

The End Times and the Bible

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1 Introduction

The goal of this study is not just knowledge because then once this study is over then your work is done. You have learned what you need to know and so you can move on. Yes, we do want to learn what the Bible says about such an important topic but we also want it to impact our lives. We want this study to motivate us to draw closer to God, to understand His ways better, and, by doing so, trust in Him more. This study should influence how we see the world; to not just see the temporary things around us but to focus us more on the eternal. And it should provoke us to lead lives of purity and holiness. Once this study ends we should carry its truths through the rest of our lives.

End Times prophecy is probably the most debated of all Bible doctrines. You can take any verse and find multiple interpretations.

Studying the End Times is called eschatology. “Eschatos” means “last” and “logy” means “the study of.”

In this study we are going to start very high up regarding our look at End Times topics and get more and more detailed.

This is not comprehensive. We will not be looking at every verse and the details of every interpretation. That would take books. This study is to, hopefully, give a good solid foundation to understand what the Bible says about the End Times and related themes.

The end times are sometimes referred to as the eschaton which means end of the world or end of time.

2 Why is studying End Times prophecy important?

- 1) It motivates us to live pure lives

1 John 3:2-3

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

When we understand the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and fix our hope on this then we will have a desire to be pure. Why? Because our eyes will be fixed on eternity instead of this temporal world.

Colossians 3:1-5 verifies this.

3 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on Earth.

Set your mind on eternity, not on the things of Earth that are passing away.

3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

What is our focus? What is our motivation? When Christ is revealed in glory. This is the Second Coming.

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

“Therefore.” Because Christ is coming back we are to put away these sins.

Do you struggle with sin? Focus your eyes on Christ’s return.

2) It comforts us in the death of those close to us

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

We know that we will meet up again with friends and relatives who were saved and have died. We will see their faces. We will hug them again. We will share our experiences since we last saw each other. Life does not end at death. We do not break up and become nothing more than part of the ecosystem again. We are more than fertilizer. We are eternal beings created in the image of God. And those who have received God’s free gift of eternal life will rejoice forever with Him and with others.

3) End Times Prophecy teaches us more about who God is and what His plans are

God is perfect in all His ways. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “His work is perfect.” Matthew 5:48 says, “your heavenly Father is perfect.” Romans 12:2 states, “the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

The more that we know about God the greater and more perfect that we will see Him. That only leads to trust and peace and confidence.

End Times Prophecy shows that God will not abandon us. We are always on His mind. He does indeed have good plans for our lives, not just as a people as a whole but as individuals also.

4) We know that there is ultimate justice and fairness

Life isn’t fair. The good oftentimes do suffer more while the wicked live lives of ease. And that fairness will not necessarily be corrected while any of us live.

But, ultimately, it will be fair.

We see this in Luke 16 with the story of the rich man and Lazarus where the rich man was “joyously living” whereas Lazarus, the poor man, was poor and sickly. But then we read verse 25, “But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during

your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.”

We also see this in Psalm 73. The poor man is envious of the rich and how they seem to get away with evil and still live lives of ease. Then we read verses 16 – 17, “When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight 17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end.”

We may live rough lives now but, if you are born-again through the free gift of salvation, then there will be untold and unimaginable riches forever in the heavenly life.

5) It fixes our eyes on the eternal rather than the temporal

2 Corinthians 4:18-5:9

while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

5 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. 4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight— 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

Matthew 6:19-21

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is a command not a suggestion because God knows what will bless us the most and for the longest.

We can easily let the things of earth distract us: health, finances, vacations, work, the house, family, conflicts, and so on. But when we are more aware of the eternal, of the ending, then we adjust our priorities. You are not as likely to memorize every episode of your favorite TV show and more likely to memorize Scripture.

6) We know that God is sovereign

Sometimes it seems like evil and unfairness gets the best of us. People are killed by terrorists. People lose their jobs and struggle to keep their homes, or don't keep them. That sin keeps having its way with us. But God is sovereign. If He can force the entire ending of the world to happen the way that He wants it to then He can certainly help us with our issues.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

7) It should motivate us to share the Gospel with all peoples

Realizing that people are going to spend an eternity in agony and suffering because they refused or never heard the Gospel should motivate us to share the good news of Jesus' free offer of salvation.

Rather than fuming because our neighbor's leaves blew onto our yard we should see them as someone whose eternity is one of horror.

Instead of seeing him as a rich and arrogant show-off we should see him as screaming in the torment of eternal flames because no one shared the Gospel with him.

8) Prophecy is proof of God

Isaiah 46:8-10

8 "Remember this, and be assured;
Recall it to mind, you transgressors.
9 "Remember the former things long past,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, 'My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

We know through archeology that the Old Testament was written before Jesus was born. In the Old Testament there were some 315 prophecies about Jesus every one of which He fulfilled.

Professor Peter Stoner wrote a book called "Science Speaks." In it he chose eight of these prophecies and determined that the odds of one person fulfilling them is 1×10^{28} . Professor Stoner used this illustration to explain this number. Fill the state of Texas knee deep in silver dollars. Mark one silver dollar with a black checkmark. Mix all of the silver dollars up. Blindfold someone and have him dive into this pile anywhere that he wants. The odds that he would pick the checked coin is the same odds as someone fulfilling these eight prophecies.

He then picked 48 prophecies and determined that one person could fulfill all of them is 1×10^{157} . This number is larger than the number of estimated atoms in the universe.

2.1 Prophecy in general

62 out of 66 books contain prophecy (Ruth, Song of Solomon, Philemon, and 3 John do not).

Over a quarter (27% to be exact) of all verses are prophetic.

2.2 End Times prophecy specifically

22% of all prophetic verses refer to the Second Coming.

It has been said that Christ's Second Coming is mentioned eight times more than Christ's first coming. His second coming is mentioned 1,845 times in the Old Testament and 318 times in just the New Testament. It is the second most discussed doctrine with only salvation mentioned more often. Every one of the nine authors of the New Testament wrote about Christ's second coming. One out of every 30 New Testament verses is about the End Times. If God, who inspired the Bible, thought that the Second Coming was that important then so should we.

In his book "Revelation" Scott Duvall says, "Revelation answers the most basic of all questions: Who is Lord of the universe? The Roman emperor claimed lordship by extending his power through local rulers, taxation, the military, trade guilds, temples, and various symbols like statues and coins. But Revelation was written to reassure Jesus's disciples that God is on his throne and that Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord of all."

He also says, "Revelation proclaims hope—hope made possible by Christ's victory, hope that brings comfort to the faithful who are now suffering, hope that calls for repentance from those who are compromising and hope that one day God will judge evil and live among his people in a new heaven and new earth."

Duvall later states that the keys to this book or Revelation are:

- 1) God is firmly seated on his throne as the sovereign Ruler of the universe.
- 2) God's eternal greatness stands in contrast to the temporary, counterfeit powers of earthly pagan rulers.
- 3) God alone is worthy of worship as the holy, powerful, eternal Creator
- 4) The chief activity of heaven is worship.

Unfortunately, when discussions of prophecy are read, the result is sometimes an appreciation for the considerable knowledge of the writer more than for the supernatural prescience of the divine author of prophecy.

All prophecy is summed up in Revelation 19:10, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." All prophecy points to the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ.

3 Overview

In this study of prophecy we are going to first take a high level view and then bring it closer and closer.

Here are some of the big events of End Times prophecy defined very generally.

Tribulation: This is a time of disaster and judgment.

Antichrist: This is a human ruler who severely persecutes Christians during the Tribulation.

Second Coming: This is when Jesus Himself or His judgment comes to the Earth. This usually follows the Tribulation.

Millennium: This is a long time of peace. It generally follows the Second Coming.

New heavens and new earth: A recreation of the existing universe. The last event before eternity starts.

Seven Seals, seven Trumpets, seven Bowls or Vials: A series of catastrophic events that occur during the Tribulation.

Now that is pretty broad.

4 Views to Interpret End Times Prophecy

Let's start very high up. How to even interpret End Time Prophecy. There are four main ways. Within each of these there are many varieties so we will keep it to the most general or common interpretation.

Two of these views have these prophecies as having already occurred. One is future. And one is allegorical.

4.1 Preterist

The word “preterism” means “past.” These proponents believe that all or most of End Times prophecies have already taken place.

There are two schools among preterists: Full and Partial.

Full preterists believe that all End Times prophecy has already occurred. There is no future fulfillment. There is no real Second Coming where Jesus returns back to the Earth. The new heavens and new earth were the fulfillment of the law in 70 A.D. They take Matthew 16:28, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” as meaning that the Second Coming will happen within their lifetimes which would be the first century. Also, Matthew 24:24 which is immediately after Jesus talking about His Second Coming, “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” Since a generation is usually 40 years all of this had to have happened pretty quickly. Since Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD they take this as when all of this was fulfilled. Jesus’ Second Coming was spiritual in nature and not physical. They say that we are currently living in the new heavens and the new earth.

Some examples of how preterists define people or events in the book of Revelation:

- Nero or General Titus was the antichrist.
- Most of the events in Revelation were fulfilled by Rome’s attack on Jerusalem. This was the Tribulation and only affected the Jews.
- This war start in Tishri in 66 AD and ended on Passover of 74 AD which was 7 ½ years which basically works out to match the seven year Tribulation spoken of in the Bible.
- Since the events in Revelation speak of taking place throughout the Earth and seas the “Earth” is Israel only and the “sea” is the Gentile nations.

The word “generation” could also be translated as “race.” So Jesus could be saying that the Jewish race or people will be kept safe until the end.

Partial preterists believe that most End Times prophecies have already occurred but that the final three chapters of Revelation (20-22) are future events and that Jesus will come to the Earth at the Second Coming.

There are a number of problems with the preterist viewpoint.

One problem is that the people and events in the Bible do not historically match those that the preterists say they are. For example, many of them claim that Nero was the antichrist. The Bible in Revelation 19 tells us that right after the Second Coming of Jesus the antichrist will be seized and cast into the lake of fire. The full preterists say that the Second Coming occurred with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. However, a first century Roman historian, Suetonius, wrote that Nero committed suicide in June of 68 AD when he was 31 years old when “he drove a dagger into his throat.” This was two years before their supposed Second Coming and certainly not after.

Another problem is that the events in Revelation take place on a global level (great earthquakes, 1/3 of the creatures in the sea dying, a 200 million man army) whereas preterists have everything happening in a small geographic area.

A third problem is the date when the book of Revelation was written. Preterists must have a date prior to 70 AD since that is the key time in their system. Anything written after that date related to End Times is no longer a prophecy. However, most scholars put Revelation as having been written at around 95 AD. John, the author of Revelation, had a disciple Polycarp. Polycarp’s disciple was Irenaeus who wrote in his book *Against Heresies* that John wrote Revelation at the end of Emperor Domitian’s reign which ended in 96 AD.

4.2 Historicism

This is somewhat similar to preterism in that the events are already fulfilled—historical—but stretches out over thousands of years rather than being done by 70 AD.

Revelation chapters 4-7 will fulfilled in the fall of the Roman Empire. Chapters 8-10 is when the Roman Empire was invaded by the Vandals, Huns, Saracens, and Turks. Chapters 11-13 is the true church's conflict with Roman Catholicism and chapters 14-19 are God's judgment on and overthrow of the Catholic Church. Not surprisingly in this view, the antichrist is the papacy.

One problem is that it is focused on Europe whereas the events in Revelation are global. There was no 200 million man army. One quarter of the world's population did not die at any point. Therefore, most of Revelation's prophecies cannot be taken literally and even if spiritualized cannot be reconciled with actual historical events.

Second is that it seems to have been contrived just to attack Roman Catholicism. That is probably why it was popular with Protestant reformers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli.

This view has greatly declined in popularity and influence.

4.3 Futurism

This system of interpretation holds that most of Revelation and other related End Times Scriptures will take place in the future.

Revelation 1:19 says, "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things." The futurist says Revelation chapter 1 is "things which you have seen," chapters 2-3 as "things which are," and the remaining chapters as "things which will take place after these things."

Futurists argue for a literal or plain interpretation of End Times Scripture when possible which is most of the time. There are symbols and figurative language that should be interpreted as such but these are generally obvious and these symbols must be viewed in context to discern their meaning.

4.4 Idealism

This is a school of interpretation where everything is symbolic or an allegory. There is no historical fulfillment. None of the characters for example in the book of Revelation are or will be real people.

So John in the book of Revelation is not actually seeing reality but sort of a "dream world."

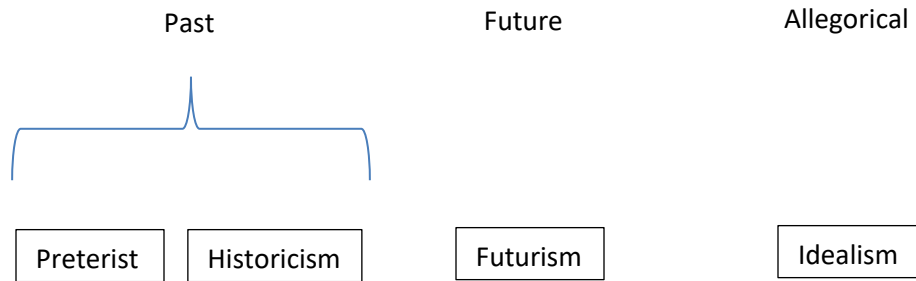
For example, the antichrist is not a real person but rather represents social injustice or the exploitation of workers or materialism. Or the antichrist may represent political opposition to the church. The False Prophet could be heresy or corruption that infiltrates the church. In this interpretation the characters in End Times prophecy are themes or overarching concepts rather than specific events or people. Thus they can be interpreted however one feels according to their own whims and passions. In the end, though, God ultimately triumphs.

One problem with this interpretation is that it has no real, historical fulfillment. Revelation 1:1a says, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place." This states that there are "things" which will take place. They are not just on-going concepts.

Another problem is that it is so abstract. What these symbols represent is up to whatever socio-political issues the interpreter is concerned with.

We are not going to consider this view.

4.5 Conclusion



Of these four views we are only going to discuss the futurist view. I do not believe that the other three views are sustainable Biblically or historically but those proofs are beyond the scope of this study.

5 Millennium

Now let's get a little closer and discuss the Millennium.

The Millennium is spoken of many times in Scripture particularly in the Old Testament. In a nutshell, it is a time of peace and justice.

Revelation 20:5-7 refer to this time as being 1,000 years. This is where the term "Millennium" comes from; it means 1,000. However, others take this number as being symbolic for a very long time.

There are three major views of the Millennium. Of course there are many others including Historic Premillennialism but we won't cover those.

Which view you hold depends on how you define two distinctions:

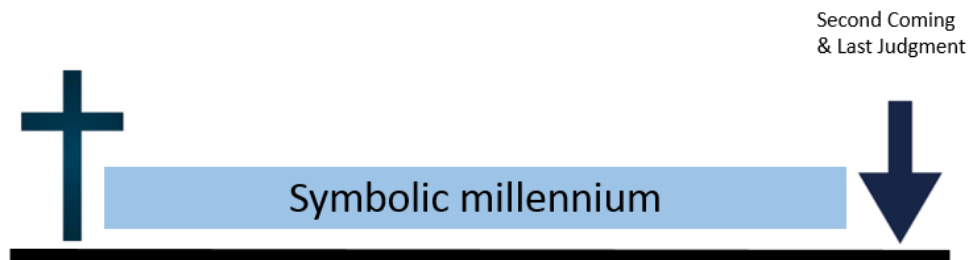
- 1) Is it actually 1,000 literal years or is it just a really long time
- 2) When will Jesus return at the Second Coming in relation to the Millennium

Here are the three major views:

- 1) Amillennialism
- 2) Postmillennialism
- 3) Premillennialism

1.1 Amillennialism

Amillennialism



Literally means “no millennium.” There is no literal 1,000-year millennium. “Millennium” in this case simply means “a long time.” The millennium is the time period between Jesus’ first and second Comings.

All prophecies concerning Israel will be fulfilled by the church during this time period. The eternal state immediately follows the Second Coming.

Amillennialists claim that the millennial reign of Jesus started with the creation of the church in Pentecost in Acts 2 and is continuing until the Second Coming. Jesus is not physically reigning on the Earth but is doing so through the Eucharist and the church. Therefore, the length of the millennium is currently unknown since the Second Coming has not occurred yet. The number 1,000 mentioned in Revelation 20 is symbolic.

There is no real Rapture where people are taken up and meet with Jesus in the air. Rather it is a mystical gathering with Jesus that occurs at the Second Coming.

This view relies a lot on symbolism.

