

Study Questions

For Use With

What the Bible Says About the Future

Second Edition

Sam A. Smith

Published by
Biblical Reader Communications
www.BiblicalReader.com

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About this study guide

These questions are keyed to the second edition of *What the Bible Says About the Future*, by Sam A. Smith (Biblical Reader Communications, 2011, available in PDF and print from Biblical Reader Communications <www.BiblicalReader.com> and in print from major online booksellers, ISBN 9781456464431). The numbers in parentheses refer to pages in the second edition text.

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5. What is the “invisible aspect” of the kingdom? (64-66)
6. What is “the kingdom of Heaven,” as developed in the Gospel of Matthew? (64-66)
7. According to the diagram on page 65, what aspects of the kingdom do the redeemed participate in?
8. According to the diagram on page 65, what aspects of the kingdom do the unredeemed participate in?

[On the subject of the kingdom of Heaven, also see the questions for the Appendix: *The Kingdom of Heaven and the Course of the Present Age*, below.]
9. What are the two phases of the visible kingdom of God? (69)
10. What four covenants shape the Old Testament idea of the visible kingdom of God? Where are these covenants found in the Bible? (66-74)
11. Explain how the covenants and the prophecies work together to give us a picture of the future. (66)
12. What promises did God make to Abraham personally in the Abrahamic covenant? (70)
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15. What promises were made to David under the Davidic covenant? (72-74)
16. What promises were made to Israel under the new covenant? (74)
17. Has the new covenant been fulfilled? (74)
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19. What kind of covenant did God make with Abraham in Genesis 15:9-21, and what is the significance of God alone walking between the pieces of the animals? (75-76)

20. Explain why faithlessness cannot invalidate the covenant God made with Abraham. (75-77)
21. Explain the distinction between the “validity” of the Abrahamic covenant and its “enjoyment.” (75-77)
22. If the covenants have neither been fulfilled nor invalidated, what is the implication? (77-79)
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23. Discuss the timing of the millennium (*i.e.*, when will it begin)? (79)
24. Discuss the location of the millennium (*i.e.*, where will it take place)? (80-82)
25. How long will the millennium last? How do we know? (82)
26. Summarize the general character of the millennium. (82-86)
27. What events will occur in the millennium, and when? (86-89)

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1. What is “the tribulation”? (91)
2. What are the two stated purposes of the tribulation period? (91-95)
3. What are some of the earliest mentions of the tribulation in the Bible? (95-100)
4. According to the figure on page 97, what are the most widely mentioned aspects of the tribulation period?
5. What book of the Bible provides the first and most precise chronological information about the tribulation? (96-98)
6. From the biblical background given in pages 95 to 100, give a brief sketch of the tribulation period.
7. What are the two preconditions to the tribulation period? (101-102)
8. What is the significance of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2) and Daniel’s vision (Dan. 7) to future prophecy? (102-110)
9. How do Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Daniel’s vision, and the prophecy of the seventy “weeks” help us to understand the two preconditions to the tribulation? (101-110)
10. The first four kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2) and Daniel’s vision (Dan. 7) are referred to under what label? Who applied this label, and in what context? (108, also see the illustration on 109)
11. What event begins the tribulation period? (111-112)
12. What event signals the midpoint of the tribulation period? (118)
13. Why must the Jewish temple be rebuilt prior to the midpoint of the tribulation period? (111-112)
14. What do the “seals” of Revelation represent? (112-113)
15. Which seals are broken in the first half of the period, and what occurs during the time of each of those seals? (112-117)

16. When does the invasion of Israel by many nations (described in Ezekiel 38-39) likely occur? How does this event relate to Israel's national conversion? (113-117)
17. Briefly list the events given for the second half of the tribulation period. (113-116)
18. What is involved in the abomination that takes place in the temple? (118-119)
19. At what point are Satan and his host thrown down to the earth? (118)
20. Describe the new world economic and religious order. (119-120)
21. Describe the ministry of God's two prophets. (121)
22. Describe the martyrdom of Christians during the tribulation. (121-122)
23. What is the nature of the sixth seal of Revelation? (122-124)
24. What is the significance of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses? (124)
25. According to the text, when does the day of God's wrath likely begin? Give the reasons used in support of this position. (124-143)
26. Explain the author's reasoning as to how 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9 indicates that the day of the LORD cannot begin until sometime in the second half of the tribulation period. (126-129, *cf.* 205)
27. What is the character of the first four trumpet judgments? (129-131)
28. List the last three trumpet judgments (also referred to as the "woe judgments"). (131-144)
29. List the seven bowl judgments. (133-144)
30. What are the three key passages describing the second coming of Christ? (141-143)
31. What are the nine elements associated with the second coming that were listed in the text? Include Scripture references for each. (143)

