

LESSON ONE**What We Need to Know in Order to Better Understand End Time Prophecy****1 John 3:1-3**

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

The hope of his return, purifies us, even as He is pure. Therefore, it is fitting to keep our eyes focused on Him and the glories that will be revealed at His return.

In Order to Better Understand End Time Bible Prophecy, it is **IMPERATIVE** that we understand:

1. The Major Viewpoints of When the Rapture Will Take Place**A. Pre-Tribulation Rapture (Pre-Trib)**

This view holds that at some point in time unknown to us, Jesus will snatch His church (those who believe in Him) off the earth. This is our view.

B. Mid-Tribulation Rapture (Mid-Trib)

This belief is that the church will be snatched off the earth mid-way through the final seven years.

C. Post-Tribulation Rapture (Post-Trib)

This view is that the church will be snatched up at the end of the final seven years. Heavy in its emphasis is that God will use this time of persecution to purify His church for His return.

D. Pre-Wrath Rapture (The idea is that the first five judgments are not from God but from Satan [which Christians will have to endure] and the sixth judgment begins the wrath of God.)**E. No Rapture**

This viewpoint, called Kingdom Now or Dominion Theology is considered to be heresy. It teaches that Christians are to subdue the earth for God through infiltrating different worldly structures such as education and government, and that either Jesus has already returned (in us) or that He cannot return physically until the church accomplishes this task.¹

F. The End Times will unfold as God has determined. We can debate it endlessly, but no matter what we think, it is going to be as it is going to be.**Mark 13:32-33**

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.”

2. God’s Covenants with Mankind (not all listed)

¹ If you are interested in knowing more about this point of view and why it is unscriptural, go to: <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/l04.html>

- A. **Edenic Covenant** (Gen. 2:15-17; eat of every tree except for this one)
 - B. **Adamic Covenant** (Gen. 3:15-19; the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent)
 - C. **Noahic Covenant** (Gen. 9:8-17; will never again destroy the whole earth with a flood)
 - D. **Abrahamic Covenant** (Genesis 12-to make a nation of Abraham and to bless all the earth through him; Genesis 15-the Promised Land; Genesis 19-the promised son [Isaac] and promised Canaan, circumcision sign of the covenant)
 - E. **Mosaic Covenant**
This covenant provided certain protections and blessing for keeping the law, and a long list of curses for not obeying the law. It is based on the Ten Commandments.
Deuteronomy 4:13
So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.
 - F. **Davidic Covenant**
God promises that the line of David would always rule over Judah. Jesus was from the line of Judah (2 Sam 7).
 - G. **New Covenant**
The New Covenant was made between God the Father and God the Son by His death and resurrection, and is received by God's grace through faith in His Son, Jesus, and not by works.
 - H. **God has no covenant with the United States of America.** We may have dedicated our nation to Him, but He has made no promises to us individually as a nation. The USA does NOT replace "Israel" in Scripture.
 - I. **The point is, God has had different covenants throughout the ages. He remains the same, but His promises to mankind are not the same.**
3. **The Dividing Line between the Old and New Covenants**
- A. **The New Covenant began when Jesus died. Before He died, the Old Covenant was still in place.**
Hebrews 9:16-17
For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.
1 Corinthians 11:25
In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."
4. **Jesus Died for the Sins of the Whole World**
- 1 John 2:1-2**
My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.
John 3:16-18
For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

5. The Message of Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ **that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.** ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: **we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.** ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

6. The Nature of Our Purification and Our Freedom from God's Judgment and Wrath

A. Christians ARE the pure in heart.

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.

Titus 1:15-16

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. ¹⁶ They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

B. Our purification is by FAITH.

Acts 15:6-9

Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. ⁷ And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸ So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, ⁹ and made no distinction between us and them, **purifying their hearts by faith.**

1 Peter 1:22-23

Since you have **purified your souls in obeying the truth**² through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

C. Our purification is by His blood.

Titus 2:11-14

For the **grace** of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² **teaching us** that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ **who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people,** zealous for good works.