In summary:

- We are currently in the Millennium
- The Millennium is an indefinite time period of, at least, nearly 2,000 years
- The church inherited all of Israel’s promises because of Israel’s disobedience and rejection of the true Messiah and so is known as spiritual Israel
- The world will get worse and worse
- There is no literal seven-year Tribulation
- The Second Coming will happen just as the world’s condition becomes intolerable which is analogous with Noah and the Flood
- All of the final remaining major events will occur together at the Second Coming: the Rapture, Resurrections, and God’s final judgment

One problem with this system is that it does not match the events discussed in Revelation. For example, Revelation 20:1-3 talks about Satan being bound at the Millennium. Amillennialists claim that Satan was bound at the beginning of the church or even at Christ’s first coming. 1 Peter 5:8 then becomes a problem because it says that Satan is still prowling about, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

1.2 Postmillennialism

Postmillennialism



Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) is considered the father of Postmillennialism. He developed this interpretation at around 1700.

As a result of the Gospel and the efforts of the church, the world will become better and better eventually ushering in a literal 1,000 year Golden Age of peace and prosperity. At the end of these 1,000 years Jesus will return. That is why it is post-millennial; the Second Coming occurs at the end (post) of the 1,000 years.

All cultures, institutions, and nations will progressively become more Christian. Other religions will decrease and many of their people will be converted to Christianity.

Post-millennialists believe in a literal 1,000 years but rather than Jesus reigning physically on the Earth He will reign from heaven. Therefore, His reign is more spiritual. When the 1,000 years begins or began is unknown. Therefore, the Millennium will not be ushered in by Jesus but by the church.

The Tribulation is not future. It already occurred in the Jewish-Roman War of 66-73 AD and involved the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

The Rapture, the Second Coming, and God's final judgment will all occur at the same time.

In summary:

- The Tribulation occurred around the time of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 AD and involved only the Jews
- The church will become increasingly successful throughout the world
- There will be or already has started a 1,000 year Golden Age at which the world would be Christianized
- During this Golden Age there will be peace and prosperity
- Some post-millennialists believe that at the end of the 1,000 years there will be a small apostasy and then will be the Second Coming, however, the majority do not believe this
- The church inherited all of Israel's promises because of Israel's disobedience and rejection of the true Messiah and so is known as spiritual Israel
- All of the final remaining major events will occur together at the Second Coming: the Rapture, Resurrections, and God's final judgment

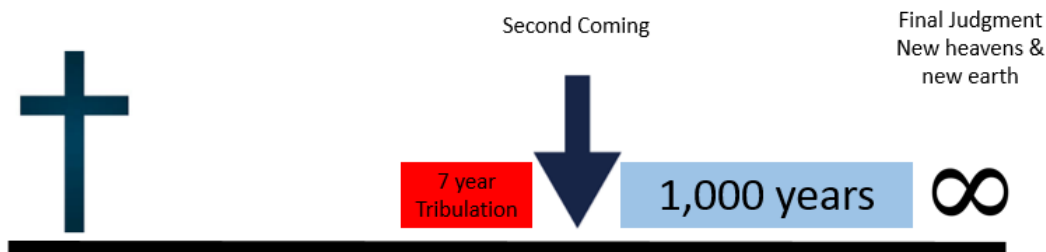
A problem is that the Bible says that the world will be worse before the Second Coming.

6 You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. 9 “Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.

Because of World War II this view was largely discredited since it was obvious that the world was not getting better.

1.3 Premillennialism

Premillennialism



In premillennialism all End Times prophecies are future.

There will be a seven-year Tribulation period at the end of which will be Jesus’ Second Coming and Satan will be bound. Jesus will return literally and physically to the Earth before the literal 1,000 year Millennium, and He will reign on the Earth for 1,000 years.

At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed. There will be a final rebellion against God which will be swiftly defeated. Then will be the new heavens and new earth.

The antichrist and the false prophet will be real people.

Because of her rejection of the Messiah, Israel will be put on hold regarding God’s promises while the church takes over as God’s vehicle for proclaiming the Gospel. The church will be raptured at some point in the Tribulation following which the Jews will embrace Jesus as Messiah and once again Israel will be God’s chosen vehicle.

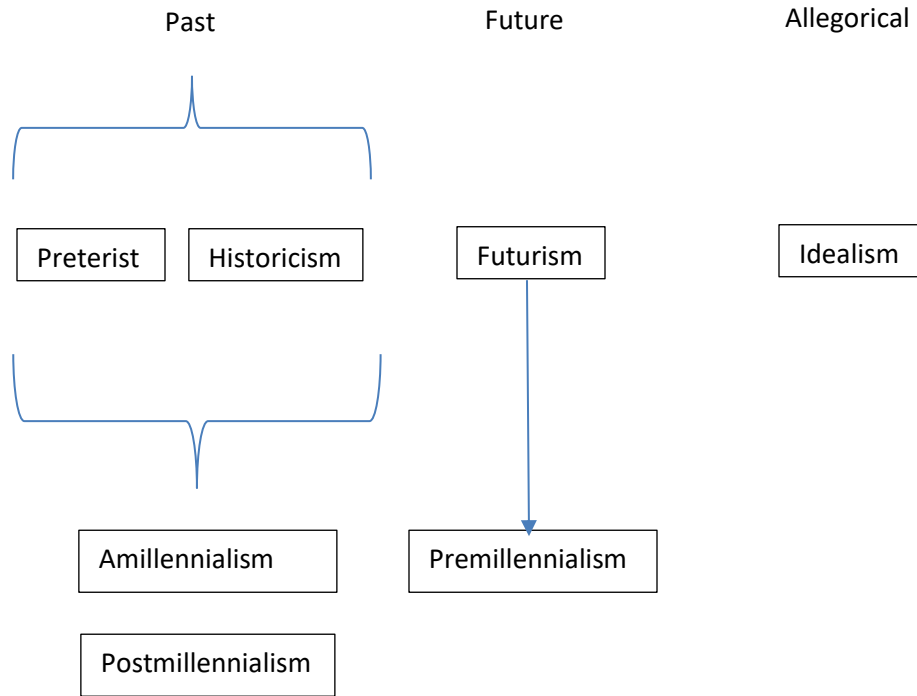
It is “Pre”-millennialism because the Second Coming is before the Millennium.

In summary.

- All End Times events are future
- There will be a seven-year Tribulation
- There will be an actual Rapture that will occur either at the beginning, during, or at the end of the Tribulation depending on your interpretation

- Jesus will physically return to the Earth and will reign from Jerusalem
- There will be a literal 1,000 year Millennium during which Satan will be bound
- At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed and lead a rebellion against God
- Satan will be defeated
- There will be a new heavens and new earth
- Israel will fulfill its own promises and not the church

5.1 Conclusion



6 Rapture

The word “Rapture” means “to be caught up” or “to carry off.” It is most clearly defined and prominent in Premillennialism. The common interpretation is that everyone who is saved (also known as born-again Christians or the Church) will suddenly and completely be removed from the Earth by Jesus Christ. Then at that one point in history, everyone left on the Earth will be only those who are not saved.

There are a number of verses that support the Rapture, but one of the key ones is 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

Here is the exact order of the Rapture.

- 1) Jesus will leave Heaven
- 2) Jesus will shout. This is a military expression and indicates that a command is being given. Strong’s Greek defines it as “an arousing outcry.” Another defines the Greek as “a mutual cheer.”

- 3) There will be a voice of an archangel
- 4) A trumpet sound
- 5) Jesus will come down to the Earth but only as far as the sky so He will not actually touch the Earth
- 6) Christians (those who have been saved from Pentecost on) who are already dead will rise first and meet Jesus in the clouds
- 7) Then living Christians will rise and meet Jesus and the risen dead Christians in the clouds
- 8) All will return to Heaven
- 9) At some point in Heaven these believers will celebrate the Marriage Feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:17-18)

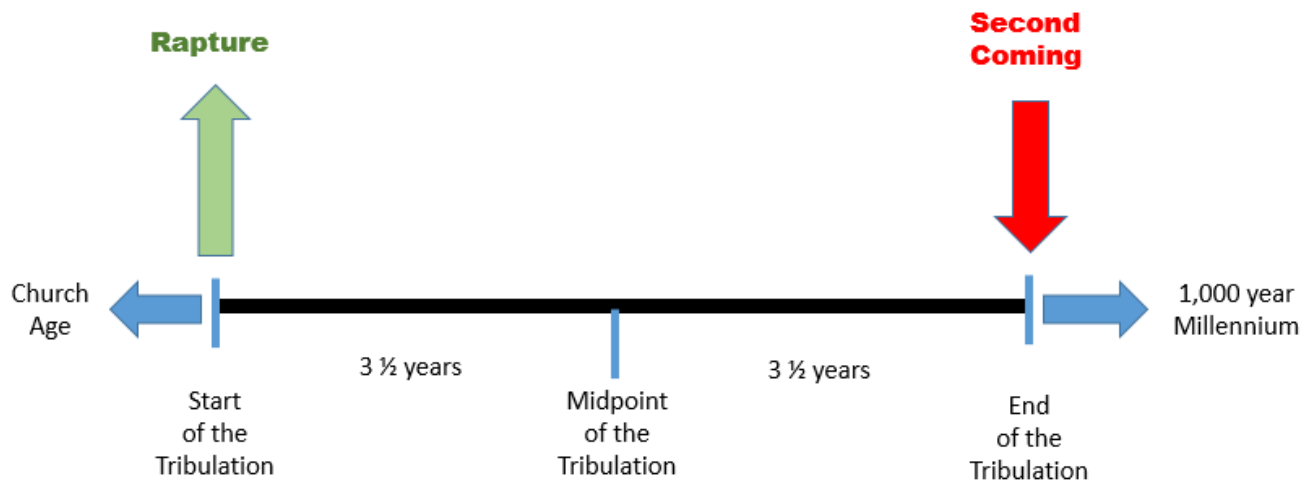
The Rapture is different from the Second Coming as we will see later on. Those who believe in a Rapture describe the Rapture as Jesus coming for the church and the Second Coming as Jesus coming with the church.

The Rapture is also known as the Parousia.

There are a number of Rapture theories mostly differing on the timing of the Rapture. All mainstream viewpoints have the Rapture occurring at some point in the seven-year Tribulation. We will look at five of them in order of when they are to occur within the Tribulation.

6.1 Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Pre-Tribulation Rapture



7 year Tribulation

The Rapture occurs at the very beginning of the Tribulation and may actually be the event that starts the Tribulation. Therefore, the Church will not go through the Tribulation. No believers will enter the Tribulation.

Because this theory and, to a degree, the Partial Rapture theory are the only ones that occur before the Tribulation they are the only ones that allow for an imminent Rapture. An imminent Rapture is one that can occur at any time, even right now, because nothing has to happen first. In all of the other theories the Tribulation must already have started and so there is some prophetic fulfillment that must take place first.

In the Tribulation the Gospel will be proclaimed by people who will be saved at the beginning of and throughout the Tribulation and also from a large number of Jews who will embrace Jesus as Messiah.

Once the Rapture occurs the church on Earth will forever cease to exist. Those who are saved during the Tribulation are Christians but are not part of the church since the church will be in Heaven.

The Church and Israel are distinct from each other with separate prophecies and separate fulfillments. The church will not fulfillment Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel. This is the only position that clearly and fully makes that distinction.

At the end of the Tribulation at the Second Coming of Jesus the church who was previously Raptured will return with Jesus. All of the wicked will be cast into Hades. That will leave only living believers left to initially populate the Millennium. We will study this more in depth later on in this study.

Of all of the Rapture theories, the pre-Tribulation Rapture views the book of Revelation most literally, i.e. it interprets more of the characters and events of the Tribulation as literal and real rather than spiritualize, symbolize, or allegorize them.

1.1.1 Arguments for

Once the Tribulation begins in Revelation 4 the church is never mentioned again on the Earth.

Several passages seem to state that Christians won't go through the tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 1:10, "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come." Those who adhere to the pre-Tribulation theory maintain that the wrath to come is the Tribulation. This cannot mean that God will deliver Christians through the Tribulation because we see in Revelation that many, many Christians are martyred during that time. Revelation 6:17 says, "for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" So here, the great day of wrath is associated with the sixth seal near the beginning of the Tribulation. So even near the beginning of the Tribulation there will be much wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the **day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.** 3 **While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly** like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;** 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 **For God has not destined us for wrath,** but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 **Therefore encourage one another** and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

We see in verse 2 that this is talking about the End Times. In verse 3 it says that they (being the unsaved as we'll see in verse 4) will have destruction suddenly come upon them. Then in verse 4 in contrast to this sudden destruction "But you, brethren." Then in verse 9 "For God has not destined us for wrath." This would be the wrath of the Tribulation. So we are to encourage one another with these words.

Now some will say that this is referring to the Second Coming and not to the Tribulation and the wrath that believers will be delivered from is the wrath and judgment of God when He returns at the Second Coming. This is a valid interpretation that deserves further study.

Revelation 3:10, "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."

Here the hour of testing is said by pre-Tribulationists to be the testing of the Tribulation. Believers will be kept from this time. Therefore, this must be a pre-Tribulation Rapture.

Thessalonians 2:1-7

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him**, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 **And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.** 7 **For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.**

Pre-Tribulationists say that verse 1 "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him" is referring to the Rapture and, therefore, this entire passage is about the Tribulation.

Verses 3 – 5 are talking about the antichrist.

But something is restraining the antichrist, keeping him from taking action—verses 6 - 7. Once the "he" that is doing the restraining is removed then the antichrist will spring into action. Who is this "he" that verse 7 is referring to? Pre-Tribulationists say that the "he" is the Holy Spirit and that, since the Holy Spirit currently dwells within believers in the church, it is when the church is removed at the Rapture that the antichrist is revealed and the Tribulation begins.

Here again is the logic.

- 1) The antichrist is already in power before the Tribulation which makes sense since it is unlikely that he would go from someone with no political power to ruler of the world in such a short time.
- 2) But the antichrist is being restrained by the church from putting his evil plans into action.
- 3) The Holy Spirit dwells with believers in the church.
- 4) When the church is Raptured the Holy Spirit, in a sense, goes with it and is gone from the Earth.
- 5) The antichrist is no longer restrained.
- 6) The antichrist then sets in motion his evil plans and that is the start of the Tribulation.
- 7) Therefore, the Rapture of the church occurs that the start of the Tribulation.

In verse 3 the phrase "for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first" translated literally is "except the departure come first." This departure would mostly likely be the Rapture.

Revelation 4:4 mentions 24 elders in Heaven. Pre-Tribulationists believe that this represents the church already in Heaven. This is at the very beginning of the Tribulation.

If the Rapture occurs simultaneously with or just before the Second Coming then there is nobody left who is alive to populate the Millennium.

6.1.1.1 The judgment seat of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." After the church is Raptured there must be time for this "judgment seat of Christ" which is when believers will be judged for rewards. If the Rapture occurs at the end of the Tribulation simultaneous with the Second Coming then there is no time for this to occur.

So let's take a quick sidebar. What is the "judgment seat of Christ"?

It is also referred to as the Bema seat since "judgment seat" is the translation of the one Greek word "bema."

Historically, the bema is a raised platform where a Roman magistrate or ruler sat to make decisions and pass sentence. We see this used in this way in Matthew 27:19, "While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him.'" Also in John 19:13, "Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha."

The Isthmian Games were in ancient Greece and were a festival of athletic and musical competitions in honor of the sea god Poseidon. The victor's prize was a crown of wild celery which was changed to a pine wreath by the Romans. At these games was a stand where the judges sat to ensure that everyone followed the rules. This is mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:5, "Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules." The victor appeared before bema where he was given his prize. Only the winners appeared before the bema and they received only a reward. There would have been no punishment.

In the same way, only the saved will appear before the judgment seat of Christ and we will only receive rewards based on how much we mirrored Jesus' life and character. There will be no punishment.

It is believed that the judgment seat of Christ will occur immediately after the Rapture when we get to Heaven. Some verses that support this are:

Luke 14:14b says, "for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." This places the rewards time at the same time as the resurrection.

Also in Revelation 19 the church is returning with Jesus at the Second Coming. This is after the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. In verse 8, "It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints," they already appear to have the result of their rewards in the "fine linen" which is the "righteous acts of the saints." So the judgment seat would have to be before the Marriage Feast.

If this is indeed the case then the sequence of events at the Rapture will be:

- 1) The church is removed from the Earth
- 2) We enter into Heaven
- 3) We appear before the judgment seat of Christ
- 4) We receive our rewards

6.1.2 Imminent return of Jesus

A key doctrine for pre-Tribulationists is the imminent return of Jesus. Mid and Post-Tribulationists cannot have the imminent return of Jesus because the recognizable events in the Tribulation, which are laid out in the book of Revelation, must occur first.

The imminent return of Jesus means:

- That Jesus can return at any time.
- There are no signs or events required to the Rapture

A result is that it gives us hope and comfort.

