

After the Rapture: Heaven and Earth

Session 3 | Biblical Prophecy Series | Heavenly events and the world after the Rapture



I. The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema)

Timing and participants: Following the Rapture, the Church appears before Christ in heaven (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10–12). All believers participate.

Purpose: Christ evaluates faithful service and rewards—not salvation or condemnation. The quality of works is tested, and motives are revealed (1 Cor. 3:11–15; Matt. 6:1–2, 5, 16).

What is examined: Love for other believers; stewardship of gifts, money and time; endurance under trials; witnessing; self-control; hospitality; work, words, and faithfulness to His calling.

Selected texts: Matt. 10:40–42; 1 Cor. 9:24–27; Col. 3:22–24; Heb. 6:10; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:10.

Loss of reward: The believer remains saved even when works do not survive Christ's evaluation; the loss concerns reward, not eternal life (1 Cor. 3:14–15).

Faithfulness over prominence: Christ sees unseen acts of kindness, sacrificial giving, prayer, steadfastness, and care for His people (Matt. 6:3–6; Heb. 6:10).

II. Rewards at the Bema

Incorruptible crown: Self-discipline in the Christian race (1 Cor. 9:24–27).

Crown of righteousness: Loving and anticipating Christ's appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).

Crown of life: Faithfulness through trials and persecution (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10).

Crown of rejoicing: Spiritual fruit in evangelism and discipleship (1 Thess. 2:19–20).

Crown of glory: Faithful shepherding of God's people (1 Pet. 5:1–4).

Beyond crowns: Greater responsibility and authority in the Kingdom, and the honor of reflecting Christ's glory (Luke 19:13–26; Dan. 12:3).

Our response now: Serve with pure motives, endure hardship, use opportunities faithfully, and live in expectation of Christ (Col. 3:23–24; 2 Tim. 4:8).

III. The Marriage of the Lamb

The host: The Father in heaven. Bridegroom: Jesus Christ. Bride: The Church. Guests: Old Testament and Tribulation saints. Clothing: Fine, bright, clean linen (Rev. 19:7–9).

Sequence: The Bride is united with Christ; the marriage celebration belongs to the heavenly events associated with His return. Compare John 14:1–3; Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:7–9.

Significance: Christ completes His promise to receive His Church, rewards faithful service, and celebrates His redeemed Bride.

IV. On Earth — Shock and Consolidation

Immediate crisis: The disappearance of believers would provoke urgent explanations. Families, governments, transportation, markets, and supply chains could face tremendous disruption.

Centralized response: Governments may pursue extraordinary powers and coordinated measures in the name of stability and security.

Deception and leadership: An anxious world could become receptive to a persuasive leader promising order and peace. The lawless ruler eventually receives satanic authority (Dan. 7:8, 24; 2 Thess. 2:3–10; Rev. 13:1–8).

Key progression: Rapture → global upheaval → geopolitical realignment → conditions for a coming covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27). The covenant initiates Daniel's seventieth week.

V. The Interval: What to Watch For

Israel remains central: A regathered nation in its land and the importance of Jerusalem are integral to Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24–27).

World power realigns: The conditions that precede the Tribulation may include a reshaped Western sphere, intensified diplomacy, and a new security arrangement for Israel.

Essential distinction: The Rapture itself is imminent; the formal beginning of the seven-year Tribulation is tied to the covenant of Daniel 9:27.

After the Rapture: Heaven and Earth

Session 3 | Biblical Prophecy Series | Ezekiel 38-39 and the coming world power structure



VI. Gog and Magog — Ezekiel 38-39

Setting: In the latter years, a people regathered from the nations live in Israel at rest and in relative security (Ezek. 38:8, 11, 14, 16).

Coalition: Gog leads Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, Beth-Togarmah, Persia, Cush, Put and many other peoples against Israel (38:2-6, 15).

Objective: Gog plans to seize spoil, wealth, goods, and livestock. Sheba, Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish challenge his intentions but are not listed among the attackers (38:10-13).

God defeats the invasion: A great earthquake, mutual slaughter, pestilence, torrential rain, hail, fire and sulfur destroy the coalition. God vindicates His holiness before the nations (38:18-23; 39:3-6).

Aftermath: Burial and cleansing continue seven months; Israel uses captured weapons as fuel for seven years (39:9-16). These details are important to the discussion of timing.

VII. Two Views of the Invasion's Timing

View 1 — After Rapture, before Tribulation: Global disruption → Gog invades → God destroys the coalition → rivals are removed → a Western leader confirms the covenant with Israel. The resulting power vacuum provides an opening for his rise.

View 2 — Early in the Tribulation: The seven-year covenant is confirmed → Israel experiences a period of apparent security → Gog invades → God destroys the coalition → the beast's power grows before the midpoint crisis.

What separates them: View 1 explains the interval and gives more room for the weapon-burning period; View 2 links Israel's security directly to Daniel 9:27. Both distinguish Gog's invasion from Armageddon.

The central question: What accounts for the repeated description of Israel as secure and at rest? Both views take seriously Ezekiel's setting and God's supernatural victory (Ezek. 38:8, 11, 14, 23).

VIII. Gog and Magog Is Not Armageddon

Gog and Magog: A specific multinational coalition attacks an apparently secure Israel for plunder; supernatural judgments defeat the army, and extensive cleanup follows (Ezek. 38-39).

Armageddon: The beast gathers the kings for the final confrontation; Christ visibly returns in judgment, ending their rebellion before His Kingdom (Rev. 16:12-16; 19:11-21).

IX. The Future Western Confederacy

Daniel's four empires: Babylon (gold/lion); Medo-Persia (silver/bear); Greece (bronze/leopard); Rome (iron/terrifying beast) (Dan. 2; 7).

The final Roman phase: Ten toes of iron and clay and ten horns signify a final ten-ruler configuration. A little horn rises among them and subdues three (Dan. 2:41-44; 7:7-8, 24).

Revelation 17: Ten kings receive authority with the beast and give their political power to him (Rev. 17:12-13, 17). Their authority ultimately becomes concentrated in one ruler.

Three stages: Ten-ruler confederacy → Antichrist consolidates the coalition → worldwide dominion, finally overthrown by Christ (Dan. 7:25-27; Rev. 19).

X. Setting the Stage for the Covenant

Rival powers removed: The destruction of Gog's coalition could profoundly shift the balance of power around Israel and the wider region.

Security becomes attractive: In an unstable world, Israel and the nations may welcome a convincing international agreement.

Turning point: The coming ruler's confirmation of a covenant with many for one week marks the start of Daniel's final seven-year period (Dan. 9:27).

Remember: The lesson ends at this threshold: the Rapture has occurred, heavenly events are underway, and the earthly stage is being set for the Tribulation.