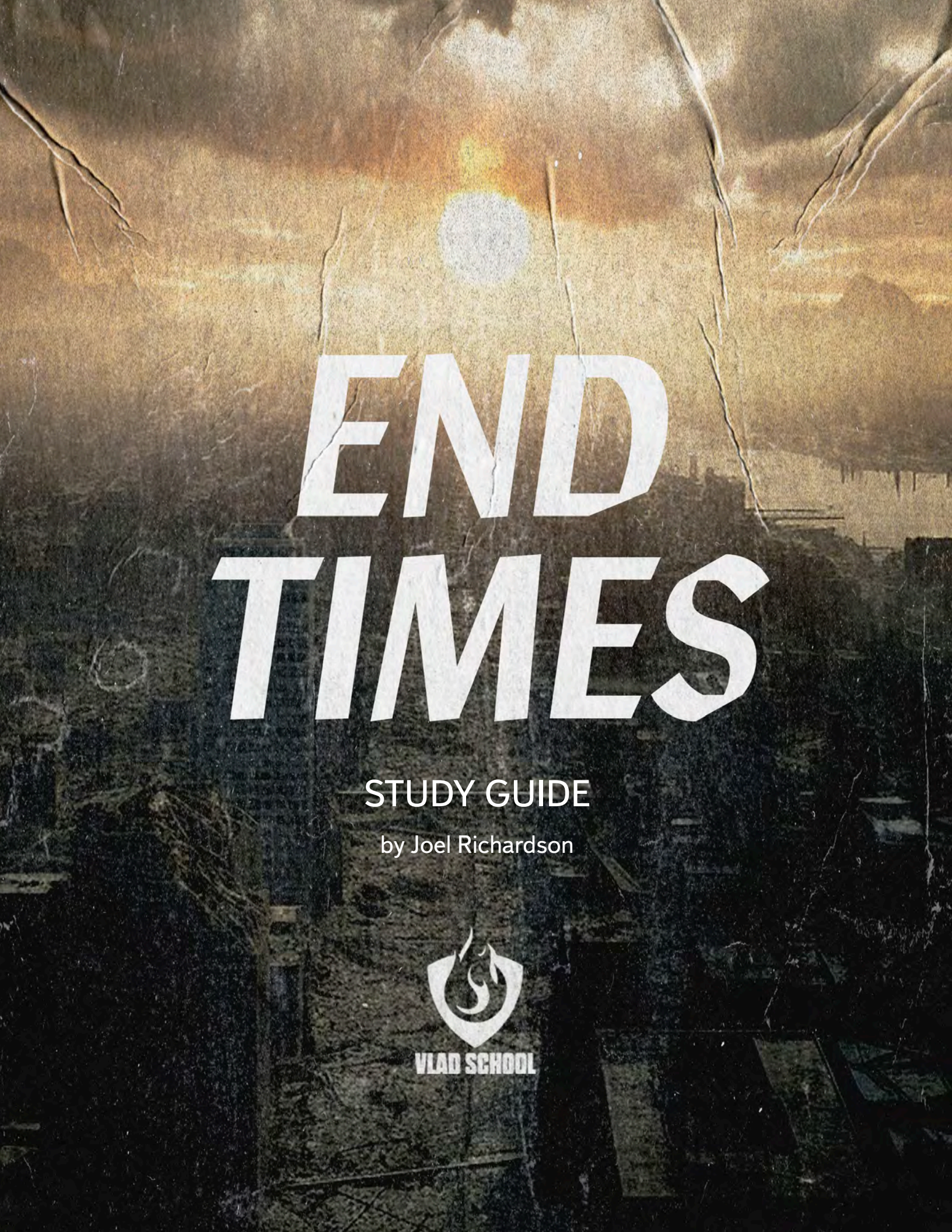
END TIMES
STUDY GUIDE
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LESSON 1

Why it's Important to Study the End Times

There are 1,817 prophecies in the Bible, in 8,352 verses.

There are a total of 31,124 verses in the Bible.

This means that 26.8 percent of the Bible is prophecy.

Jesus expects His followers to be able to discern the signs of the times so they will recognize the season of His return:

"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door" (Matthew 24:32–33).

Jesus actually rebuked His listeners for not being able to discern the prophetic signs of the times:

"He replied to them, 'When it is evening, you say, "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red." 'And in the morning, "There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening." Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?" (Matthew 16:2–3).

What are the End Times?

To study the end times is to study the Gospel (Good News) itself.

The end times are not only about the scary events that come before Jesus' coming, but also include His coming and the glories to follow.

Jesus died so that we may inherit eternal life in the kingdom that will be established after He returns.

LESSON 2

The Great Tribulation

The Old Testament basis for the concept of the great tribulation begins in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. Isaiah used the language of birth pains and labor to describe the distress or tribulation that comes before His return, the resurrection, and the redemption of all the world.