The Scriptural support for this doctrine is slim and not uncontested. The usual verses used to support it are most probably referring to the Second Coming rather than to the Rapture. These would be:

Matthew 24:42, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

Matthew 24:44, "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will."

Mark 13:33, "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come."

1 Thessalonians 5:2 is the strongest because this passage is more than likely referring to the Rapture rather than the Second Coming, "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night." Of course, a doctrine is true even it appears only once in the Bible. If God says something even just once then it is confirmed.

There is historic evidence for the doctrine of the imminent return of Jesus.

The First Epistle of Clement, 23 (written around 96 A.D. by Clement, a prominent leader of the church at Rome who knew some of the apostles personally and is probably the Clement referred to in Phil. 4:3): "Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, 'speedily will He come, and will not tarry.'"

John Calvin wrote, "Be prepared to expect Him every day, or rather every moment" and "Today we must be alert to grasp the imminent return of Christ."

The Westminster Confession, written by the Puritans of England during the 1600s, declared that men should "shake off all carnal security and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come."

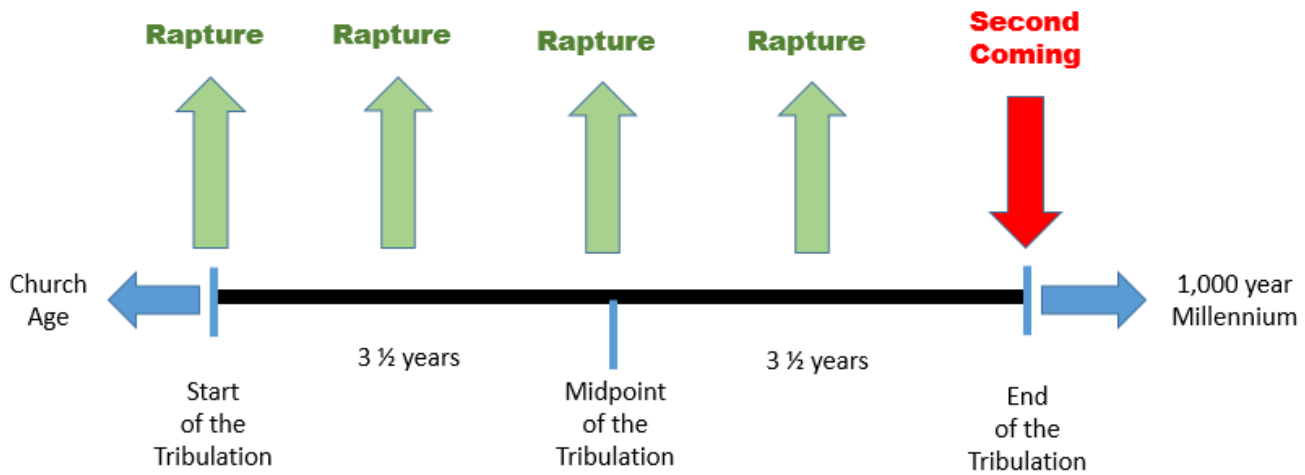
The "Apocalypse of Pseudo-Ephraem" is a Syrian tract written somewhere between 374 and 627 AD. In it is written, "All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins."

A main argument for the imminent return of Jesus is that if you accept the other evidence for a pre-Tribulation Rapture then imminence comes along for the ride.

John Walvoord wrote a book, "The Rapture Question," in which he gives 50 reasons for a pre-Tribulation Rapture.

6.2 Partial Rapture

Partial Rapture



7 year Tribulation

This is actually a series of Raptures. There will be an initial Rapture at the very start of the Tribulation just like pre-Tribulationism. But then there will be an additional, unknown number of subsequent Raptures throughout the Tribulation.

What determines who goes during which Rapture is based on each person's spiritual maturity. Only those who are watching and waiting will be Raptured. Here is what they say, "The basis of translation [rapture] must be grace or reward. ...We believe that frequent exhortations in the Scriptures to watch, to be faithful, to be ready for Christ's coming, to live Spirit-filled lives, all suggest that translation is a reward."

Therefore, many Christians will experience the Tribulation to various lengths of time.

Hebrews 9:28 reads, "so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him." Again there is this emphasis on Christ appearing "to those who eagerly await Him."

1.1.2 Arguments for

Matthew 24:40-41

Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

They say that in this Scripture both of the men and women are Christians, but only the one who is watching and waiting is who is Raptured at that time.

Luke 20:35

but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage

Only those who are worthy attain to the resurrection.

Philippians 3:10-11

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Here Paul is motivating Christians to become more like Christ so that they may attain to the resurrection (Rapture).

All of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 especially verse 6, "so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober." They say that this passage is not contrasting the saved with the unsaved but rather the alert saved with the unalert saved. Only the alert saved will be Raptured.

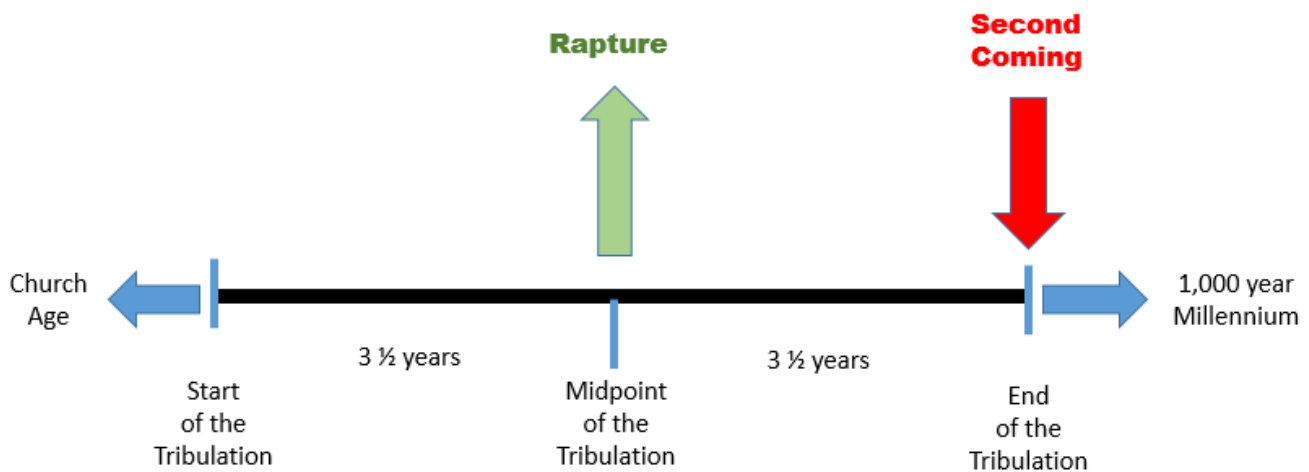
2 Timothy 4:8

in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The reward is being Raptured and it comes only to those "who have loved His appearing."

6.3 Mid-Tribulation Rapture

Mid-Tribulation Rapture



7 year Tribulation

This Rapture occurs at the midpoint of the Tribulation. The first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation is called the "Tribulation" and the last 3 1/2 years is called "The Great Tribulation" or "The Wrath of God." Therefore, the church will suffer through the "Tribulation" but will be spared "The Wrath of God." They claim that the first 3 1/2 years will be not much more than the general trials and troubles that we usually experience. So that time will be just like current times.

Many Mid-Tribulationists equate the 7th Trumpet in Revelation 11:15-19 (verse 15a, “Then the seventh angel sounded”) with the last trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” Therefore, the 7th trumpet will sound at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

Some also claim that Revelation 11:11-12 is the Rapture: “But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.” They do not view the two witnesses as real people but as symbols of the church. The two witnesses represent 1) The dead in Christ who will rise first and 2) Those who are still alive at that time.

Since in Revelation 11 the two witnesses are symbols of the church, the 3 ½ days when their bodies are lying in the streets are 3 ½ days when the church will undergo tremendous persecution. Then the church will be Raptured (verses 11-12).

So the timeline is that in the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation minus 3 ½ days the events surrounding the church are just like now. Then there will be an intense 3 ½ day persecution of the church by the antichrist. Then will come the Rapture.

1.1.3 Arguments for

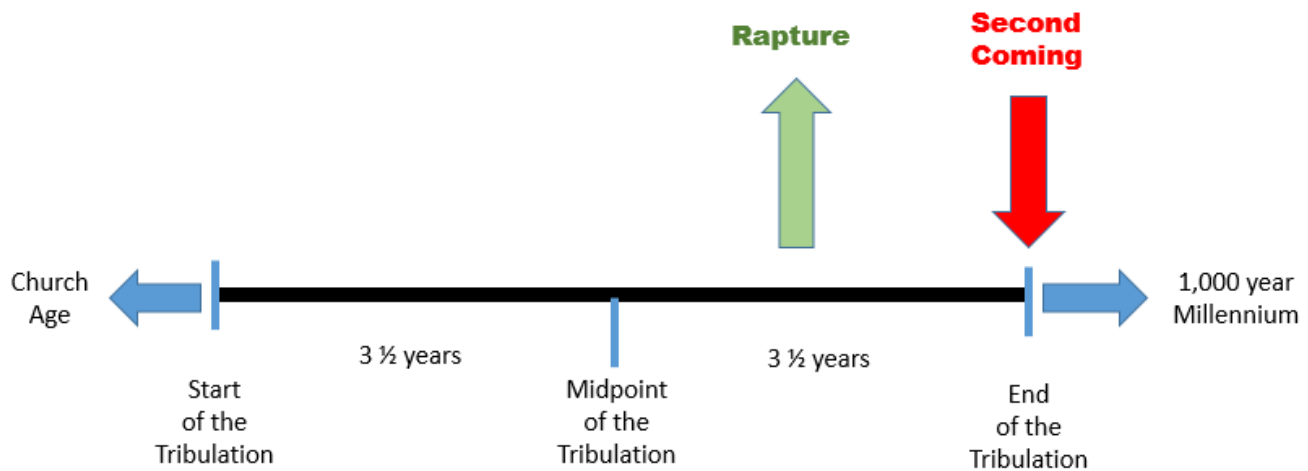
The last trumpet in 1 Corinthians 15 is the same as the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11.

Daniel 7:25 says, “He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”

The “he” is the antichrist and he will oppress the saints for 3 ½ years (time, times, and half a time). So the saints will endure the first half of the Tribulation.

6.4 Pre-Wrath Rapture

Pre-Wrath Rapture



7 year Tribulation

This view divides the Tribulation into three parts:

- 1) The Tribulation which is the first 3 1/2 years which is the beginning of birth pangs (Matthew 24:8).
- 2) The Great Tribulation which is the next 2 1/2 years.
- 3) The Day of the Lord which is the final 1 year and which is the final judgments.

Some shorten the second part to 21 months and lengthen the third part to 21 months. That would put this Rapture at the 3/4 point of the seven-year Tribulation or exactly halfway through the second half.

The Rapture will occur just before The Day of the Lord and so right before the final judgments. These final judgments are the Wrath of God. That is why this is the pre-wrath Rapture. However, the church will experience the wrath of man and of the Devil.

Many time this Rapture to coincide with the opening of the sixth seal in Revelation 6:12-17. All of the seals up to this point represent only the wrath of man by way of the antichrist. So the first five seals occur over the course of the first six years of the Tribulation. Therefore the trumpets and bowls will occur in the last year or so of the seven-year period.

They use Matthew 24:22, "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." The church's time in the Tribulation will be cut short by the Rapture or else it would have been destroyed.

The Day of the Lord is not a single point or day in time. Rather it stretches out over a year or more and includes the Wrath of God.

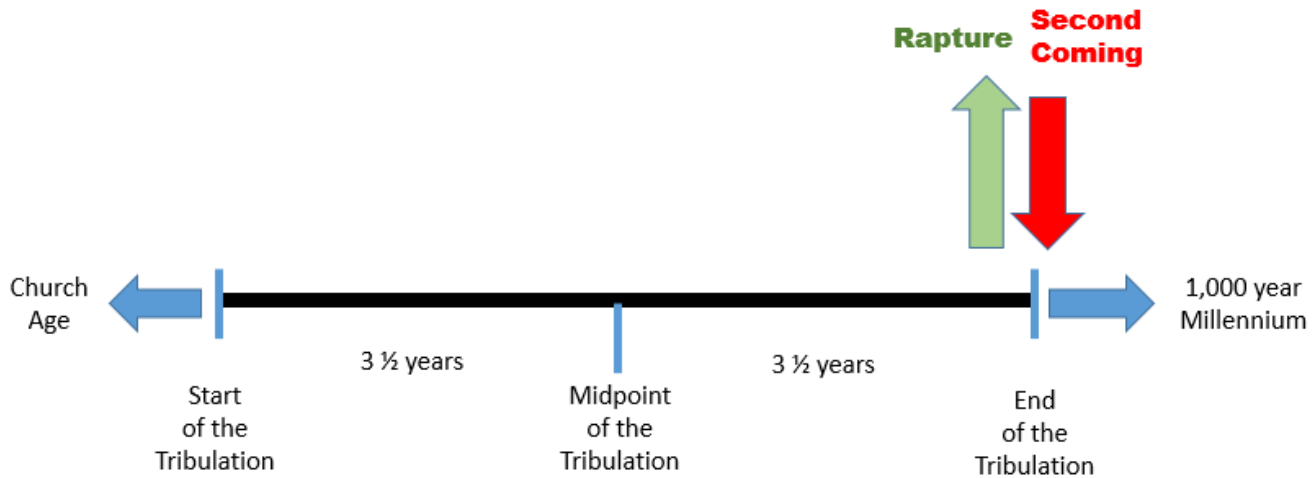
1.1.4 Arguments for

Because the first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation will be not much more than the usual trials of life there is no reason for the church to be Raptured.

All of the verses that talk about the church being saved from the wrath to come are applicable.

6.5 Post-Tribulation Rapture

Post-Tribulation Rapture



7 year Tribulation

The Rapture and the Second Coming occur together as facets of a single event. This is one continuous action. The order would be like this:

- 1) Jesus leaves Heaven with a shout, the voice of an angel, and a trumpet sound (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)
- 2) As He is coming towards the Earth the Rapture occurs
- 3) The Raptured church meets Jesus in the air and is given glorified bodies
- 4) The church then turns around and follows Jesus back to the Earth for the Second Coming

The Raptured church does not go to Heaven before the Second Coming.

The church will go through the Tribulation.

The Rapture is not imminent since the opening of all of the seals, trumpets, and bowls must first occur in addition to other events such as the two witnesses in Revelation 11. Therefore, we may not know the day or hour of the Rapture but we will have a good idea of the general timeframe since it will occur soon after the seventh bowl.

The Church and Israel are considered synonymous so the church inherits Israel's Old Testament promises.

1.1.5 Arguments for

The church is promised tribulation in the Bible. The word "persecute" is used 23 times in the New Testament.

The Day of the Lord is a single day and not a broader time period and so both the Rapture and the Second Coming must occur on the same day.

Matthew 24:29-31 is a key verse:

29 “But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

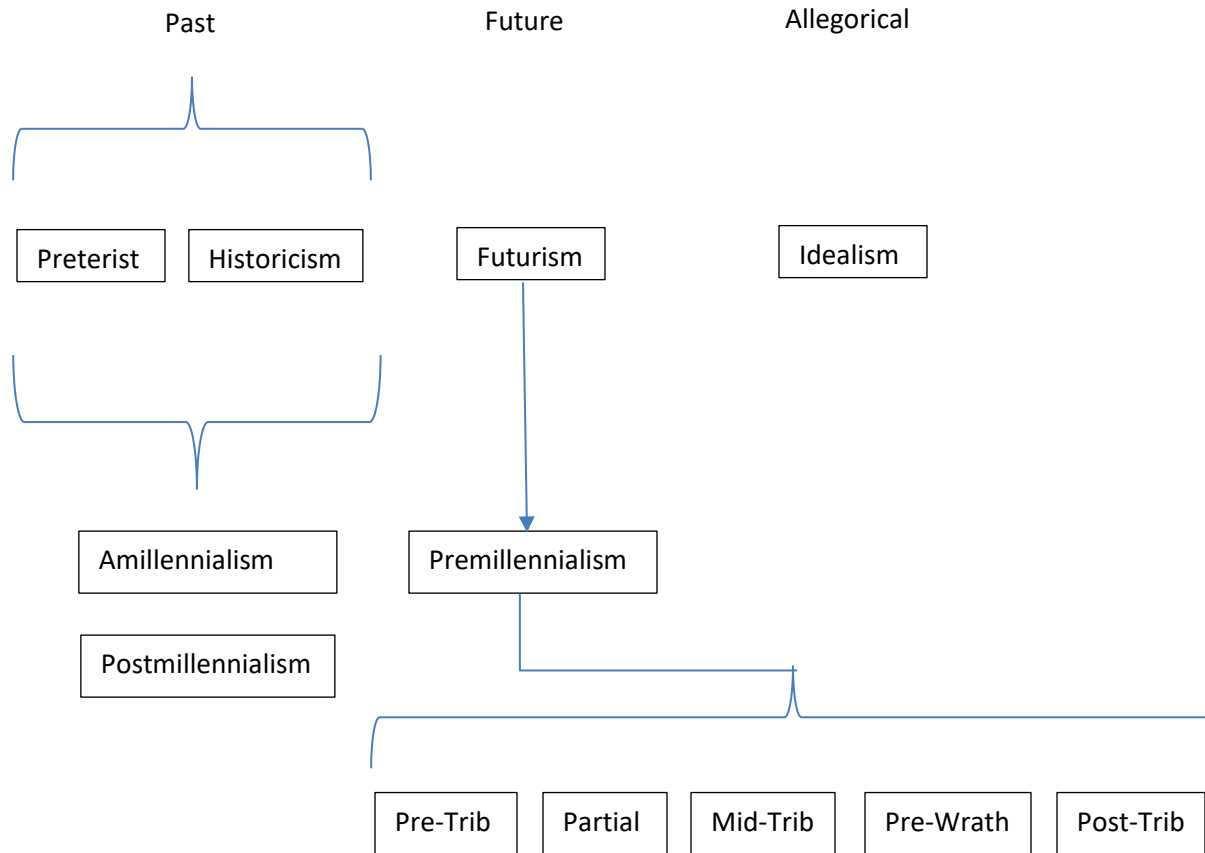
The elect will be gathered after the Tribulation and at the time of the Second Coming.