D. We are forever cleansed by and made perfect by His blood.

Hebrews 9:11-13

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, **but with His own blood** He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, **14 how much more shall the blood of Christ,**

² "Obeying the truth" means to believe in Jesus.

who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 10:1-2

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

Hebrews 10:11-17 NASB

Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. ¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, ¹⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them

After those days, says the Lord:

I will put My laws upon their heart,
And on their mind I will write them,”

He then says,

¹⁷ “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Colossians 1:21-23

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

A. We are right now righteous by gift.

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, having been justified (made righteous)³ by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

- **It is important to notice that tribulations produce perseverance, character, and hope, not purification.**

B. We purify ourselves by the hope of His coming.

John 3:2-3

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

C. We are purified by His love for us.

³ Definition of justified added for clarification

Ephesians 5:26-27

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

D. We are purified by His words.

John 15:33

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Ephesians 5:26

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that **He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.**

E. BECAUSE we are holy, righteous, pure, and blameless, we live righteous, pure, blameless, and holy lives.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

F. God DOES NOT SEND EVIL OR USE SATAN TO PURIFY US. What an INSULT to Jesus! Do we really believe that what Jesus did was okay, but now God needs Satan to bring us to perfection? God forbid!!!

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

G. Persecutions do not have the purpose of purifying us. Jesus was persecuted, beaten, and crucified. Was this to purify Him? No. Our persecution is a sharing in His sufferings. The early church and throughout church history and even today there are multiple examples of persecution. We are not persecuted because we need to be made pure, we are persecuted because we desire to live godly. In other words, persecution is a result of the holiness we already have, not God's tool to purify us. Jesus did that already.

2 Timothy 3:1-12

*But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. **12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.***

H. We do mature as believers, but it is by His doing.

Using Hebrews 10:14 and Philippians 1:6 we can conclude that we are both perfected (telieoo) in regard to everything Jesus accomplished on the cross, and subsequently brought to a state of completion (epiteleio), which most certainly refers to our maturation, or one might say, to fulfilling what Jesus already accomplished. This would include aspects such as being transformed by the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2) and from glory to glory by beholding Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18). We aren't born again knowing every right from wrong, but grace teaches us to forsake worldly lusts and to live godly (Ti. 2:12). The fruit of the Spirit grows (Gal. 5:22). Our character develops (Rom. 5:3-4). We become rooted and grounded in God's love (Eph. 3:17). Our understanding and appreciation of what was accomplished through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection becomes clearer to us (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Our discernment between good and evil matures (Heb. 5:14).

Let me put it this way. Everything that Scripture teaches was accomplished by Christ's death

is “finished.” Yet, there is a process of our current perfection being brought to completion from beginning to end. **What is essential to understand is that it is Jesus who brings to completion this work that He started—not we through our own efforts.** This growth comes by the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. -C. D. Hildebrand, Are We Preaching “Another” Gospel, Day 5

I. **Believers are saved from His judgment and wrath.**

John 5:24

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

John 3:18

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

7. **There are three groups of people on the earth today. Not all prophecies are to all three. We must consider the context when examining prophecy. To whom was this prophecy spoken?**

- A. **The Church** (including all born again believers both Jew and Gentile)
- B. **Israel** (unbelieving Jews)
- C. **Gentiles** (unbelieving non-Jews)

8. **Replacement Theology Vs. Spiritual Israel**

- A. **Under the Mosaic (Old) Covenant, God spoke certain promises and warnings to the NATION of Israel.** The prophets prophesied to the NATION of Israel. Some mistakenly substitute the Church; that is to say, the spiritual Israel, into these prophecies (many of which have been fulfilled already). However, what God spoke to the NATION of Israel was to the people born of Jacob/Israel. So, when God speaks judgment upon the house of Israel for not keeping His commandments, this does not transfer to the Church. The Church (is under the new covenant of grace and faith. Here are two examples commonly used to refer to the Church which were spoken to Israel. (There are hundreds.)

