preached to the ends of the earth.

**4 b)** joy and living with God forever.

**3 a) and c)** are correct.