Daniel 12:1-2

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

The “time of distress” is the Tribulation. Then “at that time” presumably at the end of the “time of distress” they will be rescued.

6.6 How Rapture theories align with Millennial theories



7 The Rapture versus the Second Coming

7.1 Rapture verses

Here are the key Scripture passages on the Rapture.

7.1.1 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (This is perhaps the primary Scripture on the Rapture.)

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The Thessalonians thought that Jesus was going to come back very soon but were distressed because they were afraid that their loved ones were going to die before it occurred. What was going to happen to them? Would they not be resurrected? Would they never see them again?

Paul wrote this section partly to reassure them that they have hope. They will see them again. When their loved ones died it was not “goodbye” but, rather, “good night.”

The phrase “dead in Christ” is only used of believers who have died since Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, i.e. only those who died in the church age and never of Old Testament believers. The Old Testament believers’ resurrection will occur at a different time as we shall study later.

First New Testament believers will rise first and then those who are alive will be taken up.

Then we will all meet the Lord in the air and be with Him forevermore.

7.1.2 John 14:2-3

2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Here we see an order:

- 1) Christ goes to Heaven to prepare a place for us
- 2) Christ comes back again
- 3) Christ receives us to Himself
- 4) We return with Christ to this place prepared in Heaven for us

This cannot be the Second Coming because then we are coming back to the Earth with Christ to set up His kingdom on Earth. Here we are going with Christ back to Heaven.

J. B. Smith who was a Mennonite in his book “A Revelation” made this word comparison between John 14:1-3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

John 14:1-3	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
trouble v. 1	sorrow v. 13
believe v. 1	believe v. 14
God, Me [Jesus] v. 1	Jesus, God v. 14
told you v. 2	say to you v. 15
come again v. 3	coming of the Lord v. 15
receive you v. 3	caught up v. 17
to myself v. 3	to meet the Lord v. 17
be where I am v. 3	ever be with the Lord v. 17

7.1.3 1 Thessalonians 1:10

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

Jesus is going to come and deliver us from the wrath to come. Pre-Tribulationists interpret “wrath” to be the wrath of the entire Tribulation. Mid- and Pre-Wrath-Tribulationists interpret “wrath” as only God’s wrath which is in the latter part of the Tribulation.

7.1.4 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

While the non-Christians think that everything in the world is good and that they have “peace and safety” then the Lord will come as a thief in the night. For Pre-Tribulationists this would be the Rapture. Then after the Rapture will be a time of destruction which will be the Tribulation.

But we are sons of the day. We will not be scared or frightened by the Lord’s coming.

7.1.5 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

In verse 1 the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him” is the Rapture since at the Second Coming we will be coming back with Him.”

In verse 3 the “man of lawlessness” is the antichrist. But he will be restrained, verse 6. But then what restrains him will be taken out of the way, verse 7. Then once that restraint is removed then he will be revealed to the world for what he really is. The antichrist will be aided by Satan and will be accompanied with power, signs, false wonders, and deception, verses 9 and 10. In the end the antichrist will be slain by the Lord, verse 7.

The restrainer in verses 6 – 7 is referred to by “he.” Many believe that the “he” is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells believers and therefore the church. So according to Pre-Tribulationists when the church is Raptured at the beginning of the Tribulation this is when the restrainer is removed and the antichrist is revealed.

7.1.6 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.

Paul starts off by referring to his following teaching as a mystery. A mystery in Paul’s writing is doctrine that was not revealed in the Old Testament. Therefore, verses 51-58 are not referring to the resurrection of the Old Testament believers since that is mentioned numerous times in the Old Testament. So it is referring to a new resurrection; one that was not previously revealed. This would be the resurrection of church believers.

In the phrase “in a moment” the Greek word is “atomos.” “A” means not and “tomos” means “cut.” So atomos is something that cannot be cut. It is indivisible. The Rapture will happen so fast that the time cannot be divided. This is in contrast to those creepy pictures that show the bodies of Christians rising from the Earth to the sky. One moment we are doing whatever we are doing and then instantly we will be in the presence of Jesus in the sky.

Then we shall put on our imperishable, immortal bodies.

7.1.7 Acts 1:10-11

10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

These two verses are either referring to the Rapture or the Second Coming when it says “will come in just the same way.”

Some indications that it is the Rapture is that Jesus' ascension was only seen by the few of His followers that were with Him on the mount of Olivet. The Rapture will only be seen by the church and not the entire world whereas the Second Coming will be seen by every living person on the Earth.

7.2 Second Coming verses

Here are some of the key Scripture passages on the Second Coming.

Many of these will be addressed later in this study and so will not be discussed here.

Luke 17:22-37

22 And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them. 24 For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. 25 But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. 36 [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.]" 37 And answering they *said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered."

Matthew 24:1-51

Matthew 25:31-46

Luke 21:10-38

Daniel 7:23-27

Daniel 9:24-27

Daniel 12:1-13

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Hebrews 9:28

Matthew 16:27

Matthew 26:64

Jude 1:14

Ezekiel 37-39

7.3 Table showing the differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming

The following table shows some of the differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming.

Rapture	Second Coming
Christ comes for His own	Christ comes with His own (Revelation 19:14)
Christ comes only as far as the air (1 Thess 4:17)	Christ steps foot on the Earth (Zechariah 14:4)
Removes believers and leaves the unsaved	Removes unsaved and leaves believers
Christ only seen by believers	Everyone on Earth will see Christ (Revelation 1:7)
All living believers go to Heaven (1 Thess 4:15)	All living believers remain on the Earth (Luke 17:34-37)
The only angel mentioned speaks or shouts at the beginning (1 Thess 4:16-17)	Angels are dispatched to gather the wicked (Matt 13:40, 49) and the elect (Matt 24:31)
Is a mystery—a truth not revealed until the New Testament (1 Cor 15:51)	Clearly revealed throughout the Old Testament (Zech 14 and many other places)
Christ comes to reward (1 Thess 4:17)	Christ comes to judge (Matt 25:31-46)

If you accept a pre-Tribulational Rapture then there are even more differences.

Rapture	Second Coming
Initiates the Tribulation	At the end of the Tribulation
No signs are required (Christ’s return is imminent)	All of the signs in Revelation must occur first
The antichrist (man of sin) is unrestrained	The antichrist is cast into the lake of fire
The world is not judged	The world is judged
Satan is not bound	Satan is bound for 1,000 years

8 False predictions of the Second Coming

There have been many, many predictions with dates of when the Second Coming would occur. Here are just a selected few.

These first two are listed because they are so early.

8.1 First listed

The Jewish Essene [pronounced es-een or e-seen] sect of ascetics saw the Jewish uprising against the Romans in 66–70 in Judea as the final end-time battle which would bring about the arrival of the Messiah. By the authority of Simon, coins were minted declaring the redemption of Israel.

8.2 Early

Martin of Tours was a French bishop who stated that the world would end before 400 AD, writing, "There is no doubt that the Antichrist has already been born. Firmly established already in his early years, he will, after reaching maturity, achieve supreme power."

The following are listed because of something significant or unusual.

8.3 The Great Flood

Johannes Stöfler was a respected German mathematician and astrologer who occupied the first-ever chair of astronomy and mathematics at the University of Tübingen. So when he predicted that a great flood would cover the world on February 25, 1524 people took notice. Stoeffler based his prediction on the various planetary conjunctions that would happen in that year. While only six planets were known at the time, almost all of them (including the sun) would be in conjunction in the constellation of Pisces and, given that this was the sign of the fish, it surely meant that the world would be drowned. Hundreds of pamphlets announcing the coming flood were issued and set in motion a general panic. People living near water sold their property at a great loss. In London they built an elevated fortress at the Priory Church of St. Bartholomew the Great and supplied it with two months of provisions. Boat builders became wealthy as everyone wanted a boat to ride out the flood. Count von Iggleheim, a German nobleman, went so far as to build a three-story ark which he boarded with his friends. A crowd gathered outside his boat to mock him. On the appointed day there was a rainstorm that panicked the crowd. Hundreds were killed in the stampede. Von Iggleheim refused to let anyone aboard his ark so they dragged him off and stoned him to death. The panic stopped when the rain stopped.

8.4 The Prophet Hen of Leeds

In 1806, a domesticated hen in Leeds, England owned by Mary Bateman, laid eggs with the message "Christ is coming." Great numbers of people reportedly visited the hen and began to despair of the coming Judgment Day. It was soon discovered, however, that the eggs were not in fact prophetic messages but a deception of Bateman who had been writing on the eggs with acid and reinserting them into the hen's body. As an aside, Bateman was later found to have fatally poisoned a woman and was subsequently executed for murder. As a second aside, there was a book written about this called "Chicken of the Apocalypse."

8.5 Millerism

William Miller, who was a Baptist preacher, began preaching in 1831 that the end of the world as we know it would occur with the second coming of Jesus Christ in 1843. He attracted as many as 100,000 followers who believed that they would be carried off to heaven when the date arrived. When the 1843 prediction failed to materialize, Miller recalculated and determined that the world would actually end in 1844. Follower Henry Emmons wrote, "I waited all Tuesday, and dear Jesus did not come ... I lay prostrate for 2 days without any pain—sick with disappointment."

After the failure of Miller's expectations for October 22, 1844, the date became known as the Millerites' Great Disappointment. Hiram Edson recorded that "Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before... We wept, and wept, till the day dawn." Following the Great Disappointment most Millerites simply gave up their beliefs. Some did not and viewpoints and explanations proliferated. Miller initially seems to have thought that Christ's Second Coming was still going to take place—that "the year of expectation was according to prophecy; but...that there might be an error in Bible chronology, which was of human origin, that could throw the date off somewhat and account for the discrepancy."

8.6 John Wesley

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, foresaw the Millennium beginning in 1836. He wrote that Revelation 12:14 referred to the years 1058–1836, "when Christ should come."

8.7 Harold Camping

Among the most prolific modern predictors of end times, Harold Camping has publicly predicted the end of the world as many as 12 times based his interpretations of biblical numerology. In 1992, he published a book, ominously titled *1994?*, which predicted the end of the world sometime around that year. Perhaps his most high-profile predication was for May 21, 2011, a date that he calculated to be exactly 7,000 years after the Biblical flood. When that date passed without

incident, he declared his math to be off and pushed back the end of the world to October 21, 2011. That passed also without incident.

8.8 2012 Maya Apocalypse

December 21, 2012, marked the end of the first “Great Cycle” of the Maya Long Count calendar. Many misinterpreted this to mean an absolute end to the calendar, which tracked time continuously from a date 5,125 years earlier, and doomsday predictions emerged. End-of-the-world scenarios included the Earth colliding with an imaginary planet called Nibiru, giant solar flares, a planetary alignment that would cause massive tidal catastrophes, and a realignment of the Earth’s axis. Preparations for the end of the world as we know it included a modern-day Noah’s ark built by a man in China and extensive sales of survival kits. Yet we’re still here.

More recent predictions have the Rapture or Second Coming occurring in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2024, 2025, and 2057. My suggestion is not to sell your house and gather on a hill.

9 Israel and the Church

The question here is whether the Church has replaced Israel in God’s plans and promises or is a temporary substitute.

Different Millennial and Rapture theories take one side or the other.

This is directly related to Biblical Covenants. A covenant is God’s relationship with people.

In the Old Testament, God made six covenants with Israel: Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Priestly, Davidic, and New.

In three of these (Abrahamic, Davidic, and New) God made unconditional promises to Israel promising that the land of Israel would be their possession forever and that a throne would be established for them forever. Ezekiel 37:15-38, Jeremiah 31:35-37, and Jeremiah 33:19-26 are three such promises. When God makes a promise He keeps it. Therefore, what God promises to Israel He will give to Israel and not to anything else.

There are two overarching covenants:

- Old Covenant = God’s covenant with Israel
- New Covenant = God’s covenant with the church

Another word for covenant is testament. Hence we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. A covenant only comes to application through blood. This is described in Hebrews 9:16-20.

Hebrews 9:16-20

16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.”

The Old Covenant/Testament blood was the sacrifices of animals.

The New Covenant/Testament blood is the blood of Jesus Christ. We see this in several verses.

Hebrews 9:14-15

14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 8:6-7

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

Luke 22:20

And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."

Supersessionism which is also called replacement theology or fulfillment theology teaches that church has replaced the church and inherited all of its blessings.

However, the book of Acts refers to the church 19 times and to Israel 20 times but the "church" always refers to those who are believers in Christ and "Israel" is always referring to the Jewish nation both nationally and ethnically. They are never mixed up or spoken of as one replacing the other. Never is the church called "the new Israel" or "spiritual Israel."

God's covenantal promises to Israel will be fulfilled to Israel and not to the church.

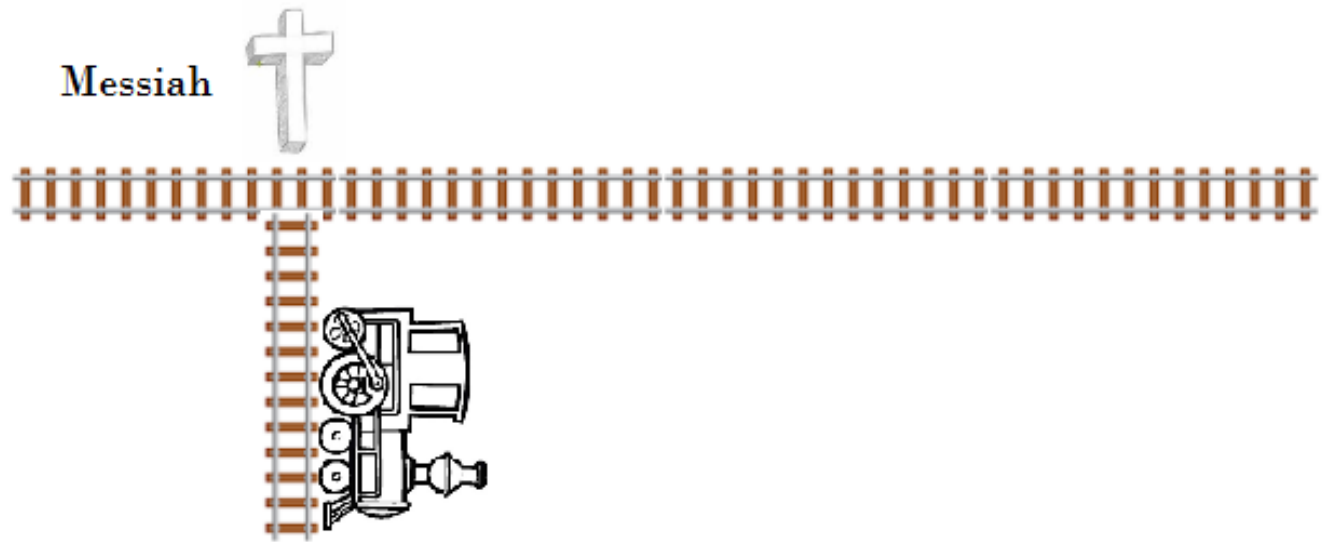
If we view God's plans as train tracks moving linearly through history we see that Israel was originally God's vehicle.