2 Chronicles 7:14

If My people (the people of Israel) who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land (the land of Israel).

Joel 2:12-15

“Now, therefore,” says the LORD,
“Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with
mourning.”

¹³ So rend your heart, and not your
garments;
Return to the LORD your God,
For He is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.

¹⁴ Who knows if He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him—
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;

¹⁶ Gather the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;

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Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
 And the bride from her dressing room.
¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister to the LORD,
 Weep between the porch and the altar;
 Let them say, "Spare Your people, O

LORD,
 And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
 That the nations should rule over them.
 Why should they say among the peoples,
 "Where is their God?"

- B. Yet, there are prophecies spoken to Israel that were specifically for the Church. One of them is found after the passage above. How can we tell which is which? The best way to know is if it is given credence in the New Testament. Here are some examples.

Joel 2:28-32 "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."	Acts 2:16-21 "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."
Jeremiah 31 "I will make a new covenant..."	Hebrews 8:7-13 , 9:15-17 "I will make a new covenant..."
Isaiah 53:5-6 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we <u>are</u> healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.	1 Peter 2:24 Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having <u>died to sins</u> , might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you <u>were</u> healed. ²⁵ For you <u>were</u> like sheep going astray, but have <u>now</u> returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

9. Major Biblical Judgments

- A. Adam and Eve (Gen. 3; punishments with a promise for mankind)
- B. Cain (Gen. 4:8-15, sent away but with protection)
- C. Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19—there were not even 10 righteous persons in that city; Lot and his two daughters saved)
- D. The Flood (Entirely evil mankind and most wildlife destroyed; Noah, his family, and representative wildlife saved)
Genesis 6:5-8
Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.
- E. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9; in order to protect man from himself)
- F. Egypt (Ex. 6 & 7; to release Israel)
- G. Israel (Various judgments; to cause them to return to the Lord their God)
- H. The "House of God" (1 Pet. 4:17; seen as either the upcoming destruction of the temple or as the discipline of Christians IN ORDER to strengthen them—never seen as a final condemnation)

- I. **The Judgment Seat of Christ** (Rom.14:10, 1 Cor. 5:10, not for sin, not for damnation, but for works/ministry judged/evaluated)⁴
- J. **The Wrath that is to Come** (1 Thess. 1:10; not for Christians, during the last 7 years; Israel believes in Jesus as their Messiah)
- K. **The Battle of Armageddon** (Rev. 16:16, Rev. 20:1-3; Jesus and His Saints Subdue Satan binding him for 1,000 years)
- L. **The Last Battle after the Millenium** (Rev. 20:7-10; Satan is released “for a season” to deceive the nations. People actually follow him. Satan and his followers are defeated.)
- M. **The Great White Throne Judgment** (Rev. 20:11-15; All of the dead not in Christ are judged for not believing in Jesus and sentenced to the lake of fire. They go fully knowing that Jesus provided a way of redemption and that if they rejected it, this would be their fate. Yet they CHOSE to reject Jesus anyway.)

10. A Proper Perspective

- A. **We are free to speculate about the End Times just as Israel and other nations speculated about the time of the coming Messiah.**
- B. **The End Times will unfold as God has planned. This is important to acknowledge.** It is ok if you don't want to speculate about End Times but simply anticipate His coming—leave all the arguments for those who feel it is important to debate. If you believe in Him, He will come for you even if you have not rightly determined how it will happen. You will be part of His plans for you even if you don't perfectly understand how it will all unfold. If someone wants to study this topic endlessly, that is ok also. What we don't want to do is allow this topic to cause contentions and divisions among us.
- C. **The End Times are not designed by God to purify His church. Jesus' blood did/does that. If we do not understand this, our theology about End Times will be bent.**

⁴ For a complete study notes on The Judgment Seat of Christ and four other lessons about judgment, visit our website. <http://graceandfaithministries.org/sgfteachings/judgment-toward-a-better-understanding/>