

Questions/answers About the Judgment, Millennium, and Tribulation

by James Blaine Chapman

This sermon explores the complexities of judgment, the millennium, and the tribulation as outlined in Scripture.

Scripture: Isaiah 11:6, Matthew 24:20, Luke 21:36, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Revelation 22:12

Topics: "End Time Events", "Final Judgment"

Description

James Blaine Chapman preaches on various questions related to judgment, the millennium, and end-time events. He explains the sequence of events leading up to the final judgment, emphasizing the importance of being prepared for Christ's return. Chapman delves into the significance of different prophecies and scriptures, shedding light on the future events such as the Great Tribulation, the Millennium, and the Great White Throne Judgment. He encourages believers to stay vigilant, pray, and be ready for the coming of the Lord.

Transcript

QUESTION #203 -- Will the words and deeds of Christians be brought before them in the judgment?

ANSWER #203 -- Their good deeds, yes; their wicked deeds done before their conversion or any wicked deeds for which forgiveness has been sought and found, no.

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QUESTION #204 -- Will there be more than one judgment? Will the saints who go up in the rapture be judged at the last general judgment?

ANSWER #204 -- The trouble is, I think, that we have sometimes tried to think of the judgment as a period comparable to one of our twenty-four hour days: whereas it is, according to the Scriptures, a much longer period; and what we call "the general judgment" is the final period of the more extended epoch. The judgment begins with the rapture of the saints at the appearing of Christ in the glory of His second advent and concludes with the great white throne assize, and so far as I can see, there will be no repetitions, but orderly progress from first to last, and the period covered will be long -- perhaps a thousand years. If one is troubled by this statement and cannot think of this as a unified judgment, let him think of Christ's "first coming." Here was His birth in Bethlehem-a subject of definite prophecy. Then there was His appearance

in the temple at the age of forty days -- another subject of definite prophecy. Then there were His teaching and healing ministries -- both subjects of definite prophecy. Then there were His Crucifixion, His Resurrection, and His Ascension. All these are mentioned in the ancient prophecies, sometimes as detached from one another. And yet there was only one "first coming" of Christ. This does not explain, but it may assist one in thinking of the Second Coming of Christ as composed of a series of episodes beginning with His coming for His saints, continuing on through the great tribulation on earth, the Marriage Supper in the skies, His return with His saints, the millennial reign, the battle of Armageddon, and the great white throne judgment

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QUESTION #205 -- There is a man here in our town preaching that according to Malachi, chapter 4, the world, man and everything will be burned up like stubble. What is the meaning of this chapter?

ANSWER #205 -- This chapter should be read in connection with Revelation 20: 7-10. By this it will be seen that the occurrences recorded in Malachi 4 are at the conclusion of the battle of Gog and Magog, and that this is to be followed by the resurrection of the wicked and the Great White Throne Judgment. In other words, the destruction described in Malachi 4 is not the end of those thus destroyed. They are yet to be resurrected and judged and their estate in eternity belongs to another chapter.

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QUESTION #206 -- What peoples will inhabit the earth during the millennium?

ANSWER #206 -- I understand the Scriptures to teach that during the millennium the saints who compose the Church, having been called out and saved during the present dispensation and resurrected or translated at the coming of Jesus Christ for His Church, will be here in their glorified bodies, and that the remnant of the race which survives the Great Tribulation and such as are born to this remnant during the Millennium itself will be here in their "flesh and blood" bodies.

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QUESTION #207 -- In Micah 4:5 it is said, "For all the people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God. for ever and ever." Is this not speaking of the Millennium? And what is the difference in the gods whom others will serve and the Lord our God of whom the prophet speaks?

ANSWER #207 -- The prophet is undoubtedly speaking of the golden future, but he is writing in the then present, and he cannot get away from things as they were and are yet, even when he would speak of the good day ahead. I think the verse might be paraphrased thus (as suggested by Whedon), "Since [at the present] all the people walk every one in the name of his god, therefore we will [or, let us] walk in the name of Jehovah our God forever and ever." "The name of God is that side of His nature which can be revealed to man; and to walk in His name means to live in mystic union with God as He has revealed Himself, and under His protection."

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QUESTION #208 -- Do not the Scriptures teach (Revelation 22:12) that rewards will be given at the coming of our Lord?

ANSWER #208 -- Yes, they do indeed so teach, but by careful reading you will find that all do not receive their rewards at the same time, but that the judgment period will cover at least a thousand years.

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QUESTION #209 -- When does the five months torment by locusts take place (Revelation 9:1-11)? What time do the two witnesses (Revelation 11) appear?