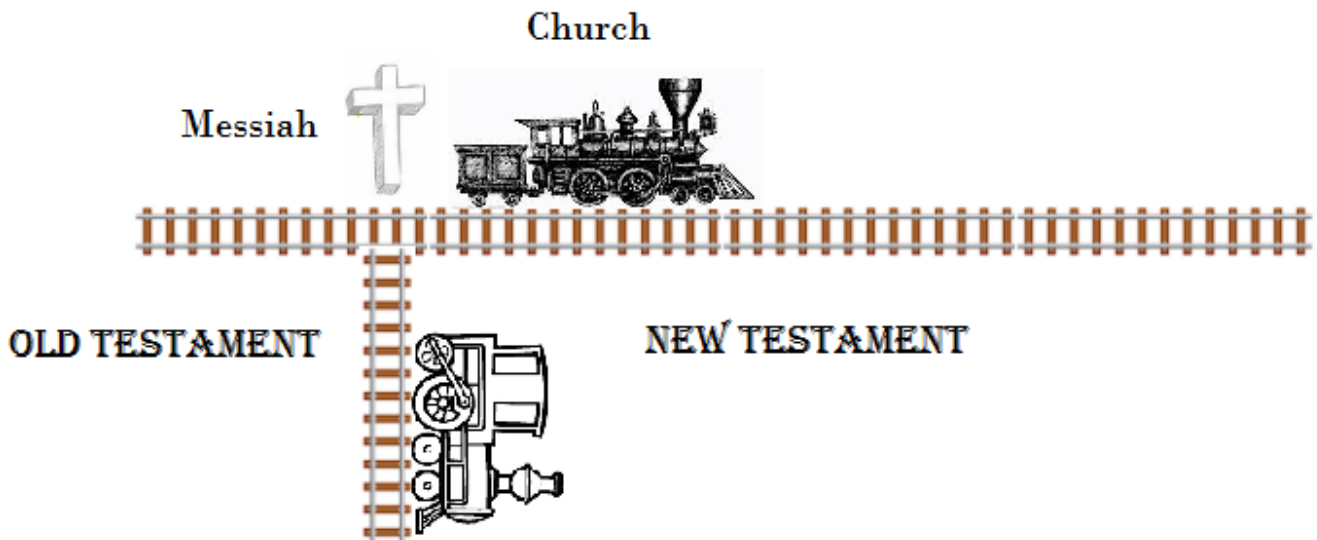
OLD TESTAMENT

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. -- Deuteronomy 7:6

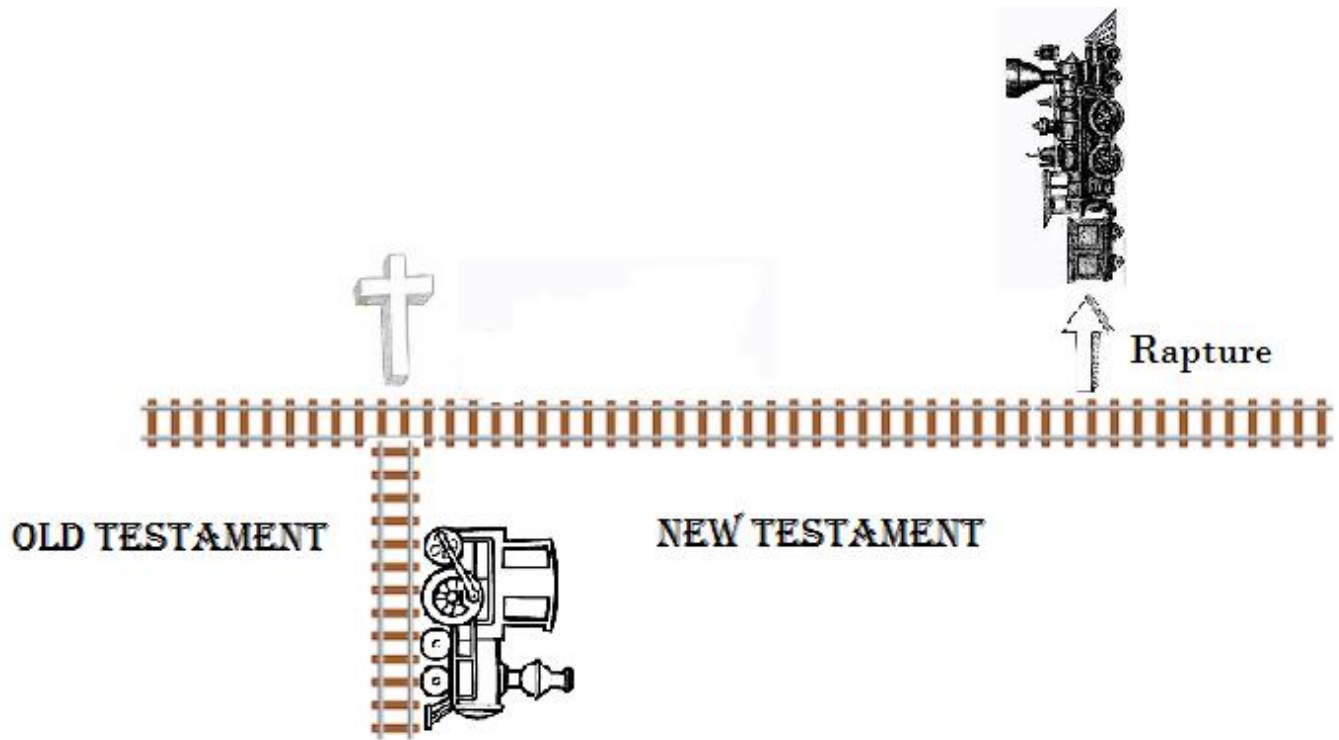
But then Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah. The result was that Israel was temporarily removed from God's tracks.



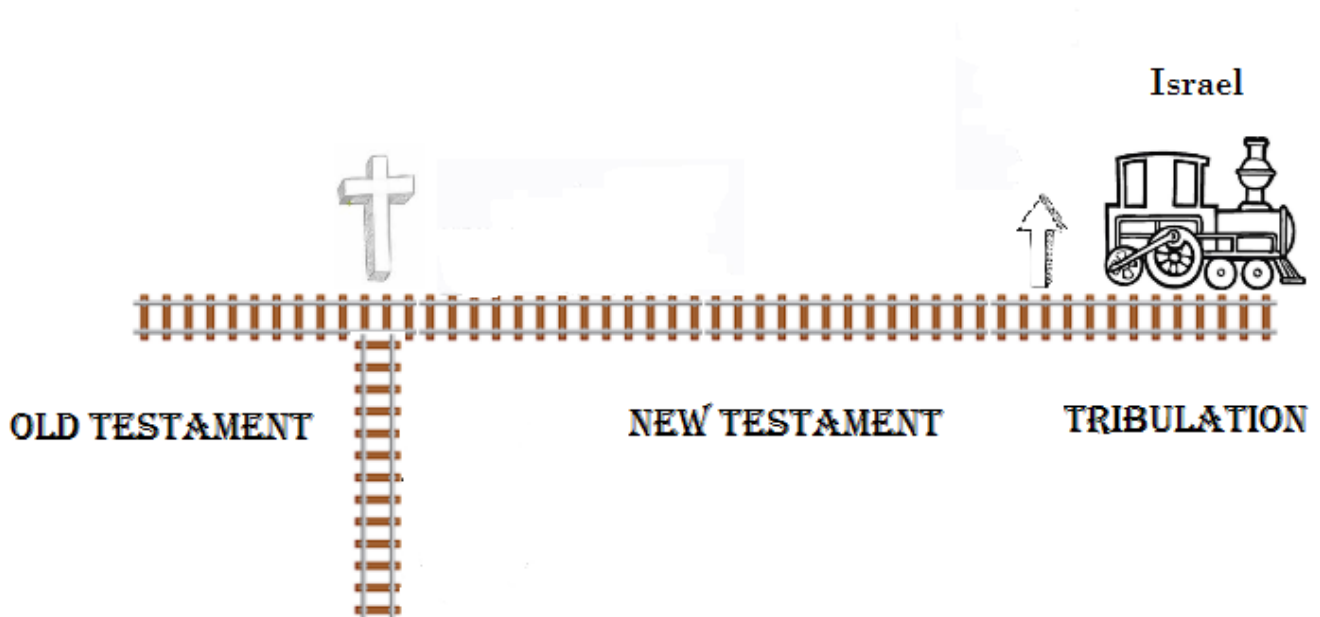
Instead the church became God's primary vehicle for proclaiming His will. This is the church age.



But then the church will be Raptured and no longer on the Earth.



God does not want people to be ignorant and so He will once again set Israel on His train tracks to be the people who proclaim His will. Romans 11:1a states “I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He?” And in verse 25, “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” Israel will be hardened because of their rejection of the Messiah. But after the “fullness of the Gentiles” then this hardening will be lifted and Israel will be back on track.



The church never inherited Israel's promises. We see in Old Testament passages about the Millennium that God will faithfully fulfill His promises to Israel. We also see in Revelation 7:4 that Israel will be prominent in proclaiming the Gospel during the Tribulation. Israel does not disappear. The church is not the new Israel.

10 Resurrections and the Afterlife

10.1 Resurrections

It is necessary to understand all of the resurrections and when they occur when studying End Times prophecy. The resurrections that we are discussing here are the ones that involve a great number of people who are in a particular category. This is not about the ten individual or limited resurrections in the Bible.

The ten are:

- 1) Elijah raised the widow's son
- 2) Elisha raised the son of a Shunammite woman
- 3) When the dead Elisha was thrown into a grave his bones the body originally in the grave came to life
- 4) Jesus resurrected the only son of a widowed woman from Nain
- 5) Jesus resurrected the young daughter of Jarius
- 6) Jesus resurrected Lazarus
- 7) A number of saints came out of their graves immediately after Jesus' resurrection
- 8) Peter resurrects Tabitha in Joppa
- 9) Paul raises Eutychus from the dead in Troas
- 10) Paul was stoned to death in Lystra but came back to life

There are five major resurrections that occur at three points in time.

- 1) The dead in Christ and then living believers are raised at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)
15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.
- 2) Believers who were killed during the Tribulation (Revelation 20:4)
Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
- 3) Old Testament believers (Daniel 12:1-2)
“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.
- 4) Believers both dead and alive who either entered the Millennium or were born in the Millennium

There is no dogmatic Scripture. They could be included in Revelation 20:11-15.

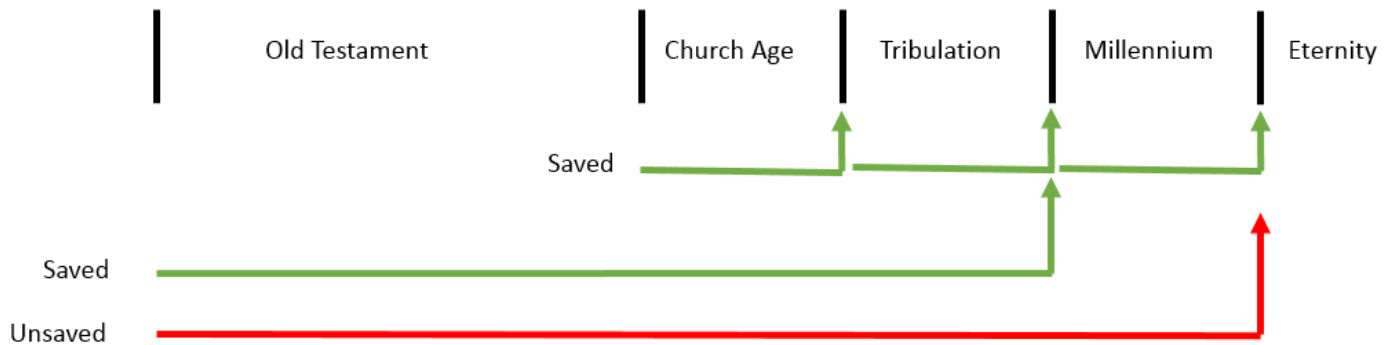
5) All of the unsaved at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:11-15)

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The resurrection of the Tribulation martyrs (# 2 above) and Old Testament believers (# 3 above) occur at the same time.

The resurrection of Millennial believers (# 4 above) and all of the unsaved (# 5 above) occur at the same time.

Resurrections of the Saved and unsaved



10.2 Afterlife

So where are the dead people who have not been resurrected yet such as the unsaved? The body goes into the ground. The soul goes somewhere else.

10.2.1 Terminology

First let us define some terms.

10.2.1.1 Sheol and Hades

Both refer to the same place. Sheol is the Hebrew word and Hades is the Greek word. Sheol is used 65 times in the NASB Bible all, of course, in the Old Testament. Hades is used ten times all in the New Testament.

We know that they are the same because in Psalm 16:10 we read, "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." Then in Acts 2:31 Peter quotes the same verse but says, "he looked ahead

and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay." In Psalm 16 David calls it Sheol but in Acts 2 Peter calls it Hades. Same place.

It is a holding place for those who have not been resurrected yet.

In the Old Testament both the godly and ungodly went to Sheol. For example in Genesis 37:35 godly Jacob said, "Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, 'Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.' So his father wept for him."

10.2.1.2 Hell

Hell is the final, eternal abode of Satan and his angels and of the unsaved. It is referring to as a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Hell has several names:

- Hell (13 times) with two of those times it being referred to as "fiery Hell."
- The Lake of Fire (four times, Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15)
- Furnace of Fire (two times, Matthew 13:42, 50). This is a similar phrase as "lake of fire."
- Outer Darkness (three times, Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). Since the primary torment of Hell is eternal separation from God this could imply or symbolize a place that is the furthest edge of creation and so as far from God as possible.
- Black darkness (two times, 2 Peter 2:17, Jude 1:13)
- Second death (four times, Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8)
- Some Bibles use the Greek word Gehenna. There is a valley or ravine near Jerusalem called the Valley of Hinnom. In the Old Testament children were sacrificed to idols here. Later it became a dump which, it is said, constantly burned. Therefore, this became a symbol of the eternal fire of Hell. Hinnom became the Greek word Gehenna.

No one is in Hell right now. The first two occupants, as we shall see later on in this study, will be the antichrist and the False Prophet. Then will be Satan and the demons. Finally it will be filled with the unsaved.

10.2.1.3 FirstFruits

In the Old Testament the law required that the earliest gathered grains, fruits, and vegetables were to be dedicated to God to honor Him for His faithfulness and provision. This was known as the firstfruits. Leviticus 23:9-10 is an example, "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.'" The firstfruits was usually the best of the harvest (like the first press of olive oil) and it also promised a harvest to follow.

Two passages speak of Christ being the firstfruits.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming

Romans 8:29 uses "firstborn" instead of "firstfruits"

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren

Christ had to be the first to raise from the dead and go to Heaven. He had to be the best, the firstfruits. He had to be the first sheaf of the harvest as Leviticus 23 referred to. Then when Christ rose it was a promise that the saved would follow Him into Heaven; i.e. the rest of a bountiful harvest. We see this in Ephesians 4:8, "Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.'" This refers to Psalm 68:18, "You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men, Even among the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell there." Who was the "host of captives"? This is the saved in Abraham's Bosom who were waiting for Christ to raise from the dead so that He could lead them to Heaven.

No one was able to go to Heaven until Christ rose from the dead. Therefore, the saved needed to be in a waiting place until that happened.

But where was Jesus between the time that He died on the cross to when He rose from the dead?

Matthew 12:40 says, "for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." So Jesus was three days and nights somewhere.

1 Peter 3:18-19, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison" Jesus, after His death, went and made proclamation to spirits now in prison. Where were they?

In Luke 23:43 Jesus said to the repentant thief on the cross, "And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'" What is this "Paradise" that Jesus spoke of?

In 2 Corinthians 12:4 we read that Paul "was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak." Is this the same Paradise that Jesus spoke of?

10.2.1.4 Hades and Abraham's Bosom

That gets into Luke 16 of Hades and Abraham's bosom.

Luke 16:19-31

19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' 27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

You can pull a lot out of this story, but for this context we only want to look at the description of Hades and Abraham's bosom.

Is this story real or a parable? There is much debate. I lean towards that it is a real story because one of the characters has an actual name, "Lazarus." No parable has anyone with a real name. But even if it is a parable, parables still illustrate reality.

We see here the place where people go after they have died. It has two sides:

- 1) Hades
- 2) Abraham's Bosom

On the one side is Hades.

- a) It is a place of fire and torment.
- b) The wicked (aka unsaved) go there.

On the other side is Abraham's bosom.

- a) It is a place of comfort.
- b) The righteous (aka saved) go there
- c) Abraham died some 1800 years prior and was buried in the cave of Machpelah. In the Bible when you are an honored guest in someone's house you were allowed to rest your head in their lap or bosom. This implies acceptance and comfort. Was Abraham actually there? It does not really say. But Abraham was one of God's most faithful men. So to rest in Abraham's bosom was to be given a place of honor in God's eyes.
- d) The saved were carried to here by angels.