Chapter 7: Tribulation Chronology

1. To what does "absolute external chronology" refer? (145-146)
2. Explain the problem with developing an absolute external chronology. (145-146)
3. To what does "relative external chronology" refer? (146-154)
4. What evidence was presented as proof that the tribulation is a future (as opposed to past or present) event? (151-153)
5. What difference do you think the external chronology would make to biblical interpretation in general (*i.e.*, what is the significance of viewing the tribulation as a future (as opposed to a past or present) event)?
6. What is the relationship (chronologically) of the tribulation to the millennium? (153-154)
7. Why does "internal chronology" present the greatest challenge to the student of tribulation prophecy? (154)
8. How is the length of the tribulation established, and confirmed? (154-158)

9. In the prophecy of the seventy “weeks” (Dan. 9:24-27), how do we know that the seventieth “week” is seven years long? (154-158)
10. Describe the major divisions within the tribulation period. (158)
11. What is the length of the second half of the tribulation period in days, and how do we know this? (154-158)
12. What are the three key passages of Scripture that contribute to our knowledge of the chronology of the tribulation period? (159-162)
13. In the Matthew 24:4-31 passage describing the tribulation period, how do we know that verse 15 is recursive (i.e., starting back at the middle of the period)? (159-160, see especially “The chronology of Daniel,” on page 159)
14. Based on your own reading of Matthew 24:4-31, and your study of the chronology presented in Figure 7.4 (163), approximately where would you place the severe persecution described in Matthew 24:16-20? (159-163)
15. Using your answer from question 14 above, where would you place the fifth seal of Revelation? Defend your answer.
16. Based on your answer to question 15 above, what general information can you deduce about the chronology of the seals of Revelation (as to which seals fall in each division of the period)?
17. Based on your own study of the chronology of Revelation presented in Figure 7.5 (165), why does the account of the slaying of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-14), which happens very near the end of the period, precede the account of the rise of the false religious system (Rev. 13), which occurs near the middle of the period?
18. Based on information in figure 7.7 on page 173, what is the length of the interlude between the close of the tribulation and the beginning of the millennium? How is that figure derived?
19. Based on your study of the chronology of Revelation presented in Figure 7.5 (171), how do we know that the events of Revelation 12:7-12 actually occur (in time) before the events of chapters 8-11?
20. If the day of the Lord is limited to the seventh seal of Revelation, based on the chronology presented in Figure 7.7 (173), what general observations could you make about the nature of the tribulation period (i.e., how much of the tribulation period would constitute divine wrath)?
21. Based on your own study of this chapter, what benefit do you see in the study of tribulation chronology? How has this information helped you understand the events and character of the period?

Chapter 8: The Rapture of the Church

1. Why is the rapture of great significance to the Church? (175)
2. What are the three facts about the rapture that we learn from Paul? (176)
3. Describe the rapture of the Church. (176-178)
4. Who will be included in the rapture? (178-181)

5. How is the issue of the unique nature of the Church related to the rapture? (178-181)
6. According to the text, what is “the Church”? (Not the local church.) (186)
7. What evidence is given to support the distinctness of the Church from Israel? (179-180)
8. According to the text, what is the extent (beginning and end) of the Church age? (181)
9. What are the names of the rapture views that could not be classified as “pre-wrath”? (182-186)
10. What are the five arguments given in support of pretribulationism? (182-186)
11. What does “contingent” mean when used in connection with rapture views? What is the opposite of contingent? (186)
12. Why does the doctrine of the imminency of the rapture not prove pretribulationism? (186-187)
13. Why does the wrath argument not prove pretribulationism? (187-188)
14. What is the, “a seal, is a seal, is a seal” argument? (187-188)
15. What problems result from viewing the entire tribulation as divine wrath? (187-188)
16. Briefly describe the midtribulational rapture theory. (190-191)
17. What are the three major problems associated with the midtribulational rapture theory? (190-191)
18. Compare and then contrast the midtribulational rapture theory with Rosenthal’s pre-wrath rapture theory. (190-195)
19. What are the major problems with Rosenthal’s pre-wrath theory? (193-195)
20. Describe the partial rapture theory. (195-198)
21. What is the principal problem with the partial rapture theory? (208-213)
22. Describe the imminent pre-wrath view. (199)
23. What is the line of reasoning used to support the imminent pre-wrath view? (199-206)
24. If the doctrine of the imminency of the rapture doesn’t prove pretribulationism, what, if anything, does it prove? (186-187, 211-212)
25. If the wrath argument doesn’t prove pretribulationism, what, if anything, does it prove? (187-188, 203-206)
26. What arguments can be made to support the notion that the wrath of God is limited to the second half of the tribulation period (or some portion thereof)? (205, also see chapters 6-7)
27. Describe “classic posttribulationism.” (206)
28. List the arguments used in support of classic posttribulationism, and the problems given for each of those arguments. (206-211)
29. Describe “imminent posttribulationism.” (211)

30. What is the most significant problem with imminent posttribulationism? (211)
31. Examine the illustration on page 201 and describe what these three views of the rapture have in common and how they differ.
32. Examine the illustration on page 207 and describe what these three views of the rapture have in common and how they differ.