Isaiah on The Great Tribulation

"O Lord, they sought You in distress; they could only whisper a prayer, Your chastening was upon them. As the pregnant woman approaches the time to give birth, she writhes and cries out in her labor pains, thus were we before You, O Lord. We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, we gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, nor were inhabitants of the world born. And will no longer cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:16—18).

"Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. Come, my people, enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while until indignation runs its course. For behold, the Lord is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth will reveal her bloodshed" (Isaiah 26:19-21).

"Before she travailed, she brought forth; Before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons. 'Shall I bring to the point of birth and not give delivery?' says the Lord. 'Or shall I who gives delivery shut the womb?' says your God" (Isaiah 66:7—9).

"Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her, that you may nurse and be satisfied with her comforting breasts, that you may suck and be delighted with her bountiful bosom." For thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you will be nursed, you will be carried on the hip and fondled on the knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you will be comforted in Jerusalem'" (Isaiah 66:10-13).

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Jeremiah on the Great Tribulation

"Now these are the words which the Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah: 'For thus says the Lord, "I have heard a sound of terror, of dread, and there is no peace. Ask now, and see if a male can give birth. Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And why have all faces turned pale? 'Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it"" (Jeremiah 30:4—7).

Daniel on the Great Tribulation

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:1—2).

In Daniel 12, the angel Gabriel quotes both Isaiah and Jeremiah and speaks of the resurrection taking place after the Antichrist's reign of terror.

Jesus on the Great Tribulation

"Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house...For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matthew 24:15—21).

"As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Matthew 24:3).

LESSON 3

The Seven-Year Tribulation

The seven-year tribulation is found in both Daniel and Revelation. Daniel informed us that a period of seven years is set apart in the last days, with the second half (3.5 years) comprising the actual "great" tribulation.

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress" (Daniel 9:24—25).

"Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.
"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (Daniel 9:26—27).

"He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time" (Daniel 7:25).

A time (1 year) + times (2 years) + half of a time (half of year) = 3.5 years

"Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, 'How long will it be until the end of these wonders?' I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed" (Daniel 12:5—7).

"From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" (Daniel 12:11—12).

"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" (Revelation 11:3).

"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city <u>for forty-two months</u>" (Revelation 11:2).

"But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for <u>a time and times and half a time</u>, from the presence of the serpent" (Revelation 12:14).

"There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for <u>forty-two months was given to him</u>" (Revelation 13:5).

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city... "And he [the Antichrist] will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (Daniel 9:24, 27, addition mine).

LESSON 4

The New Temple on the Temple Mount

The Bible is very clear that sacrifices will be reestablished in the Temple in Jerusalem. While it may very well be a brick-and-mortar structure, it could also be something as simple as a tent.

Daniel lays the foundation for this concept, mentioning the following concepts four times:

1. The abomination that causes desolation.
2. The ceasing of offerings.

"Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper" (Daniel 8:9–11).

"Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?' He said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored'" (Daniel 8:12–14).

"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (Daniel 9:24–27).

"Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation" (Daniel 11:31).

"From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days" (Daniel 12:11).

In the New Testament, Jesus, Paul, and John all build upon Daniel's prophecy:

"Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house...For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matthew 24:15—21).

"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

"Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months" (Revelation 11:1-2).

Some have argued that because "temple" is sometimes used metaphorically in the New Testament, that the Antichrist might not actually sit in the literal temple in Jerusalem.

This is nonsense. There is no way that the references to the Temple and the abomination that causes desolation in Daniel can be understood as referring to anything other than the literal Temple in Jerusalem.

LESSON 5

The Rapture

Rapture is an English term used to describe the moment when believers will rise to meet the Lord Jesus in the clouds.

The origin of the term comes from 1 Thessalonians 4:17, where Paul used the Greek word *harpazo*, meaning "to snatch away" or "to seize."

Paul also explained the rapture in some detail in 1 Corinthians 15.

The Old Testament taught two things:

1. Someday God would come from heaven to save His people.
2. Someday the righteous dead would be resurrected or raised back to life out of the earth.

The New Testament explained:

1. Both of these things occur together at the same time.
2. Those who are alive when God comes will experience the resurrection. They will be transformed and "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

"But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 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. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other" (Matthew 24:29–31).

"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming..." (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51—52).

"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up [harpazo] together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13—18, addition mine).

LESSON 6

The Different Rapture Positions

There are several different positions on the rapture, each with a different belief on when it will occur in relation to the final seven years. The positions include: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, pre-wrath, and post tribulation.

1. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture

This position states that the rapture happens at the beginning of the seven years, and the return of Jesus occurs at the end of the seven years.

2. The Mid-Tribulation Rapture

This position states that the rapture happens at the middle of the seven years.

3. The Pre-Wrath Rapture

This position states that the rapture happens anytime somewhere in the last 3.5 years.