We also see:

- a) There was a chasm between the two sides so no one could cross over. Once you have died your eternal faith is determined. There is nothing that you can do to change that.
- b) Neither man was annihilated. They were both conscious and were aware of their eternal fate.

Hades is the holding place for the unsaved until they will be resurrected at the final judgment (the Great White Throne Judgment) in Revelation 20:11-15. People will be there for anywhere from thousands of years to just a day if they die right before the final judgment. They will suffer torment for all of that time but it will be nothing compared to their agony when they are cast into the Lake of Fire (Hell).

The saved, on the other hand, were carried by angels to Abraham's bosom where they waited in comfort. What were they waiting for? Until Christ rose from the dead and was the firstfruits. Then He led the captives out of Abraham's Bosom and into Heaven. After Christ's resurrection, no one went to Abraham's Bosom anymore. They all went directly to Heaven.

So in Matthew 12 when Jesus was "in the heart of the earth" and 1 Peter 3 when Jesus "went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison" and in Luke 23 when Jesus said "today you shall be with Me in Paradise" I believe that this was all the same place: Abraham's Bosom. Then when Jesus rose out of there He took with Him all of the dead saved from Adam up to that point.

Then in 2 Corinthians 12 when Paul was taken into Paradise he did not go to Abraham's Bosom; He went to Heaven. Before Christ's resurrection Abraham's Bosom was Paradise. Now that Christ has risen and everyone goes directly to Heaven, Paradise is now Heaven itself. So Paradise was Abraham's Bosom; now it is Heaven.

11 End Times Prophecy

So after all of that we can finally get to End Time Prophecy.

11.1 Daniel's kingdoms

In Daniel 2:31-45 we read about Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great statue.

Then in Daniel 7 Daniel had a dream about four beasts.

In Daniel 8, two years after the vision in chapter 7, Daniel has another vision with two beasts.

All three of these visions are related and intertwined. God is telling Daniel about the major kingdoms of the world both present and in the future.

11.1.1 Nebuchadnezzar's statue

First let us look at the statue.

The king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had dreams (Daniel 2:1). Only Daniel was able to reveal and interpret the dreams. In the dream there was a great statue. The statue had four parts although some divide it into five parts. Each part is a separate kingdom.



The head was made of gold. This was the reign of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar's.

The breast and arms were made of silver. This was the rule of Medo-Persia.

The belly and thighs were bronze. This was Greece under Alexander.

The legs were of iron and the feet a mix of iron and clay. Depending on how you interpret this, the legs and feet can be the same kingdom or they can be two kingdoms with the legs being one and the feet being the other. If you view them as one then it is Rome. If you separate them then the legs were the Roman Empire and the feet are the rule of the future world ruler, the antichrist.

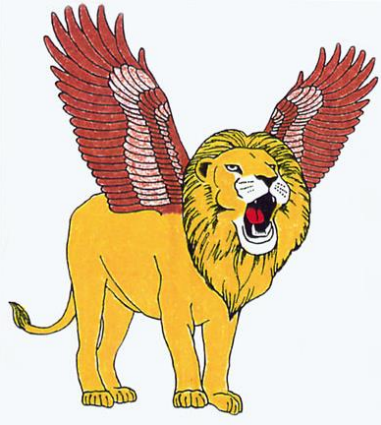
11.1.2 The Visions of the Beasts in Daniel 7

In Daniel 7:2-8, 11-12, 15-28 we read about four beasts. These represent four conquering kingdoms.

Then in Daniel 8 we read about two more beasts. Daniel 8 came two years after the vision in Daniel 7. The beasts in Daniel chapters 7 and 8 are analogous. They point to the same kingdoms. We will look at these two sets of beasts together.

11.1.2.1 The first beast

Daniel 7: The first beast, a lion with eagle's wings, was Babylon which ruled from 606 to 539 B.C. The symbols of Babylon were a lion and an eagle. The wings indicate swiftness.



<https://www.returnofelias.org/daniel-7>

11.1.2.2 The second beast

Daniel 7: The second beast, a bear with three ribs in its mouth and raised up on one side, was Medo-Persia which ruled from 539 to 331 B.C. First was Media but then the higher side was Persia which soon overshadowed Media. The three ribs that were being consumed by the bear represent the three kingdoms that were conquered by Medo-Persia: Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.



<https://www.returnofelias.org/daniel-7>

Daniel 8: The two-horned ram is Medo-Persia. The first and smaller horn was Media and the second horn which came later but was bigger was the more powerful Persian empire. Persia had more than 2 million soldiers.



11.1.2.3 *The third beast*

Daniel 7: The third beast, a leopard, is famous for its swiftness as indicated by the four wings. It also had four heads. This was Greece which ruled from 331 to 168 B.C. The four heads represent the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexander the Great was divided when he died. Since he had no heirs his kingdom was divided among his four generals. Cassander got Macedonia and Greece, Lysimachus got Thrace and parts of Asia Minor, Ptolemy got Egypt and parts of Asia Minor, and Seleucus got Syria, Israel, and Mesopotamia.



<https://www.returnofelias.org/daniel-7>

Daniel 8: What in Daniel 7 was a four-headed leopard is here a goat. The shaggy goat is Greece. At first the goat has one large horn.



<http://www.oocities.org/mart1963/docs/05-WAR.html>

This was Alexander the Great. Alexander came from the west and quickly conquered the Persians. This is shown in Daniel 8:6-7, "He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power."



<http://ilovethewordofgod.com/rev13.htm>

Alexander died at age 32 from malaria and alcoholism. This is the large horn that was broken. But as soon as the large horn was broken in its place came four conspicuous horns. These four horns are the four generals mentioned above for the leopard.



<http://www.oocities.org/mart1963/docs/05-WAR.html>

Then out of the four horns came a small horn that grew exceedingly great. This is considered to be Antiochus IV Epiphanes who came to power in 175 B.C. It says of this horn in verse 11, "It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down." The "Commander of the host" is God and the "regular sacrifice" is the main temple in Jerusalem. As we shall examine in a later section, Antiochus Epiphanes overthrew Jerusalem and desecrated the temple stopping the sacrifices. This is a foreshadow of the antichrist's "Abomination of Desecration" which will be the midpoint of the Tribulation.

11.1.2.4 The fourth beast

Daniel 7: The fourth beast is not compared to any animal. It had ten horns which was ten kings. This corresponds to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's statue. This is the Roman Empire.

Then one small horn came up among the ten horns. This small horn will subdue three of the horns. Daniel 7:25-27 says,

25 He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27 Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

This is the antichrist. He will rise quickly to power, severely persecute the saints for 3 ½ years (time (1 year), times (2 years), and half a time (1/2 year)), and then even more quickly his kingdom will be destroyed forever by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.



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11.1.2.5 Summary chart of the three visions

	Kingdoms	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
	Head of gold	Babylon – 606 to 539 B.C. (Nebuchadnezzar)	
	Arms of silver	Media/Persia – 539 to 331 B.C. (Cyrus)	 
	Thighs of brass	Greece – 331 to 168 B.C. (Alexander the Great)	 
	Legs of Iron	Rome – 168 B.C. to 476 A.D. (Emperors)	
	Feet of iron & clay	[Antichrist – Future]	

11.1.2.6 The conquering stone

God allows kings and rulers to reign on the Earth for a time. The result has oftentimes be unnecessary war and death.

On July 6, 2003 the New York Times had an article “What Every Person Should Know About War” by Chris Hedges. It reported these startling facts.

“Of the past 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8 percent of recorded history.”

“At least 108 million people were killed in wars in the twentieth century. Estimates for the total number killed in wars throughout all of human history range from 150 million to 1 billion.”

Using other data sources, it is estimated that 155 million people have died from famine in just the last 160 years.

<https://ourworldindata.org/famines#the-our-world-in-data-dataset-of-famines>

Currently in 2018 The UN Refugee Agency estimates that there are 65.6 million forcibly displaced people and 22.5 million refugees worldwide for a total of 88 million people.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

This is the result of man’s rule on the Earth.

At the Second Coming, Jesus Christ will destroy all of those kingdoms and set up His own rule. It will be a time of peace and harmony. This is what God created us for. Not the ugliness that sin has caused.



Daniel 2: ³⁴You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Jesus Christ the mountain whose kingdom will fill the whole earth.

We saw here in the book of Daniel that was written around 606 B.C. how God gave us a glimpse of what is going to happen in the future. These visions, though scary, give us hope because we know that, ultimately, God will reign.

We also see how Scripture all ties together. Though written centuries apart they still mesh. The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation match. This is because even though they are written by different people they come from the same source—God.

11.2 Daniel's 70 weeks

Many consider Daniel 9:24-27 to be one of the most important prophecies in the Bible. This passage is referred to by several names: "The 70 Weeks of Daniel," "Daniel's 70 Weeks," and "The 70 Weeks of Years."

It is used to pinpoint in time a specific event in Jesus' life, although what the event is may vary. It is the only Old Testament scripture that hints at the church age. And it references the 7-year future Tribulation, which was thousands of years in the future at the time of the writing, and some key people and events during that time.

Daniel 9:24-27

24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

There are a number of interpretations of this passage. Here are a few.

- At the time of this prophecy Israel was in exile in Babylon and this prophecy is only referring to the 70 years of this particular captivity. There is no future aspect to this passage. See Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10.

"For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.'" – Jeremiah 29:10

- Some say that the period referred to is theological (spiritual) and calendrical. This means that the times that it references are not numerically specific but are a general reference. So this viewpoint says that the final week (the beginning of the 70th week) started at Jesus' baptism at around 27 A.D. The mid-point was the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. and the second half of the final week is the entire church age. Notice that the time from the beginning of the "week" to the midpoint of the "week" is 43 years and the second half of the "week" is almost two thousand years and still going. This is a historical interpretation.
- Another view is the first 69 "weeks" starts with a decree to rebuild Jerusalem and takes us to a significant event in Jesus' life. Then there is a gap of an undetermined time period. Then the final week is a seven-year Tribulation. This is a past and future interpretation.

We do not have the time to review the pros and cons of each one of these interpretations but the latter view is the one most accepted and is the one which we will work with.

11.2.1 Purpose

First off, we see that there are six reasons or purposes related to this prophecy. They are addressed to "your people and your holy city." Since this was addressed to Daniel "your people" are the Jews and "your city" is Jerusalem. The interpretation of these six does vary.

1) To finish the transgression

Note that it does not say to "finish transgressions" but to finish "the transgression." "Transgression" means "to rebel, to revolt, to refuse subjection to rightful authority." "Finish" means "to cancel or annihilate." Since this is

addressed to Israel it is most likely referring to when Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah. When the Jews finally accept Jesus as their Messiah and say "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:37-39) then the transgression will be cancelled. This will happen during the Tribulation.

2) To make an end of sins

The sins of each individual Jew will be forgiven at the time of their personal embracing of Jesus the Messiah.

3) To make reconciliation for iniquity

He was "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). His blood was "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). There will be an abundance of forgiveness. Israel will be reconciled with God and will be put back onto the track regarding prophecy that the church had been on for 2,000 or more years.

4) To bring in everlasting righteousness

This is a reference to the Millennial Kingdom that was prophesized many times in the OT. This is similar to Isaiah 60:21, "Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified."

5) To seal up vision and prophecy

All of the End Time visions and prophecies will be fulfilled by the end of the Millennium when there will be a new Heavens and earth. Therefore, there will be no need for any more of these.

6) To anoint the most Holy

It is unclear as to whether it is referring to a holy person or a holy place. If it is a holy person then it would be the anointing of Jesus as King of Kings. However, what this anointing would be is unclear. When Jesus returns at the Second Coming or even at His triumph at the end of the Millennium He will be the self-declared King. No one will need to confirm this or make it official. If it refers to a holy place then it is probably referring to when the Temple is rebuilt and then dedicated. Of the 15 references in the Bible to "Most Holy" or "Holy of Holies" all of them have some connection to the Temple be it an offering or a part of the Temple (such as the altar).

11.2.2 Time Period Division

The times are divided into three parts: seven weeks, 62 weeks, and one week. This is generally worked out to be 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years. It seems like quite a leap going from 70 weeks to 490 years. How did that happen?

11.2.3 Day for a Year

In Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks" is actually a misleading translation. The second Hebrew word is actually the plural of seven without specifying days, months, or years. It is literally "seventy sevens" or "seventy units of seven things." Those who interpret this passage prophetically say that it means years. Therefore seventy times seven years equals 490 years.

Two passages justifying this are:

"According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know My opposition." - Numbers 14:34

"I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year" Ezekiel 4:6b

Also, compare Genesis 29:27 with Genesis 31:41.

Genesis 29:27 says, "Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years." If you interpret this as it appears you would conclude that Jacob worked 7 days for Leah and then seven years for Rachel; a total of seven years and one week.

But then read Genesis 31:41, "These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times." Here is the clarification. The "week" in 29:27 was actually seven years. Seven years plus seven years equals the fourteen years total. Genesis 29 says "complete the week of this one" and then another seven years for the other. But in Genesis 31 Jacob says that he served fourteen years for the two daughters. So in chapter 29 the phrase "complete the week of this one" was not a week of days but a week of years.

So why not just say 49, 434 and 7 years? Wouldn't that be easier and clearer? That is because seven is a special number to Israel. They were to rest on the 7th day of each week and the land was to rest every 7th year. So the number 7 represents rest and obedience. So by using $70 * 7$ God is more clearly conveying to Israel that there will be an ultimate time of rest and obedience. This was more than a mathematical equation; it was a promise of future hope.

11.2.4 Calculating

So we have these three time periods. What do we do with them?

The first person who calculated these time periods was Sir Robert Anderson in his book, "The Coming Prince" which was published in 1894.

The 490 years ($70 * 7$) is divided into three periods: 1) Seven weeks (49 years), 2) 62 weeks (434 years), and 1 week (7 years).

The starting point is "from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem." There are four decrees from three Persian monarchs that reference the return of the exiles and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. These decrees span 93 years.

- 1) Ezra 1:1-4; Isa 45:1 (538/7 B.C.) Cyrus issued a decree to allow the Jews to return to Judah and rebuild the temple.
- 2) Ezra 3 (520 B.C.) Darius reiterated the decree of Cyrus.
- 3) Ezra 7:11-26 (458/7 B.C.) Artaxerxes, King of Persia, issued a decree to Ezra authorizing him to reinstitute the Temple services, to appoint judges and magistrates, and to teach the Law.
- 4) Nehemiah 2:1-8 (445/4 B.C.) Artaxerxes issued another decree this time to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Most people use the Nehemiah prophecy, the fourth one, as the starting point because it actually refers to rebuilding Jerusalem. The Scripture says, "...from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" and not just that the Jews could return.

Daniel was in captivity in Babylon when this prophecy was given. Israel had been conquered and Jerusalem had been destroyed. Some say that at the end of the first seven weeks (49 years) is when Jerusalem was rebuilt. That is why the first seven weeks is demarcated from the 62 weeks.

11.2.4.1 Sir Robert Anderson's calculations

Anderson's calculations work out this way.

He used the Nehemiah decree as the starting point and determined that it was issued on March 14, 445 B.C.

He took 483 years (49 + 434) and multiplied this by 360. He used a 360 day year because he assumed a lunar calendar (360 days) versus a solar calendar (365 days). This totals 173,880 days. He used a lunar calendar because in Revelation 11:2-3 it mentions 42 months which is exactly 3 ½ years and then it mentions 1,260 days which also works out exactly to 3 ½ months but only if you use a lunar calendar (1260 / 360 = 3.5).

Another example of the Bible using a lunar calendar is the Flood. Genesis 7:11 is the beginning, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened." Then Genesis 8:4 gives us the end, "In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat." The Flood, therefore, lasted exactly 5 months. Genesis 7:24 tells us "The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days." Five months equals 150 days only if you are using a lunar calendar of 30 days for each month.

Back to Anderson's calculations. March 14, 445 B.C. plus 173,880 days takes us to April 6, 32 A.D. which is when Anderson claims that Jesus was crucified. Others say that this date is when Jesus rode in on a donkey as King (Luke 19:38).

But other people did the calculations differently.

11.2.4.2 Alternate Calculations

11.2.4.2.1 Another calculation

Another interpretation starts with the Ezra passage, the third one, which would be 457 B.C. 483 years takes us to 27 A.D. which they say was when Jesus was baptized and thus started His ministry.

11.2.4.2.2 Another calculation

Another calculation starts at 444 B.C. which is also the Nehemiah decree and then the 173,880 days ends on March 30, 33 A.D. which they say would be approximately when Jesus was crucified.

11.2.4.2.3 Another calculation

This one starts at 454 B.C. which is the Ezra passage, the third one.