ANSWER #209 -- I do not pose as an expert on the Book of Revelation, but I will tell you what I think. I believe that we are now living in the latter part of the church age described in the first three chapters of Revelation-in the Laodicean period. That we are now up to chapter 3:1422, somewhere in there. And that chapter 4:1 describes the rapture at the second coming of Christ and that all the rest of the book, so far as prophetic history is concerned, is future. Part of the book follows the Church to the Marriage Supper and part follows the fate of the world after the rapture has taken place, and everything mentioned on to the close of chapter 19 will be fulfilled during the time the Marriage Supper is being celebrated in heaven and the great tribulation is in sway upon earth. Then chapter 20 tells about the thousand years reign, and the great white throne judgment. And the two remaining chapters belong, so far as their prophetic history is concerned, in the timeless age that follows -- eternity. Now I do not say I know this is correct; but I do say I know that is what I believe. To reiterate: Revelation chapters 1-3 inclusive-the church age, ourselves in the latter part of it; chapters 4-19 inclusive: the rapture, the marriage supper in heaven and the great tribulation on earth; chapter 20, the Millennium and the great white throne, judgment; chapters 21 and 22, eternity. And on the basis of this outline I would find the place of all the occurrences mentioned, except those instances in which it is indicated that something aside from prophetic history is intended. We may have deeper sorrows yet before the rapture, but we are taught to pray that we may be counted worthy to escape the woes of the great tribulation and stand before the Son of man. So just as there will be no Millennium of peace until Jesus comes, so there will not be the great tribulation until after the Church is translated at the rapture. The next occurrence for which we are to look and watch and pray and keep ready is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church, and I personally positively refuse to listen to anyone who tries to tell me, "My Lord delays his coming" while anything else whatsoever is being done. I believe Jesus Christ could come this very day (I am writing early in the morning) and do no violence to the prophecies of the Scriptures; while if He tarries I will continue to work and watch and hope and pray and keep on the wedding garment of full salvation and keep a good supply of Holy Ghost oil for my lamp that I may make sure to get into the marriage whenever the Bridegroom does come. Praise God, hallelujah, and "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

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QUESTION #210 -- What is meant by: "And a little child shall lead them" and the connected scripture?

ANSWER #210 -- The passage in question is found in Isaiah 11:6 and is a part of the description given of the millennial kingdom of Jesus. Among other things it pictures a little child leading ferocious beasts, or such beasts as we have known as ferocious, without danger or hurt. This can happen only after that wonderful change has taken place by means of which the world and the earth, as well as the spirits and bodies of God's own people, shall be added again to the empire of God, and everything that offends is taken away. Sometimes the scripture of which you speak is applied to a child's leading adults to Christ for salvation, and the application is poetical and beautiful, but it is not the meaning with which the scripture was used by the prophet.

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QUESTION #211 -- Please explain Isaiah 65:20, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed."

ANSWER #211 -- This verse with several succeeding verses in the same chapter is descriptive of conditions that will prevail in the Golden Millennium which shall follow the second coming of Christ. With this in mind, I think the details are not difficult.

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QUESTION #212 -- Regarding the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16, do you understand that the redeemed are conversation with the lost? And would their coming face to face with the lost mar their own happiness in heaven?

ANSWER #212 -- This Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus gives us the best look into the future of any passage in the Bible, but I do not think it is intended to show how it will be forever, and in the great eternity beyond the Judgment of the Great White Throne I think there will be no communication between the saved and the lost, and there will be nothing whatsoever to mar the happiness of the redeemed world without end.

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QUESTION #213 -- Some are saying there will be no rapture of the saints before the tribulation, and that the church will go through the Great Tribulation. I expect to be true in either case, but do you think this is a proper view of the calendar of the future?

ANSWER #213 -- No, I do not agree with this idea. Wily then should we be told, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man"? (Luke 21:36). Plainly, I believe this means that we are to pray that we may keep saved and sanctified that we may be glorified at the coming of Jesus in the clouds, and that coming is before the Great Tribulation. But, as you say, we must keep our hearts set to go through with God in any case. For there are good people in the warring nations of the earth who are suffering all they could suffer if they did go through the Great Tribulation. Let us also pray for them.

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QUESTION #214 -- At what period in the Book of Revelation, and at what stage of the Great Tribulation does the Rapture of the Bride occur?

ANSWER #214 -- The Rapture takes place at the opening of the fourth chapter of Revelation, and this is prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation proper.

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QUESTION #215 -- Please explain Luke 21:19, "In your patience possess ye your souls."

ANSWER #215 -- The general theme is that of tribulation. Especially those tribulations with which, on the fringe of the Great Tribulation, our gospel age shall close. There are so many things which need remedy

and which we are powerless to change that virtue and strength are expressed principally in the ability to bear. And so the Master says ye shall win or save your soul by being patient

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QUESTION #216 -- Who is "the man of sin" that is to "be revealed," mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3?

