Current predictions about the future of the world run from the utopian to the cataclysmic. Is the world headed for a bright or dismal future, or both? Will humanity ever be able to overcome its legacy of centuries of conflict and short-sighted exploitation and build a unified society of peace and harmony? Or will the earth descend into chaos and become an environmental wasteland?

The prophets of the Bible foretold amazing things about the future. Many of their predictions have already come to pass. For instance, the general consensus among scholars is that there are over 300 prophecies about Jesus Christ, all written down hundreds of years before His birth, that were fulfilled during His lifetime on earth. The chance of even eight of those prophecies being fulfilled in one man have been estimated at one chance in one hundred million billion.¹

More importantly for us now, there are hundreds more biblical prophecies about future events and world conditions. Some of these are being fulfilled in our times, and they presage the fulfillment of yet others in the future, perhaps even in our lifetimes. These future events are of such size and scope, and are so momentous in nature, that the Bible warns us to be prepared for them when they happen.

Our future was predicted thousands of years ago. You can know that future.

The following is a short summary of the events and conditions the Bible predicts are to come in chronological order.

1. Signs of the Times

Today, conditions prevail and events are taking place that Jesus said would signal His return and the end of the world as we know it. Jesus, as well as several biblical writers, likened these signs to a woman in labor prior to giving birth. Many of these “birth pains” such as war, famine, earthquakes, and pestilences, have been evident for a long time.

In this modern age, humankind has invented weapons capable of previously unfathomable death and destruction. Famine is a reality for millions, and the UN World Health Organization estimates that over 600 million people go hungry each day, and malnutrition in children contributes to over half of child deaths.² Pollution, global warming, and the depletion of resources points toward even greater famine and consequent violence in the future.

One bright aspect of the modern age is the global spread of the Good News of the Gospel, made possible by modern communication media such as radio, television and the Internet. As a result, the Gospel has been taught in all nations like never before in the course of history.

Daniel, a Jewish prophet who lived 500 years before Jesus, wrote that in the end times travel, knowledge, and education would increase, which has happened at an exponential rate in contemporary history and continues to do so. The labor that precedes childbirth doesn’t go on indefinitely, and it will be only a matter of time before events culminate in the return of Jesus Christ.

Scriptural references

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?”

Jesus answered. “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not
alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:3-8,12-14 NIV)

“But Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal it up so that it will not be understood until the end times, when travel and education shall be vastly increased!” (Daniel 12:4 TLB)

2. The Antichrist

A powerful empire will arise on the world stage, led by a person referred to in the Bible as a “vile person,” “man of lawlessness” and “son of perdition,” but most commonly referred to as the “Antichrist,” who will come to power at the head of this world government.

His evil nature will not be so evident at first, and many will regard him as a savior because he will be able to bring solutions to some of the world’s most intractable problems such as a more equitable distribution and consumption of resources; resolution of long-standing hostilities between nations, ideologies, and religions; and reduction of economic instability and exploitation. He will be a man of war and yet gain power by both intrigue and nonbelligerent means. He is, however, in league with Satan, and in the end will become the embodiment of evil.

Scriptural references

Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4,9 ESV)

[This] vile person ... shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. ... He shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time. (Daniel 11:21,25)

When the transgressors have reached their fullness, [this] king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means. (Daniel 8:23-25 KJV)

And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life. (Revelation 13:7-8 NKJV)

3. The Covenant

The Antichrist will initiate, or at the least be very much involved in, an agreement called the “holy covenant” in the Bible, which will temporarily bring a measure of peace and security to the world, and will allow the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The signing of this covenant will signal the start of the last seven years of humankind’s dominion on earth and this present age of human history.
Approximately three and a half years into the agreement, after surviving what may possibly be an assassination attempt, the Antichrist will break the covenant, declare himself God, and abolish all religious worship except devotion to himself and his totalitarian world order.