Chapter 9: What Eternity Will Be Like

1. What is “eternity”? (213)
2. Who is the source of virtually everything we know about Heaven and Hell? (213-214)
3. What insight do the New Testament letters (Romans-Jude) add to our understanding of Heaven and Hell? (214-215)
4. Describe the events leading up to the final judgment, and the judgment itself. (215-216)
5. Where is the only detailed description of the new heavens and earth found? (218)
6. Describe, the new heavens and earth. (218)
7. Where is the only detailed description of Heaven (the New Jerusalem) found? (218)
8. Why do you think there will be no temple in the New Jerusalem? (218-221)
9. Why will the redeemed be in need of healing as they enter eternity? (221-222)

Chapter 10: The Resurrections and Judgments

1. What are some of the earliest mentions of the resurrection in Scripture? (223-224)
2. What did Jesus teach regarding the resurrection? (224)
3. Who are the two main sources of detailed information on the resurrection in the New Testament, and what did they communicate concerning it? (224-225)
4. Describe the first resurrection. (225-226)
5. Describe the second resurrection. (226-227)
6. Describe the judgment of the Church. (227-228)
7. What is the purpose of the judgment of the Church? (227-228)
8. What are some misconceptions regarding eternal rewards? (228)
9. What is the “judgment of the nations”? (230)
10. Describe the final judgment of the unredeemed. (230-231)

Appendix: Amillennialism, Covenant Theology, and Dispensationalism

1. Define “realized eschatology.” (235)
2. Define “amillennialism” (235)

3. Briefly describe the rise of amillennialism. (235)
4. In what ways are gnosticism and amillennialism similar? (236)
5. Define “replacement theology.” (236)
6. What are the historical connections between amillennialism (replacement theology) and gnosticism? (236-242)
7. In what ways does amillennialism disregard the book of Revelation? (242-244)
8. Describe “covenant theology.”
9. Briefly describe the history of covenant theology. (245-246)
10. Describe “dispensational premillennialism.” (246-248)
11. What biblical support exists for a dispensational view of biblical history? (247)
12. What is the fundamental difference between covenant theology and dispensationalism? (248)
13. Explain why the Bible, including unfulfilled prophecy, should be interpreted normally/objectively. (248-250)
14. Give three reasons why a consistently normal/objective method of interpretation is superior.

Appendix: The Biblical Basis of Premillennialism

1. What is “premillennialism”? (251)
2. List three major passages of the Bible that explicitly teach premillennialism. (252-254)
3. What is it that covenantalists characteristically confuse regarding the kingdom? Explain your answer. (255-256)
4. Why must there be a future earthly kingdom built around a regenerated nation of Israel? Develop your answer. (256-267)
5. Where is the Abrahamic covenant found, and what are its provisions? (256-259)
6. Where are the ancillary covenants (the Palestinian, Davidic, and new covenants) found, and what are the provisions of these covenants? (259-267)
7. What three reasons were given for believing that the Abrahamic covenant and its ancillary covenants have not been invalidated? (263-266)
8. What is the condition that must be met in order for the Abrahamic covenant to be fulfilled? (263-266)
9. If there is a condition that must be met in order for the Abrahamic covenant to be fulfilled, how can it be maintained that the covenant is “unconditional”? (261)
10. Explain the difference between the “validity” of the Abrahamic covenant and its “enjoyment.” (261)
11. Who is, “the Israel of God,” mentioned in Galatians 3:8-9? Explain and support your answer. (266-267)

12. The Church occupies a unique place in the overall prophetic program. Describe that place. (267-268)

Appendix: Who is “the Seed of Abraham”?

1. Why is the question, “Who is the seed of Abraham?” of great importance to both general interpretation and the interpretation of prophecy? (269-270)
2. What issue is at the heart of the divide between the reformed faith and premillennialism? (269)
3. What are the two positions that reformed theologians have taken with regard to the promises of the Abrahamic covenant? (269-270)
4. What is “replacement theology”? (269-270)
5. What are the two forms of premillennialism? (269-270)
6. What is the position of premillennialism with regard to the promises made to Abraham? (270)
7. Do premillennialists recognize the existence of a “spiritual seed” of Abraham? (270)
8. What do premillennialists believe with regard to the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham’s seed? (270)
9. Summarize the evidence supporting the fact that God did indeed make promises to Abraham’s physical seed. (270-277)
10. What were the four reasons given for believing that the promises made to Abraham have not been invalidated? (277-291)
11. How does Romans 11:1-36 demonstrate that God’s plan includes a future for national Israel when they return to him in faith? (282-289)
12. Why does Matthew 21:43 not imply the disinheritance of Israel? (290-297)
13. What are the three key passages of Scripture that communicate the truth that there is a spiritual seed of Abraham? (291-294)
14. Describe the seed of Abraham that will inherit the promises. (In what sense will they be Abraham’s “seed”?) (294-300)

