

## “Our Glorious Future”

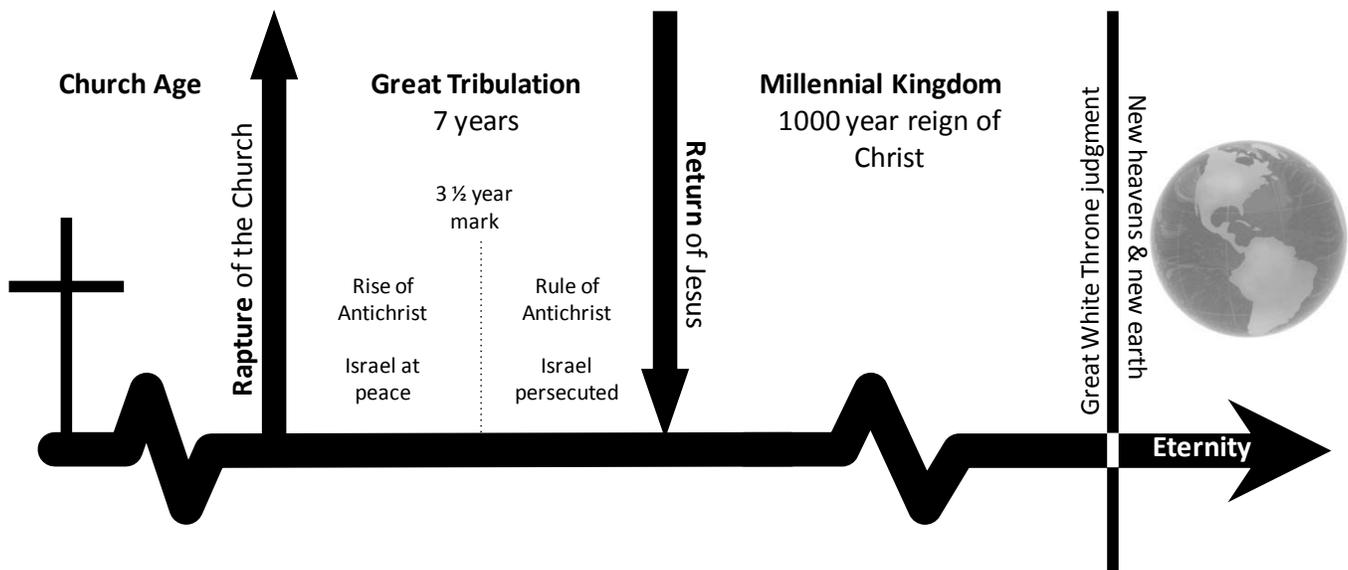
Humans have always had an insatiable desire to know the future. Fortunately, God hasn't left us in the dark about what awaits our world. Moving from Isaiah all the way to Revelation, we'll discover the glorious plans God has in store for the world as a whole, for His church, and for each of us individually.

### Intro

- Turn to Isaiah 66
- This morning we're going to be talking about the future...
- humans have always had an insatiable desire to know the future
  - o invented methods – called *divination* – practiced in all cultures
    - astrology – study stars as omens
    - cartomancy – cards
    - palmistry – palms
    - oneiromancy – dreams
    - extispicy – sheep entrails
    - augury – flights of birds
    - Tasseomancy – read tea leaves or coffee grounds
    - pyromancy – watch fire and smoke for revelation of the future
    - gastromancy – interpret the sounds made by an oracle's digestive tract – listen to their stomach – thought to be the voices of the dead who could tell you the future.
  - o We're way too smart for any of that – abandoned superstition
  - o We have more sophisticated & scientific methods: mathematical models & highly educated experts
- Yet, gather the evidence – we still have a remarkably poor track record
  - o Philip Tetlock, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania – 1980's
  - o examined 27,451 predictions made by 284 academic experts
  - o concerning possible geo-political events
    - Would there be a nonviolent end to apartheid in South Africa?
    - Would Gorbachev be ousted in a coup?
    - Would the United States go to war in the Persian Gulf?
  - o Complex study; simple conclusion: the experts bombed
    - didn't beat statistical models
    - paste possible answers on wall, bring in a monkey with a dart – you would have just as much chance of getting the future right!
- That's why biblical prophecy is such a gift!
  - o God hasn't left us in the dark about most important events of future
    - Don't know direction of stock market – but know direction world is headed
  - o “Eschatology” – *eschatos* = “last” – biblical study of last things – finale
- Studying eschatology because Isaiah has much to say about it
  - o Judgment, resurrection, rule of Messiah, restoration of all things
- Isaiah knew a lot about the future, but a lot he didn't know

- filled in by later revelation
  - in particular – he didn't have a sense of the timeline of future events
  - to him, everything in the future looked like 1 grand event
    - like standing in Denver & looking west – 1 big mountain
    - but then you drive west – many mountains
  - Isaiah wrote his prophecy standing in Denver
  - God took later writers west – Daniel, Paul, John – filled in the details – distinguished b/w the events
- So this morning we're going to travel West from Isaiah – connect his prophecy to the detailed timeline God revealed later in scripture
  - timeline – 4 major epochs