All three of these views (pre-tribulation , mid-tribulation, and pre-wrath rapture) teach that Jesus will come twice. I do not see the Bible supporting that.

4. The Post-Tribulation Rapture

This position states that the rapture happens at the end of the seven years. Jesus returns, and the dead will be raised to be with Him. Then, those who are alive will be caught up in the air to meet Him.

If you survey church history, every single reference to the rapture is post-tribulation. Any other belief arose about 200 years ago.

LESSON 7

The Doctrine of Imminence

We often hear that the rapture is imminent, meaning it can happen at any time without any preceding signs. Is this true?

Imminence, as taught by those who teach the pre-tribulation rapture, is entirely unbiblical.

"The New Testament is consistent in its anticipation that the return of Christ might occur at any moment" - John MacArthur

"From the very earliest days of the church, the apostles and first-generation Christians nurtured an earnest expectation and fervent hope that Christ might suddenly return at any time to gather His church to heaven." - John MacArthur

Passages often cited to support imminence:

"You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near" (James 5:8).

"...We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come" (Matthew 24:42).

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (Matthew 25:13).

"Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:1—4).

So, yes, the New Testament does call us to be prepared for the Lord's return. But it was well understood that this meant:

1. Being prepared to face the great tests and tribulations that precede His coming.

2. We should make sure we are in the faith so as to escape the vengeance and judgment upon unbelievers that occurs when He returns.

"Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:1—4).

"Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance'" (Matthew 3:5—8).

Various signs need to be fulfilled before Jesus can return.

- The Antichrist's covenant for restoring sacrifices in Jerusalem's temple required the prior restoration and repatriation of Israel by the Jewish people.
- Jesus couldn't have returned before Israel's rebirth in the last century.
- Paul stated that the rapture cannot occur before the apostasy and the revelation of the Antichrist.

LESSON 8

The Early Church on The Tribulation and Rapture

The idea of the pre-tribulation rapture is a fairly new concept. The early church universally expected the church to face the tribulation and the Antichrist.

1. The Didache (c.50—c.120)

"[T]hen shall appear the deceiver of the world [the Antichrist] ... and he shall commit iniquities which have never been since the world began. Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery trial and many shall be offended and be lost, but they who endure in their faith shall be saved ... Then shall the world see the Lord coming on the clouds of Heaven." - Didache 16:4—8

2. Epistle of Barnabas (c.80—c.100)

"The final stumbling-block approaches ... We take earnest heed in these last days; for the whole time of your faith will profit you nothing, unless now in this wicked time we also withstand coming sources of danger, as becometh the sons of God. That the Black One [Antichrist] may find no means of entrance, let us flee from every vanity, let us utterly hate the works of the way of wickedness. Do not, by retiring apart, live a solitary life, as if you were already justified ... Take heed, lest resting at our ease, as those who are the called [of God], we should fall asleep in our sins, and the wicked prince, acquiring power over us, should thrust us away from the kingdom of the Lord." - Epistle of Barnabas, 4

3. The Shepherd of Hermas (c.95—c.150)

"[Blessed are] you who endure the Great Tribulation that is coming on, and they who shall not deny their own life." "Those, therefore, who continue steadfast, and are put through the fire, will be purified by means of it." - Vision 2:2; 4:3

4. Justin Martyr (c.110—c.165)

"He [Jesus Christ] shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy [Antichrist], who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians." - Dialogue with Trypho, CX

5. Irenaeus (c.120—c.202)

"And they [the ten kings who serve the Antichrist] shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight." - Against Heresies, V, 26, 1

"And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, "There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be." For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome, they are crowned with incorruption." - Against Heresies, V, 29, 1

"For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist ... who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one." - Against Heresies, V, 35, 1

6. Hippolytus (c.185—c.235)

"For when the times advance, he too, [The Antichrist] of whom these thing
are said, will be manifested ... Now, concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary ... That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church." - Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 50, 60, 61, cf. 60—67

"When the times are fulfilled, and the ten horns spring from the beast in the last (times), then Antichrist will appear among them. When he makes war against the saints, and persecutes them, then may we expect the manifestation of the Lord from heaven." - On Daniel, II, 7

LESSON 9

Are We Appointed for Wrath?

"But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath [orgē] but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him" (1 Thessalonians 5:8–10, addition mine).

Jesus died for us so that we are delivered from eternal wrath. Jesus didn't die to deliver us from the tribulation.

Those who support the pre-tribulation position admit there will be many saints on the earth during the great tribulation. (They call them "tribulation saints"). If Jesus died for them, to save them from the wrath of the tribulation, why are they on the earth?

Repentance and baptism save us from eternal wrath (orgē), but not God's judgments that are poured out on the earth.

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath [orgē] of God abides on him" (John 3:36, addition mine).

"Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath [orgē] to come? Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:5–8, addition mine).

The wrath of God is already revealed from heaven. Why have we not been raptured?

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them" (Romans 1:18–19).