ANSWER #216 -- This is the "antichrist" who is to be revealed in a time yet future. From many considerations, it appears that this person who offers himself in direct competition with Christ is to come somewhat into sight before the Second Coming of Christ, but is to be fully discovered during the Great Tribulation which reaches its climax after the coming of Christ and the Rapture of the Church.

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QUESTION #217 -- What about the wound of the first beast mentioned in Revelation 13? Does it mean that he is a man wounded by a sword? Also the second beast: what is the mark which people are to receive from him? Do you think we might ignorantly receive this mark?

ANSWER #217 -- I believe that the opening of the fourth chapter of Revelation marks the Second Coming of Christ, and that all that follows that, excepting the symbols and timeless doctrines and exhortations which are indicated as such, as yet future. For this reason it is not possible for us to be sure and clear in the interpretation, and we should not be so. We will understand it better when the time comes, and for the most part the record is fairly literal and clear, except that the time has not yet come. As to ourselves: we must make sure all the time that we are saved and sanctified and ever ready and watching for the Lord's coming, and in this state we have nothing to fear. Nothing outside of us can get inside us and do us harm or affect our standing with God without our consent And by being always "blessed and holy" we are guaranteed a part in the first resurrection, and will not be here when the worst of the Great Tribulation comes.

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QUESTION #218 -- When will the events described in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39 take place? Before, during or after the Great Tribulation?

ANSWER #218 -- The chapters mentioned are a prophetic parable. The same thing is said in more literal form in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. The climax of the judgment mentioned is, historically speaking, the last battle between the forces of God and the armies of Satan, after the Great Tribulation, after the Millennium, and after Satan's loosing-just before the beginning of "the ages of the ages."

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QUESTION #219 -- Please give plain scriptural proof that there is to be a Millennium of Christian triumph in the future.

ANSWER #219 -- The most direct reference, of course, is the twentieth chapter of Revelation, But it has been observed that without exception, scriptures mentioning the resurrection, when there are specifications, place the resurrection of the just first and of the unrighteous second. I suggest that a study of the Scriptures be made with this suggestion as a clue. The logical basis for the teaching of a golden period in which mercy and judgment shall be mingled is the fact that the alternative of this is the breaking

off of mercy abruptly and the inauguration of full justice as a crisis. In the natural world there is twilight between day and night, and in the moral world it seems there should be the same, and it seems to me the Scriptures teach it will be so. I am not expecting to wake up some night and find the world on fire, judgment set and mercy gone forever. I do not believe the Scriptures teach it will be that way. I expect that some time soon Jesus will come back to the world the second time and those who are ready will go up to meet Him in the clouds and accompany Him to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. With the influence of the Church withdrawn, the Great Tribulation will come on the earth and sin and wickedness will have their day. Then Christ will come back with His Church and will reign on the earth for a thousand years. This reign will be a period of mercy and judgment mixed, but just as sin had its day during the Great Tribulation, righteousness will have the advantage in this Lord's Day. After this period of mixed mercy and judgment will come the period of judgment and justice unmixed with mercy, and then, "the ages of the ages." This is not citing specific scriptures, as you request, but I suggest that you make a thorough study of the Scriptures with this general thought in mind and see for yourself what the Writings say.

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QUESTION #220 -- What is the meaning of Matthew 24:20, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day"?

ANSWER #220 -- The subject discussed in Matthew 24 is dual, relating partly to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish tribulation, and partly to the second coming of Christ and the Gentile tribulation. The passage you select refers to the former, and the Christians are exhorted to pray that their flight from the city of Jerusalem shall not be in the winter when their sufferings would be greatly increased by the inclemency of the weather, nor on the Sabbath day when the gates of the city would be closed and their escape would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. It is a matter of history that the Christians did heed the warnings of Christ and take note of the signs which He mentioned and that not a single Christian, so far as known, perished in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Let us pray that we may be as wise with reference to the coming Gentile tribulation and that we may be accounted worthy to escape these things and to stand before the Son of Man.

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QUESTION #221 -- Please harmonize 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Daniel, chapter 12, and Habakkuk 2:14. All these seem to be describing "the last days," but how can the last days be both dark and fair? These scriptures do not describe the last days alike.

ANSWER #221 -- The writers are not describing exactly the same period of "the last days." Just now the world is full of sin and violence, and it is going to get worse before it gets better. Before us, and perhaps immediately before us, are the days of the Great Tribulation. But beyond the tribulation is the golden Millennium, and beyond that a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and in which there will be no sin or sorrow. When the prophets of old looked ahead, some of them described Jesus as the "suffering Saviour," others described Him as "the reigning King." Both these were in the vision, but some overlooked the first and spoke only of the latter. And it was thus also when they described the state and condition of our world. But it is encouraging to us to know that the world will be better after it is worse, and that then it will never be bad any more. This is the doctrine of "Christian triumph," and it keeps us strong in the darkest hours, for we know that whatever the road, we shall finally come out right.

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