Add 483 years = 30 A.D. realizing that there is no year 0 between B.C. and A.D. They say this would probably bring us to Jesus' baptism.

11.2.4.2.4 Another calculation

This one also starts 445 B.C. which is the Nehemiah decree.

The 49 years takes us to 396 B.C. which is when it is said that Jerusalem was rebuilt.

Another 434 years takes us to 32 A.D. which is Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Why the discrepancies in calculations? Because we do not have exact dates for the decrees, we are not positive which decree is being used, and we are not sure which calendar was used.

No matter which calculation you use, they are all similar in two basic points. One is that the 49 years ends at the building of Jerusalem. And that the end of the next 434 years end at some crucial point in Jesus' life be it His baptism, triumphant entry into Jerusalem, or crucifixion.

All of these have the 70th week as future. There is one other type of interpretation called the Preterist or Historical view.

11.2.4.3 Preterist (Historical) View

This starts in 457 B.C. which is the Ezra decree.

The 49 years takes us to 408 B.C. which is when they say Jerusalem was rebuilt.

Add 434 years and that takes us to 27 A.D. which they will say is when Jesus was baptized.

Then, and here is where there is a big difference, they immediately add 7 years to 34 A.D. which is when they say Stephen was stoned. This is called the Historical view because it was completely fulfilled already. There is no future fulfillment. All of the events in this prophecy can be explained by historical events.

I accept the future 70th week interpretation.

11.2.5 Messiah the Prince and end of the 69 Weeks

What does “until Messiah the Prince” means. Some think of it as Jesus’ baptism, some as when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, and some as His crucifixion. But for this study we are not going to spend a lot of time on this. We are more concerned with the final week.

After the 69 weeks two events occur: the death of the Messiah and the destruction of the city. We know that “the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing” was Jesus being crucified. “Will destroy the city and the sanctuary” was when Jerusalem was ransacked in 70 A.D. by the Romans led by Titus and culminated with the burning and destruction of the temple.

11.2.6 The Gap

At this point not much has been said about the final week. There is a delineation between the 69th week and the 70th week. Unlike the delineation between the 7th week and the beginning of the 62 weeks which signaled an event (the rebuilding of Jerusalem), the delineation before the 70th week is actually a gap of an indefinite time period.

The prophets in the OT could not see the time period represented by this gap. It is like seeing the two peaks of a mountain range with one peak directly behind the other. You can see both peaks but not the valley in between.

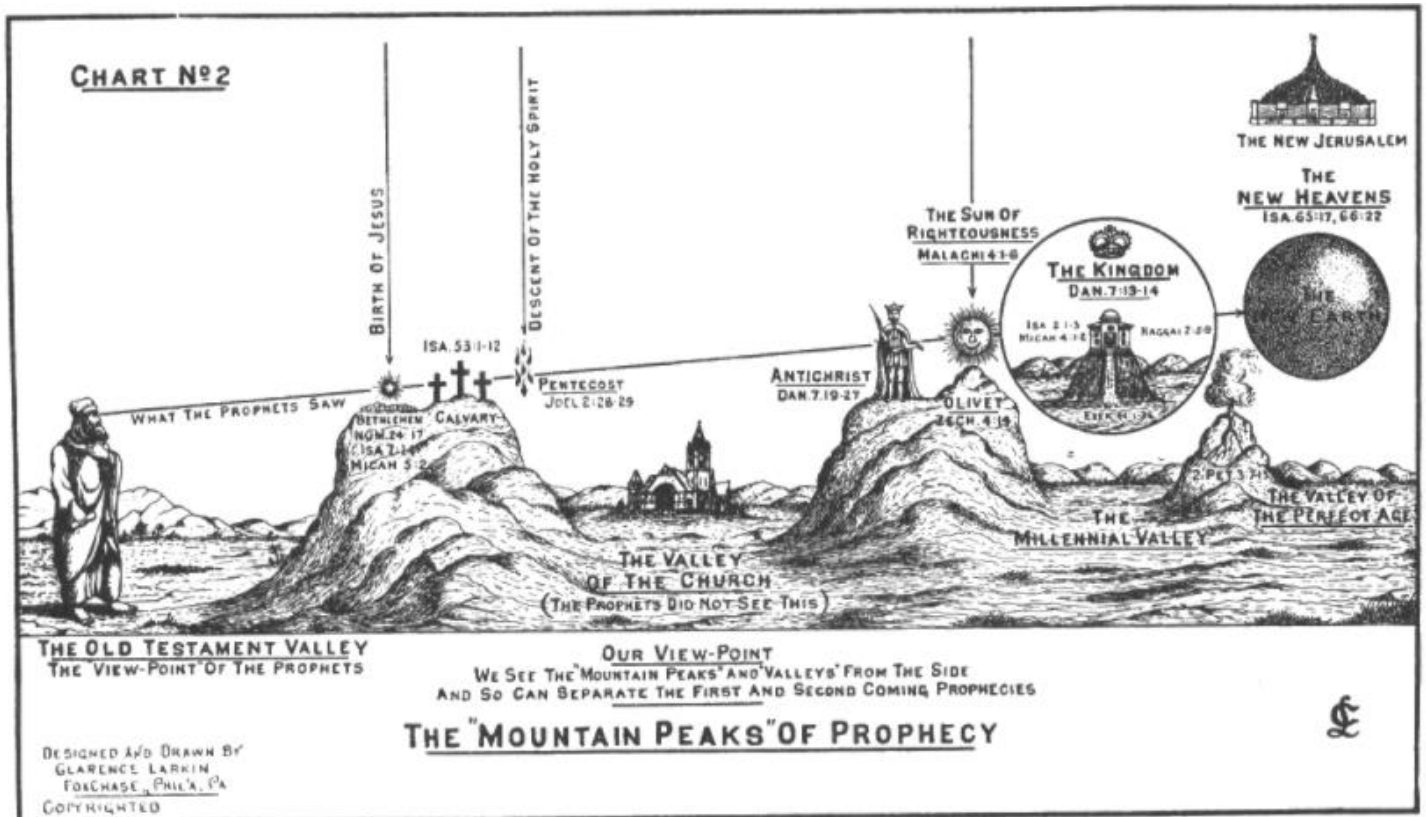


Here these two mountains seem close to each other as you look at them from the front.



But when you look at these two mountains from the side you now see that they are actually far apart.

Here is another depiction from Clarence Larkin.



Gaps in the Bible are not unusual.

Micah 5:2 is an example, “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.” The beginning of the verse speaks of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem at around 3 B.C. Then the middle of the verse, even still in the same sentence, talks about when Jesus will rule over Israel. Clearly Jesus was not a ruler in His First Coming and so this is referring to His Second Coming. So this one sentence has within it a gap of over 2,000 years.

1.1.6 The 70th Week

Now we are into the seventieth week. Unlike the 69 weeks which have already passed, this final week is yet future and is associated with the seven year Tribulation in the Book of Revelation.

Let’s take a look at this 70th week.

We read in verse 27, “And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

The prince in v. 26 and 27 is the Antichrist. At the beginning of the seven years (The Tribulation) he will make a covenant with Israel. This covenant is thought to guarantee peace with Israel and perhaps allow them to rebuild the Temple and reinstitute the sacrificial systems. Of course this would be tricky because the Muslim’s Dome of the Rock sits on the site of the original Temple. Therefore, if the Jews want to rebuild the Temple on its original site then the Dome of the Rock would have to go. This would cause great consternation in the Islamic world.

Then at the 3 ½ year mark he will break the covenant: “and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” This is referred to as the “Abomination of Desecration” in Matthew 24. What is the “Abomination of Desolation”?

It is mentioned three times in the Old Testament all in Daniel.

- 1) Here in Daniel 9:27.
- 2) Daniel 11:31, "Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation."
- 3) Daniel 12:11, "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."

It is mentioned twice in the New Testament (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14) both of which are similar.

- 1) Matthew 24:15, "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)."

It is not specifically defined. It does imply that the Temple will be in existence and the Jews will sacrifice there. Therefore, the temple must be rebuilt before the midpoint of the Tribulation.

We can look back to a previous incident where the Jewish temple was defiled. Antiochus Epiphanes IV ruled Palestine from 175-64 B.C. He was particularly cruel and the Jews rebelled against him. As he was crushing the rebellion he stopped the temple sacrifices and set up an idol of Zeus in the temple. It is also said that he sacrificed a pig on the altar realizing that a pig was an unclean animal and so would have defiled the temple.

Presently, we do not know what the "Abomination of Desolation" will be, but when it happens the whole world will recognize it. It will be the exact midpoint of the Tribulation and will usher in the Great Tribulation.

11.3 Revelation

We are going to skip over the first five chapters of Revelation and start in chapter six.

The Book of Revelation or the Book of the Apocalypse is what the Apostle John saw when he was taken into Heaven. Eleven times John says, "I looked." The first time occurs in Revelation 4:1 with the scene in Heaven. To me this is like when I am sitting in a stadium or theater and watching what is happening on the field or on the stage. When I go home I tell people about what I saw.

Revelation 1:1 says, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John." Jesus was to "show" these things to John. Also in Revelation 4:1-2 John wrote, "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne." Again John is told that he will be "shown" these things. It says that he "looked" and he was told to "come up here."

I do not believe that John was in a trance. I believe that he was physically taken to the future and saw events spanning over 1,000 years. It was like he was in a stadium or theater watching these things occur and his job was to report them back to us.

11.3.1 The First Seal – A White Horse - Conquering ruler

Revelation 6:1-2

Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." 2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

White is the color of victory.

This is the world ruler referred to in Daniel 9:26. He is also called the antichrist.

He is riding a white horse because in Biblical times it was customary for the conquering king to ride in triumph on a white horse. We see the same symbolism in Revelation 19 when Jesus comes back at the Second Coming (the ultimate conquering King) riding on a white horse. Some say that because it mentions a bow but not arrows that this will be a swift and bloodless conquering. The crown shows him to be triumphant.

11.3.1.1 Antichrist

Let us look a little at the antichrist.

Here are some names or descriptions of the antichrist.

- Man of sin or man of lawlessness (depending on your translation) – 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- Son of perdition or son of destruction (depending on your translation) – 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- The beast – Revelation 13:5
- The Worthless Shepherd -- Zechariah 11:17
- The prince who is to come – Daniel 9:26
- The little horn – Daniel 7:8

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

We see from this Scripture that the antichrist will set himself up to be God even going so far as to take a seat in the Jewish temple.

1 John 2:18, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour."

2 Thessalonians 2:7-12, "7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

This is the antichrist. Here are his characteristics as described in Daniel 7:24-26 and other passages.

24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27 Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

- 1) He is a leader of a country. In verse 24 he is called a king but that might be a generic term for a leader of a country since that is pretty much all that they had back then.
- 2) Since he is arising out of the old Roman empire it is thought that he will be European.
- 3) He is initially small which indicates that he is somewhat obscure and insignificant at first.
- 4) He overthrows or subdues three of the other kings.
- 5) He is highly intelligent as seen by it having the eyes of a man.
- 6) He is arrogant and boastful.
- 7) He persecutes the saints of the Most High for 3 ½ years which is the second half of the seven-year Tribulation aka The Great Tribulation. Verse 25.
- 8) He will overcome the nation Israel.
- 9) His empire and/or influence will be the entire Earth. Verse 23. Revelation 13:7.
- 10) He will speak against God. Verse 25.
- 11) He will institute his own system of laws. Verse 25. Many think that he will be an economic genius.
- 12) God will destroy him. Verse 26.
- 13) The antichrist will appear to be fatally killed by a head wound but then will appear to be resurrected (Revelation 13:1-3).

Some view Zechariah 11:15-17 as a prophecy about the antichrist since it is referring to “a” shepherd rather than generic worthless shepherds.

15 The Lord said to me, “Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd. 16 For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat sheep and tear off their hoofs.

17 “Woe to the worthless shepherd
Who leaves the flock!
A sword will be on his arm
And on his right eye!
His arm will be totally withered
And his right eye will be blind.”

Some say that the event that will launch the antichrist will be the Rapture. 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9.

Some who are pre-Tribulationists say that the antichrist will be a minor leader in a European confederacy. He will be empowered by Satan but will be restrained by the Holy Spirit working through the church. Then the Rapture will occur and the church will be removed. With hundreds of millions of people suddenly gone from the Earth there will be chaos and panic. Because Christians will have occupied many key positions in all institutions of the world all systems will fail: economic, agricultural, governmental, technological, medical, sociological, etc. It is the antichrist who will step in and bring stability to this world volatility. One way that he will do this will be by bringing peace to the Middle East. He will be beloved.

But then he will try to spread his authority over other countries, and they will oppose him. This will be World War III. The antichrist will triumph and “he will destroy to an extraordinary degree” (Daniel 8:24). But the power will not be his own but will be from Satan (Daniel 8:24).

He will march on Jerusalem and experience resistance from the Jews but will overcome them and make his way into the rebuilt Temple where he will desecrate it. This will be at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

He will take economic control of the world by regulating it. Revelation 13:16-18:

And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

The word “mark” in Greek usage meant an imprint on a document or coin. The Bible does not indicate what exactly this mark will be. Some think that it might be a microchip implanted in the skin or a physical mark such as a barcode on the skin.

The antichrist will also become the world religious head. He will have a partner called the Beast which we will discuss later on. He will set up an image of the Beast and expect people to worship it (Revelation 13:15).

11.3.2 The Second Seal – A Red Horse - War

Red is the color of blood and war.

Revelation 6:3-4

3 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.” 4 And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the Earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

Peace is taken away and there is great war. The implication is that the first rider, the antichrist, conquered peacefully. The world embraced him to a degree. But then he got greedy and went out to grab more. The result was war: the antichrist versus those whom he had not conquered peacefully. The antichrist will win.

We see some of these battles in Daniel 11:5-45.

Some put the early battles in the past.

Here are some of the highlights (or lowlights as the case may be).

- 1) This is a great series of battles between the king of the North and the king of the South. The directions are in relation to Israel so the king of the South is south of Israel.
- 2) Because of its many similarities the king of the North is thought to be the antichrist which is the “little horn” of Daniel 8.
- 3) The king of the South starts off very powerful and tries to form an alliance with the king of the North by giving him his daughter but it will not work out.
- 4) The result is war.
- 5) The North wins and occupies Israel where he causes much destruction (verse 16).
- 6) The North tries to make peace but this fails.
- 7) The North will try to conquer the coastlands but a commander will defeat him.
- 8) The king of the North will apparently be killed and another king will take his place by seizing the throne using political skill and deceit.
- 9) This new king of the North then attacks the king of the South and, once again, defeats him.
- 10) The two kings will sit down to negotiate but will tell each other lies and the effort falls apart.
- 11) The North will invade the South but this time is defeated by forces from what is called today Cyprus.

- 12) On his way back he will stop in Israel to take out his vengeance. He will desecrate the temple, stop the sacrifices, and set up the “abomination of desolation.” So this is the halfway point of the Tribulation. So all that happens previously was probably during the first half of the Tribulation.
- 13) This king—the antichrist—will blaspheme God and magnify himself above all gods.
- 14) There will be another war between the North and the South and the North will win.
- 15) The last half of the last verse in Daniel 11 tells us what happens to the antichrist, “yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.” As we shall see the antichrist does come to his end when Jesus Christ returns and defeats him. Of course no one can help him.

11.3.3 The Third Seal – A Black Horse - Famine

Black is the color of suffering.

Revelation 6:5-6

5 When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come.” I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine.”

Famine is often a product of war. After the war of the antichrist the labor force will have been distracted by fighting or reduced by death. The land will have been devastated. The supply chain will have been destroyed. The government and economic system will be in chaos. Food will be hard to produce and even that which will be produced will be difficult to get to people.

A denarius was one day’s wage in Bible times. In this case someone will work an entire day and only be able to buy enough wheat to make a couple of loaves of bread. That is a hardly sustainable amount of food for each day.

The Bible equates black with famine in Lamentations 5:10 states, “Our skin has become as hot as an oven, because of the burning heat of famine.” Suffering through famine is like being burnt.

11.3.4 The Fourth Seal – An Ashen Horse – Death

Ashen, a pale green, is the color of death.

Revelation 6:7-8

7 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.” 8 I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

The current population of the world is almost 8 billion people. If this happened today then 2 billion people would die. Between the war and the famine the world will be devastated all resulting in the antichrist having greater power.

Estimates of how many people have died in wars in all of history range from 150 million to 1 billion. So this fourth seal will see more than twice as many people die from war, famine, and disease than in all previous times of history and yet this will be in a very short time frame.

11.3.5 The Fifth Seal – Martyred Souls

Revelation 6:9-11

9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

Here, the scene shifts from what is happening on the earth to Heaven.

These are the ones who have been martyred for the sake of Christ. They persevered in faith and gave their utmost for the glory of God.