Scriptural references

He will confirm a covenant with many for one “seven” [seven years]. In the middle of the “seven” [years] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering [religious rites]. (Daniel 9:27 NIV)

And after the league is made with him [the Antichrist] shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people. ... his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall ... rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. ... Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery. (Daniel 11:23-32)

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads. ... And I saw one of his heads [the Antichrist] as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. (Revelation 13:1,3)

4. The Image of the Beast

When the Antichrist breaks the covenant, the mysterious “abomination of desolation” is erected in the precincts of the Jewish Temple. The prophet Daniel wrote of it several times, and Jesus confirmed that when it is erected there it will signal the beginning of the 1,260-day period known as the Great Tribulation. Daniel refers in his writings to this abomination’s capacity to bring desolation. In the book of Revelation, it is called the “image of the beast” and it has power to cause those that do not worship it to be killed.

This image could be some sort of cybernetic representation of the Antichrist endowed with artificial intelligence that will allow it to speak and issue orders. The Antichrist’s government will demand that all people worship it. However, those who willingly comply will be condemned to the same fate awaiting the Antichrist.

Scriptural references

And forces shall be mustered by [the Antichrist], and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. (Daniel 11:31)

Therefore when you see the “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matthew 24:15,21)

[The Antichrist’s False Prophet] deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Revelation 13:14-16)

[An angel said] with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:9-10)

5. The Great Tribulation

After the covenant is broken, the next three and a half years will see the world plunge into unprecedented social chaos. This period of time is known in the Bible as the “Great Tribulation.” During this time, the Antichrist and his government will systematically persecute those who refuse to worship him.

An electronic monetary system will be put in place, and everyone wishing to “buy and sell” will be required to receive what the Bible refers to as the “mark of the beast.” This will be a personalized account number somehow embedded, possibly in the form of an electronic chip, in people’s right hands or foreheads. This account number is
enigmatically linked to the number 666. God’s Word warns people not to receive this mark.

Meanwhile, God will help Christians and others who resist the Antichrist, and in their defense will unleash pestilences and plagues on the Antichrist and his followers. We are also told that two of God’s prophets will perform miracles and publicly defy the Antichrist.

Scriptural references

For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:21-23 NIV) But the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. (Daniel 11:32)

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666. (Revelation 13:16-18)

Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. And their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

6. Nuclear War

At some point, likely near the end of the three-and-a-half years of Great Tribulation, the Antichrist and “ten kings” who join forces with him will destroy the mysterious “Babylon the Great” in what sounds like a nuclear holocaust. Scripture indicates that this Babylon is not the ancient city or empire by that name, but rather the great worldwide, materialistic, capitalistic system, currently epitomized by—but not limited to—the USA. According to the visions of the prophet Daniel, the ten kings who join with the Antichrist emerge from the ancient Roman Empire.

Scriptural references

And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.... And on her forehead a name was written: ‘Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.’ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Revelation 17:3-6)

And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. ... They and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. (Revelation 17:12-13,16 ESV)
Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire. ... The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: ... Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.” (Revelation 18:8-11,19)

(See also Daniel 7:7-8,19-24.)

7. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

At the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will return. The sun and the moon will be darkened, but then a bright light will be seen around the world, followed by the sound of a mighty trumpet. Jesus will be seen by everyone as He appears in the clouds of the sky surrounded by angels. Then He will rescue His followers out of this world, and they will receive new immortal bodies and be caught up from the earth in what is called the Rapture. Scripture is clear that this event occurs “immediately after the Tribulation” and not before, as portrayed in recent popular novels and movies.

Scriptural references

*Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* (Matthew 24:29-31)

*Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* (Revelation 11:15)

*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all [die], but we shall 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

8. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

A celebration is then held in heaven, called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. One of the titles for Jesus is the “Lamb of God,” (John 1:29) and His bride is all those who believe on Him. (Romans 7:4) The marital metaphor is used in the Bible to describe the intimate spiritual unity between Christ and His people, and the fervency of the loving union of heart, mind, and spirit that accompanies this relationship.

During this Marriage Supper, Jesus will unite with those He rescued in the Rapture and His followers throughout the ages, and at His Judgment Seat He will reward them with eternal crowns of life.
Scriptural references

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” (Revelation 19:6-9)

For the Son of Man [Jesus] will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (Matthew 16:27)

When the Chief Shepherd [Jesus] appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. (1 Peter 5:4)

9. The Wrath of God

The devastating plagues described in the Bible as the “wrath of God” will be poured upon the world at the same time that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is being celebrated, specifically targeting the Antichrist and his forces.