Appendix: The Kingdom of Heaven and the Course of the Present Age

1. Generally, how do covenantalists interpret the parables of Matthew 13? (301-302)
2. All of the parables of Matthew 13 teach the same central truth using different analogies, what is that central truth? (301-306)
3. Summarize Paul’s testimony concerning the course of the present age. (307-308)
4. Summarize Peter’s testimony concerning the course of the present age. (308)
5. Summarize Jude’s testimony concerning the course of the present age. (309-310)
6. Summarize John’s testimony concerning the course of the present age. (310-311)

7. Why is it not reasonable to interpret the parable of the leavening of the lump of meal (Matt. 13:33) to mean that the world will be largely converted to Christ? (Derive your answer from a comprehensive examination of the material.)

Appendix: The Amillennial View of the Kingdom

1. What is the typical amillennial conception of the kingdom of God? (313-315)
2. What critical distinction do amillennialists fail to make? (313)
3. Why must there be a spiritual aspect of the kingdom of God? (313-314)
4. Why did Christ not emphasize the physical aspect of the kingdom in his earthly teaching? (313-314)
5. Where do amillennialists begin in constructing their view of the kingdom? (314)
6. What did the writers of the New Testament gospels assume about their readers? (314)
7. How does the amillennialist's understanding of the kingdom, as derived from the gospels, affect their interpretation of the Old Testament? (314-315)
8. Why is the reinterpretation of the Old Testament, in light of the New Testament, theologically unsound? (316-319)
9. Explain why amillennialists' reinterpretation of the Old Testament in light of the New Testament raises questions regarding the inspiration of Scripture. (316-319)
10. Explain the amillennialist's use of Joel 2:28-29 in Acts 2:16 as evidence that future prophecy should be taken non-literally. (317-319)
11. The fact that amillennialists concede they must reinterpret (spiritualize) the Old Testament prophecies of the kingdom is evidence of what? (319)
12. What is the sequence of major events as derived from the book of Revelation? (320-322)
13. What is "progressive parallelism"? (320-321)
14. What is the problem with progressive parallelism? (321)
15. How does the teaching of Revelation fit with the teaching of the Old Testament? (321-322)
16. What significance can be attached to the fact that the last book of the Bible teaches precisely the same view of the kingdom as the Old Testament, when understood normally? (320-322)

Appendix: Rapture Theology and the Olivet Discourse

1. Describe the difference between early pretribulationism and the new pretribulationism. (323)
2. Why did the new pretribulationists extend the description of the second coming all the way to Matthew 25:30? (323-325)
3. What is the problem that results from denying that Matthew 24:36-25:30 describes the rapture? (325-326)

4. How do the new pretribulationists attempt to support the doctrine of the imminency of the rapture given their view of Matthew 24:36-25:30? (325-326)
5. How do the new tribulationists support the view that Matthew 24:36-25:30 refers to the second coming? (326-327)
6. What evidence points to the conclusion that the Noah illustration in Matthew 24:40-41 could not refer to the second coming? (326-327)
7. Give five reasons why Matthew 24:36-25:30 describes the rapture, not the second coming. (328-331)

Appendix: Chronological-Topical Index to Future Prophecy (333-345)

1. Assume you are studying Zechariah 14:1-8. Using the Chronological-Topical Index, find all of the cross-references to this passage.
2. Assume that you are interested in knowing more about the rapture of the Church. Using the Chronological-Topical Index, find all of the references to the rapture.
3. Using the Chronological-Topical Index, find all of the references to the future conversion of Israel.
4. Using the Chronological-Topical Index, find the time period to which Joel 3:20-21 refers. What are the cross-references to this passage?

Overview of *What the Bible Says About the Future*

1. List several things you have learned from this study of biblical future prophecy (things that you did not know previously).
2. Have you changed your view on any particular features of eschatology? Explain each.
3. Have you found additional confirmation of some views you previously held? Explain each.
4. How do you think the information you have gained will benefit you, and your ministry to others in the future?
5. What do you think is the practical value of studying biblical future prophecy?
6. How do you think that a clearer understanding of biblical future prophecy might help you to understand other areas of Bible, and Bible doctrine?
7. Discuss how do you think future prophecy relates to an overall understanding of the Bible.