## Our Glorious Future



### What's Coming...

#### 1) The Great Tribulation (Wrath & Restoration)

- a. Isaiah 66:14-16
  - i. "wrath" = God's righteous anger in action against sin
  - ii. climactic judgment on "all flesh"
  - iii. result: "slain by the Lord will be many"
- b. Turn to Rev 6
- c. According to Dan 9 – Great Tribulation lasts 7 years – wrath intensifies with time
  - i. Rev: world-wide warfare, famine, massive earthquakes, fire from the sky, environmental disasters, worldwide darkness.
- d. So terrible – look at Rev 6:15-17
- e. Time of unprecedented distress on earth – Mt 24:21-22
- f. Fortunately, the church will be spared from it: **Great Tribulation begins w/ Rapture**
  - i. 1 Thess 4:16-17
  - ii. "asleep" – the rest – Our resurrection – perfected bodies

- iii. Lots of debate over when the Rapture occurs: pre, mid, post
- iv. We hold to pre-Tribulation for a number of reasons
  - 1. primary reason ...1 Thess 5:9 – spared from wrath
- v. Once the church is removed, God’s wrath begins
- g. But even in wrath, God has a gracious **purpose: Salvation of Israel**
  - i. Dan 12:1 – Great Tribulation designed to bring Israelites to salvation
  - ii. Dan 9 – Antichrist – makes treaty – breaks treaty – new holocaust
  - iii. God uses his persecution to bring the Jews to faith in Christ
    - 1. Rom 11:25-26
    - 2. Great Tribulation humbles Jewish people – nowhere else to turn, all turn to Jesus & are saved
  - iv. When they’ve all turned to Jesus, then Jesus comes back...
- h. **Completed by the great and terrible return of Christ**
  - i. Rev 19:11-21
  - ii. Jesus descends from heaven – Antichrist gathers his armies
  - iii. Battle is anticlimactic!
    - 1. We’re there, but we just watch!
    - 2. Like me vs Mike Tyson – over at the 1<sup>st</sup> punch
  - iv. After Jesus speaks – not a single unbeliever left alive
  - v. With this remnant of humanity, all believers, Jesus begins the next phase...

## 2) Millennial Kingdom (MK) – Covenant Promises to Israel Fulfilled

- a. Read Rev 20:4-6
  - i. Called the Millennial Kingdom because 1000 years – “millennial” = 1000yrs
- b. **The MK is all about God’s covenants with the nation of Israel**
  - i. 4 main covenants God made with the Israelites in the Old Testament:
    - Abrahamic Covenant (**AC**)
    - Mosaic Covenant (**MC**)
    - Davidic Covenant (**DC**)
    - New Covenant (**NC**)
      - 1. New Covenant replaced the Mosaic Covenant – so there’s just 3 in effect
  - ii. These 3 covenants are eternal and irrevocable – Rom 11:29
  - iii. Some already fulfilled:
    - 1. Abrahamic Covenant: countless descendants
    - 2. Davidic Covenant: eternal Davidic king = Jesus
    - 3. New Covenant: forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit
  - iv. But still much more that **MUST** be fulfilled for Jewish people:
    - 1. spiritual: perfect obedience & relationship with God
    - 2. national:
      - a. promised land (Syria to Egypt)
      - b. world preeminence
      - c. everlasting peace, prosperity, fertility
  - v. These are what God will fulfill in the Millennial Kingdom ...
- c. **Here’s what we know about this kingdom...**
  - i. **It will be ruled by Christ & faithful believers**
    - 1. Jesus = promised eternal Davidic King – rule the world
    - 2. But not alone! Faithful believers rule with Him

- a. Determined at Judgment Seat of Christ
- 3. Rule together from...
- ii. Jerusalem the center of world**
  - 1. Common theme in Isaiah
  - 2. Isa 2:2-3
    - a. place where Christ reigns over the world
    - b. place where all come to know & worship God
- iii. Worldwide peace & justice – Isa 2:4**
- iv. MK ends with one final test of mankind**
  - 1. Rev 20:7-8 – one last test of humanity’s faithfulness
    - a. given choice between Jesus & Satan
  - 2. Rev 20:9-10 – battle as anticlimactic as the last time!

### 3) The eternal state / Heaven on Earth

#### a. final judgment

- i. Rev 20:11-15
  - 1. Great White Throne
  - 2. No believers here – we’re resurrected long before this
  - 3. Unbelievers judged based on their works
  - 4. and the outcome is tragic – all demonstrate that they deserve wrath – lake of fire
- ii. That’s where the book of Isaiah ends - Isa 66:24
  - 1. tragic last word!
  - 2. Point: God wins! Everything aligned against Him will be utterly destroyed
- iii. That’s the fate of all who reject God’s gracious offer

#### b. But for those who do accept God’s offer – experience exact opposite

- i. all eternity – bask in the presence of God in the...

#### c. new heavens and new earth

- i. Rev 20:11 – current universe disintegrates
- ii. Rev 21:1-5
  - 1. holy city coming down from heaven to earth
  - 2. heaven on earth – no separation
  - 3. “no longer any death” – all is joy
- iii. Isa 65:17-19
  - 1. sorrow replaced by unending joy – no more cause for weeping – no more tragedy or suffering
  - 2. So joyful – “the former things will not be remembered or come to mind”
    - a. won’t even remember the pain of this life!
  - 3. All we will know is joy!
  - 4. lit: “I create Jerusalem a gladness and her people a joy”
    - a. We will be joyful by nature
    - b. joy not something you try for or choose – it will be what you are – natural & unwavering state
  - 5. Not only for humanity – God unceasingly joyful as well!
- iv. For all eternity, God & humanity joined in unceasing joy!
- v. That’s what awaits all those who’ve placed their faith in Jesus

## **Application of these truths to our lives today...**

- We don't have to demand justice now
- We don't have to find pleasure now
  
- We have great cause for hope – we have so much to look forward to!
- We have great cause to share – the eternal results could not be more serious!