Scriptural references

And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: …“The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come … for destroying those who destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:16,18 NIV)

Out ... came the seven angels having the seven plagues [and] seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God. ... The first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” (Revelation 15:6; 16:2-17 NKJV)

10. The Battle of Armageddon

On a plain in northern Israel, the Antichrist will muster his armies for his final campaign against the nations that still oppose him. At that time Jesus and His heavenly army will return to earth to utterly destroy the Antichrist’s forces and deliver those who opposed his tyranny. The Antichrist and his leading henchman, the false prophet, will both be cast alive into the lake of fire, a place of punishment. Satan, who plagued humankind throughout history and possessed the Antichrist, will be imprisoned in the “bottomless pit.”

Scriptural references

The kings of the earth and of the whole world, gather ... to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ... to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14,16)
I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ... And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ... And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (Revelation 19:11,14,16)

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. (Revelation 19:19-21)

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. (Revelation 20:1-3)

11. The Millennium

The restoration of the war-damaged earth will then begin. Jesus will rule on earth for 1,000 years, assisted by those who had been His followers in their earthly lives. This time is commonly called the Millennium and will be a veritable golden age compared to the world that preceded it. Peace and harmony will be largely restored to the world and enmity between animals—and between animals and humankind—will end.

There will be those who survive the cataclysms surrounding Armageddon, people who neither followed the Antichrist nor were believers in Jesus Christ. They will live on in a simpler and righteous world, where loving God and others will be the governing rule.

12. The Battle of Gog and Magog

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released from the bottomless pit. He will recruit followers and form a rebellion against Jesus and His government. Although it seems inconceivable, apparently he will find plenty of followers who rebel against the conditions of Christ’s benign but firm rule in the Millennium.

That rebellion will be obliterated, along with the entire surface of the earth in the Battle of Gog and Magog, after which a beautiful new and significantly changed surface will be recreated on the earth.

Scriptural references

The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. (Daniel 2:44) The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. (Daniel 7:27)

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. ... They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4,6)

He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isaiah 2:4)

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6-9)
Scriptural references

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (Revelation 20:7-9)

The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ... The heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. (2 Peter 3:10,12) Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. (Revelation 6:14)

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. (Revelation 21:1 [see also 2 Peter 3:13])

13. The Great White Throne Judgment

All people from the beginning of time who had not known or believed in Jesus will then be resurrected, and will stand before God’s throne to be judged. They will be either rewarded or punished according to their works and assigned to their places in the hereafter. Satan will be cast into “the lake of fire.”

Scriptural references

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them... And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. (Revelation 20:11-12)

All the nations will be gathered before Him. ... Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” ... Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.” And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matthew 25:32,34,40-41,45-46)

The Devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ... And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10,14-15)

14. The Heavenly City

God’s great heavenly city will then descend to the recreated surface of the earth. God Himself will dwell in that city with those who love and serve Him. The Bible tells us that God will wipe away every tear, and there will be no more death, sorrow, crying or pain. Justice will reign, and there will be no more wars, oppression, power struggles, racial prejudice, disparity between rich and poor, poverty, disease, tragedy, or injustice.

The Bible tells us that God is a God of love (1 John 4:8). His kingdom will be filled with love, beauty, peace, comfort, joy, and compassion, and will be enveloped in the love of God Himself.

Scriptural references

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things
have passed away.” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” ... I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 21:1-6,22-27; 22:4-5)

And that is the happy ending. Although there are frightening events looming in the future, we can take heart that God is in control and after the dark night there is a beautiful and eternal tomorrow waiting. These events will come to pass as foretold in the Bible, and you can be prepared in the best way possible for the future by inviting Jesus into your life and heart today. He will answer your call and you will be blessed with His presence and love from this day forward and on into eternity. You can simply pray this prayer or one like it in your own words:

Dear Jesus, I believe that You died for me and that You love me. I know I need Your presence in my life, and I open my heart and ask You to come in. Forgive me for my past sins. Thank you for Your free gift of everlasting life and for Your forgiveness of all my sins. Help me to love You and to share Your love and truth with others. Amen.

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Endnotes