

Session 2

# Defining the End Times

## – Misconceptions –

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1. **Misconception 1: We will go to heaven when Jesus returns.**

- a. At the Second Coming, we will be raptured unto the sky to meet Jesus. After all the saints on earth are caught up into the sky, we will return to earth with a resurrected body to rule and reign with Jesus during the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20).
- b. We are not going to heaven even during Eternity. Instead, heaven in the form of New Jerusalem, the New Heaven and New Earth will be coming down here on earth (Rev. 21:1–8).
- c. Only the saints who die between the crucifixion of Jesus and the Second Coming will go to heaven as a temporary “holding place”. At the Second Coming, all the dead saints will be resurrected and the living saints will be raptured with new resurrected bodies and we will rule and reign with Jesus on the earth.

2. **Misconception 2: The “Last Days” are the same as the “End Times”.**

- a. The “Last Days” or “Latter Days” are actually different from the “End Times” or “the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4).
- b. The “Last Days” refer to the timeframe between the Ascension of Jesus (in Acts 1:9) until the Second Coming of Jesus. We have always been living in the Last Days since Jesus ascended to heaven in Acts 1.
- c. The “End Times” refer specifically to the final seven years of human history before the return of Jesus (Dan. 9:27; we will look at the End-Time timeline in a subsequent session).
- d. Thus, the Last Days are not specifically the End Times, but the End Times are part of the Last Days.

3. **Misconception 3: Misconceptions surrounding the Great Tribulation.**

- a. **First misconception:** The Great Tribulation lasts for seven years.
- i. The Great Tribulation actually lasts for 3½ years and not seven years as commonly believed. There are three common phrases that describe the duration of the Great Tribulation, which all work out to 3½ years:
    - 1260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6);
    - Time, times and half of time (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14);
    - 42 months (Rev. 11:2; Rev. 13:5).
- b. **Second misconception:** The Great Tribulation is God's judgment against the Church.
- i. The Great Tribulation is actually the judgment of God against Satan, Antichrist, and all who oppose Jesus. It is not a judgment against the Church.
  - ii. However, the people of God — both Israel and the Church — will face unprecedented persecution by Satan, Antichrist, and all who oppose Jesus, and the Lord in His sovereignty allows this persecution for a time to accomplish His purposes (Rev. 12:17, Dan. 7:25).
  - iii. Three general reasons that God allows His people to be persecuted:
    - To separate the wheat from the tares and the sheep from the goats (Matt. 13:24–30; 25:31–46);
    - To purify and to refine the Church (Dan. 11:35; 12:10; Mal. 3:1–3);
    - For God's people to partner with Jesus in the eschatological revolution (Rev. 6; 8 – 9; 16).
- c. **Third misconception:** The Church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation.
- i. The Church will not be raptured but will be present on earth during the Great Tribulation.
    - There are more than 40 passages of Scripture that point to the presence of the Church on earth during the Great Tribulation (e.g. Dan. 7:20–22, 25–26; Rev. 6:9–11).
    - Four passages of Scripture give clear indication of the Rapture of the Church after the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; 1 Thes. 4:13–17; 2 Thes. 2:1–4).

4. **Misconception 4: Time will cease and the world will end.**

- a. Time will not cease nor will the world come to an end. Instead, the world we know will transit into the next “Age”. The Bible teaches that there are three main eras in God’s narrative:
  - i. Human or natural Age  
This timeframe is from the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 until the Second Coming of Jesus;
  - ii. Millennial Age (also known as the Millennial Kingdom / the Millennium)  
This refers to the literal Millennial rule of Jesus on this earth for 1000 years (Rev. 20:4);
  - iii. Eternal Age (also known as Eternity)  
This is when the New Jerusalem will descend onto the earth, the current earth will be renewed to become the New Heaven and New Earth, and the Father will dwell on earth with mankind forever (Rev. 21:1–3).
- b. The primary purpose of the Millennial Age is for Jesus to prepare the earth for the coming of the Father. Jesus will progressively cleanse the earth from all sin and evil, disciple the nations, and restore the earth (Matt. 28:19–20; 1 Cor. 15:24–28; 2 Pet. 3:10–13).
- c. Thus, the End Times are part of God’s redemption plan. It is primarily a global transition from this Human Age to the Millennial Age and eventually to Eternity where God will dwell on earth with man forever (2 Cor. 6:14 – 7:1; Rev. 21:3).