It is unclear if these are all of those who were ever martyred for Christ or only those who have been martyred in the Tribulation. Some claim the latter because of the comment "avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth" implying that their persecutors are still living.

Notice that when they cry out for justice they do not ask "if," rather they ask "when."

Why were the souls underneath the altar? Because we saw in the OT that the blood of the sacrifices to the Lord were poured out at the base of the altar.

Exodus 29:12, "You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; and you shall pour out all the blood at the base of the altar."

Notice that even in this most historic of times when so much is going on, God remembers His people. We see this at the cross, Jesus tells John in John 19:17 to take care of His mother. As Jesus was experiencing the wrath of the Father for the sins of all people He never forgot His people. In Matthew 14 when John the Baptist was murdered Jesus went up to a mountain to be by Himself to grieve and when He came down the people rushed to Him but instead of shooing them away He felt compassion for them and healed them.

11.3.6 The Sixth Seal – Divine Wrath

Revelation 6:12-17

12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Whereas the catastrophe and terrors of the first four seals were the result of man's decisions, what occurs here are the results of God's wrath upon a sinful people. Starting from this point on all of the remaining devastations in the trumpets and bowls are the judgments of God.

We also see the true heart of the wicked. Instead of humbling themselves before God and falling upon His grace and mercy they instead try to hide themselves from God. They try to run from His presence. But we saw how well that worked for Jonah. And when they see that God is inescapable do they then kneel before Him? No. They ask to die. They

have no concept of an afterlife, no mindset of Heaven and Hell. Everything is the here and now. It is about escape. Once life ends then it is gone forever according to the wicked.

We see that that this judgement falls upon everyone from kings to slaves. People may strive to be great but that is meaningless when it comes to God. Success in this world does not make a difference in a person's relationship to God or to his eternal destiny.

We see in other passages in the Bible prophecies about these events.

Matthew 24:6-7 speaks of famine and earthquakes.

6 You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

But notice verse 8, "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs." Now that's scary. One quarter of all people dying is only the beginning.

Joel 2:30-31 speaks of darkness and the moon turning to blood.

30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. 31 "The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

But notice verse 32.

32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the Lord has said, Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.

Even in the midst of terrible judgement upon the sins of mankind God still longs for the salvation of everyone. He always provides the possibility of salvation. Instead of running from God people should run to God.

Isaiah 34:4 talks about the sky rolling up like a scroll.

And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.

We see how the entire Bible ties together. It may have been written by some 40 authors over approximately 1,500 years but it all came from the same source, the Holy Spirit, and so all ties together.

This section ends with a potent question. "Who is able to stand?" By themselves, no one. With the grace of God, any one.

11.3.7 Chapter 7 - The Saints

The question may be asked, "Will anyone be saved in the Tribulation?" This is especially pertinent if the Rapture does occur at the beginning of the Tribulation. Then who will preach the Gospel?

We will see in this chapter that a great multitude of both Jews and Gentiles will be saved.

How will this happen if no one is there to preach the Gospel to them? We know that people do not always get saved only when the evangelist is right there in front of them giving them a challenge. Many people take tracts, Bibles, or what they have heard and leave. Then days, months, or years later they get saved.

God is certainly able to call sinners from even the most corrupt of situations. He called Rahab and her household from corrupt Jericho.

Isaiah 59:1 tells us, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear." Even in the midst of terrible chaos and judgement God can hear that one faint voice and His hand can reach down and save them. This is true even in the Tribulation.

Here in verses 4-8 we see that God has chosen and sealed 12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel for a total of 144,000. Here we see God bringing the train of Israel back onto the tracks of His plans. These are Jews who believe in Jesus as the Messiah. But not just saved Jews. They are also sealed. Many more Jews will be saved, possibly even millions. But these 144,000 are special because they are sealed. Seals in the Bible meant security and authority. That these Jews were sealed probably means that they will be protected throughout the entire Tribulation from persecution and judgement.

Many of those who will be saved in the Tribulation will be martyred or will be killed by the earthquakes and other catastrophes. These 144,000, on the other hand, will be supernaturally protected so that there will always be a core of evangelists to preach the Gospel. We deduce this because in Revelation 14:1 we read, "Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads." So here when Jesus comes back and is standing on the Earth there is the 144,000 who made it through the Tribulation. Not one is lost. And notice, too, that instead of the mark of the Beast they have the name of Jesus on their foreheads.

It is interesting that the tribe of Dan is not mentioned in this 12. Instead Joseph is substituted. No one really knows why but some commentators think it is because the antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan. Israel trusted him in the beginning of the Tribulation when they signed the covenant because he was one of them. But this is speculative.

Another interesting point to notice is that Jews were sectioned by tribes. Because the genealogical records were destroyed when the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed no Jew today knows what tribe they came from. But we see here that God knows. God knows which tribe every Jew in history originated from. He knows more than just the hairs on our head.

We read in Revelation 7:9, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands."

During the Tribulation the Gospel will go to all nations and to all peoples and many of them everywhere will be saved. This includes Jews, Gentiles, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and every language and race. Even in His wrath and judgment God's mercy prevails.

The Bible tells us in verse 14 that this great multitude is specifically those who were martyred during the Tribulation. Great will be the persecution during the Tribulation. The wicked will know that the horror that is coming upon them is from God and rather than turn to God's mercy they will, instead, focus their anger on God's children. Christians will be hounded like the Jews were during World War II.

But notice the contrast in verse 16 of the saints' future compared with the wicked's present. "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat." The third Seal brought famine on the wicked, but the saints will hunger and thirst no more. In the sixth Seal the sun became as black as sackcloth, but the saints will never again have the sun beat down on them.

This is indeed Titus 2:13, “looking for the blessed hope.” This life is but a shadowland as C.S. Lewis called it. True reality is when we stand in the presence of the Lamb.

11.3.8 The Seventh Seal – Silence

Revelation 8:1, “When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”

Silence—it portends something powerful is about to happen. Something beyond even what has already happened. It is like everyone is holding their breath for 30 minutes. Think about when a judge says to the jury, “Have you come to a verdict” and the respond is, “Yes, we have.” At that moment there is silence. There is not a twitch, not a breath. Everyone is waiting. Judgment is coming.

11.3.9 The First Trumpet – Trees and Grass Burnt up

The Seals are finished now come the Trumpet Judgments.

Revelation 8:7

The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The seven Trumpets are contained within the sixth Seal. They do not follow the Seals but are the Sixth Seal.

This is similar to Exodus 9:18-26 when the seventh plague of Egypt was hail and fire and which destroyed the fields except that this judgement will affect the entire earth.

Notice that this judgement does not seem to directly affect people. It is almost God giving a little warning. “Repent now, while you can because you are next.”

11.3.10 The Second Trumpet – A Third of Sea Life Killed and One Third of Ships Destroyed

Revelation 8:8-9

The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, 9 and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

What is this great mountain? It could be a meteor or a comet. If God could create the entire universe then He can surely create a flaming mountain that will fall into the sea.

What does it mean that a third of sea became blood? There might have been some substance in the mountain that turned the water red. For example, if you mix Phenolphthalein and sodium carbonate together in water it will turn red. From John’s vantage point in Heaven, red water appears as blood.

This judgement will further devastate the food supply. And with a third of the ships destroyed the supply chain will also suffer greatly. Famine will only increase.

11.3.11 The Third Trumpet – A Third of Fresh Water is ruined.

Revelation 8:10-11

The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. 11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

This judgement is the opposite of Exodus 15:22-25

22 Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. 24 So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 Then he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet.

In Exodus there were bitter waters and in God's mercy He turned them sweet. Here it is God's judgement and sweet waters are turned bitter.

11.3.12 The Fourth Trumpet – Darkness

Revelation 8:12

The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

Here a third of the heavenly bodies are affected and there is great darkness. Again, this is a foreboding of what is to come.

Previously, the heavens told of God's glory. Now they are declaring His wrath. We see this in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands."

Romans 1:20 speaks of this although this passage is speaking generally and not specifically of this prophecy, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

When the complexity of the heavens didn't draw people to a loving and beautiful creator then here God will show them His other side.

Faith is not blind. God has used His creation to show us His attributes. Right now, the heavens mostly point to a loving Creator. Then in the Tribulation it will be a holy God.

11.3.13 The Fifth Trumpet – The First Woe -- Demonic Torment

Revelation 9:1-12

Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them. 7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. 10 They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. 11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in

Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. 12 The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

The severity of God’s judgements is escalating. This is also called the first of three woes.

This “star” is actually a being since it is referred to as “he” and opens a pit with a key. This being is considered to be Satan.

11.3.13.1 Who is Satan?

Satan’s Names

Name	Scripture	Note
Satan	Mark 1:13, “And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.”	Satan means “the adversary” in Hebrew. Because of his hatred of God, he opposes everything that God is and tries to do.
The Devil	1 John 3:8, “the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”	“The Devil” in Greek (diabolos) means “false accuser.” He likes to accuse God’s children of things that are not true in order to pull them away from God.
Lucifer	Isaiah 14:12, ““How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn!”	His original name before he fell is the “Morning Star” or “star of the morning” which can be translated as Lucifer.
Beelzebul	Matthew 12:24, “But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, ‘This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.’”	Beelzebul means “ruler of demons.”
The Great Dragon	Revelation 12:9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”	The Great Dragon tells of his intimidation and fury.
The Evil One	John 17:15, “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”	Satan is not just another evil being; he is “the” evil one.
The Tempter	Matthew 4:3, “And the tempter came and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’”	One of Satan’s greatest weapons is to tempt people into not believing God and then disobeying Him.
Ruler of this world	John 12:31, “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”	Right now, this world is ruled and being led by Satan.
Abaddon or Apollyon	Revelation 9:11, “They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.”	These mean “destroyer.” Satan does not create unless it suits his purpose.
The Serpent of Old	Revelation 12: 9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”	“Serpent of Old” refers back to the Garden when Satan was cursed and forced to crawl on his belly like a serpent.

Ezekiel 28:12-19 is one of the most important Bible passages that tells us of Satan’s origin.

Verse 15 (“From the day you were created”) tells us that Satan was created by God. He is not an equal foe to God. He has not been around forever. Verse 12 tells us that Lucifer (which was his original name which means “bearer of light” or “morning star”) “had the seal of perfection” and was “full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.” Verse 14 and 16 says that he was the “anointed cherub who covers [guards].” Lucifer was originally created as one of God’s most beautiful and perfect angels. He was a cherub (the plural is cherubim) which is one of the types of angels that had the closest access to God and probably guarded God’s holiness. He had intimate access to God.

But then in verse 17 God tells Lucifer that “your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.” Because Lucifer thought so highly of himself it corrupted his wisdom and his understanding of true reality. He thought of himself as being much greater than he really was. The result was that he proclaimed that he will rise above everyone else and sit where God sits and assume a place of great power and control (Isaiah 14:13-14).

Satan revolted against God. The result was that Satan lost his privileged status and became an enemy of God.

This may be the event in Revelation 12:9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

We see in places like Job 1:6 that Satan, even after the Fall, still has access to Heaven, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.”

Satan appears in the Garden of Eden to the very first man and woman (Adam and Eve). Traditionally he is portrayed as a snake. But many commentators believe that he was actually a lizard who lost his legs as part of the curse. This comes from Genesis 3:14, “The Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life...’”

He then lies by telling them that God lied and that if they disobey God then they will gain great wisdom and power— “you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). This entices them to commit the first sin which resulted in them being separated from God and thrown out of the Garden. And from then on Satan has been doing everything that he can to get people to doubt God and to disobey Him.

1 Peter 5:8 is a telling verse, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Here Peter warns us to watch out for the methods of Satan. Satan’s primary method of trouble is to lie. We see that in the Garden of Eden. He did not attack Adam and Eve. Rather, he whispered in their ear. He lied to them and by doing so they made a wrong choice and caused their own destruction. We see in John 8:44 that Satan is the father of lies, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” Satan does not make us do wrong. He deceives us so that we choose to do wrong.

Back in Revelation 9, the “bottomless pit” is where the demons are locked up. In Luke 8 when Jesus was talking to the demons called Legion it says in verse 31, “They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.” This is the same place mentioned here in Revelation. The abyss and the bottomless pit are the same place. Then we read in Revelation 20:1-3 that this is where Satan will be locked up. 2 Peter 2:4 tells us, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment...” This is the “pits of darkness.” Jude 6, “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day...” This is the place of “eternal bonds.”

We know that many demons are currently free to roam the earth and torment people but many are presently locked up in this bottomless pit.

So what is going here in Revelation 9? It appears that Satan is thrown down and given a key to unlock the bottomless pit where many of the demons were being kept in bonds. First smoke bellows up out of the pit. Then burst out hordes of demons whose job it is to torment people.

John tries to describe them as best as he can, but clearly they are nothing like anyone has ever seen before. Their mission was to torment people but notice in verse 4 that they were not allowed to torment the children of God. The promise in 1 John 4:4 is still valid in the Tribulation, "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." Greater is the Holy Spirit in us than the demons that are in the world. God's promises are eternal.

11.3.14 The Sixth Trumpet – The Second Woe – The Army of Two Hundred Million

Revelation 9:13-21

13 Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind. 16 The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm. 20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

This is an army of 200,000,000 which comes from the east. Some say that this must be China because that is the only country east of Israel that can field an army this large. We see that the entire world is in war mode. Peace has been snatched from the world.

The description—breastplates of fire, heads like lions, fire coming out of their mouths, tails like serpents—is maybe John's best way of describing modern tanks and mechanized battle gear such as helicopters and planes. Or, of course, this could be more demons.

This army kills 1/3 of all mankind.

11.3.15 The Times of the Gentiles

Revelation 11:1-2

Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

This corresponds to Luke 21:24, "and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

The “times of the Gentiles” is only used here in Luke 21:24 therefore it makes a definition difficult. However, based on context it may be defined as the present age when Gentiles control world politics and religion. This time will end at the Second Coming of Christ.

<https://bible.org/article/times-gentiles>

11.3.16 The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11:3-13

3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. 7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. 11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Here, the two witnesses are introduced. They are said to prophesy for 1,260 days which is 3 ½ months or half of the Tribulation.

Who these two witnesses are has been a matter of great controversy.

Some say Israel and the church but there are several huge problems with this.

- 1) The church will never be killed and lie in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days.
- 2) The church does not devour its enemies, rather it shares God’s Gospel with them that they might be saved.
- 3) The church does not have fire flow out of its mouth. It would be an incredible stretch to even spiritualize this.
- 4) The church does not send forth plagues or turn water into blood.
- 5) Both the church and Israel have been witnessing for more than 3 ½ years.

Some of the early church fathers claimed that it will actually be Enoch and Elijah. This is because these were the two men in the Bible who did not actually die because they were taken up into Heaven alive. Therefore they do not violate Hebrews 9:27, “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once [note the “once”] and after this comes judgment.” This is because they will die in Revelation 11 but since they did not die previously, like all other men, this will be their first death. In this view Enoch being a non-Jew represents the church and Elijah who was a Jew represents Israel.

Another view is that they are two people manifesting the spirits of Moses and Elijah.

Several indications that one of these is most likely are:

- 1) Elijah commanded fire from heaven. In 1 Kings 18 Elijah prayed and it said, "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." And also 2 Kings 1 when Elijah calls down fire from heaven and it devours a company of soldiers. In verse 5 the two witnesses use fire to devour their enemies.
- 2) In Numbers 16:35 during the rebellion of Korah against Moses fire came down from heaven and devoured 250 men. "Fire also came forth from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense."
- 3) The heavens were shut up so that it did not rain during Elijah's time as seen in 1 Kings 17. In verse 6 the two witnesses can shut up the sky.
- 4) Two of the ten plagues in Egypt for Moses was turning water in to blood (Exodus 7:17) and plagues (Incests, boils, hail, locusts, death of the first born). We see that in verse 6.
- 5) Micah 4:5 says, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." John the Baptist at least partially fulfilled this. But Jesus' incarnation was not the "great and terrible day of the Lord." That would be Jesus' Second Coming.
- 6) In Matthew 17 it is Moses and Elijah that are the ones who appear at the Transfiguration.

I believe that the two witnesses will be two human prophets who will prophesy in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah. This is the same as John the Baptist who was not Elijah but prophesied in the spirit and power of Elijah. This does not violate Hebrews 9:27 since they have not died once already.

Once they had finished their ministry Satan will rise out of the bottomless pit and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days. During that time the earth will rejoice over their deaths and give each other gifts. This is the only time that the unsaved are said to be glad during the Tribulation and, notably, it is when God's people have been killed. Their bodies will be seen on television and the internet. People will rejoice because they will blame these two witnesses for much of the horror of the judgements and because people do not like to hear that they need to repent.

Then after these 3 ½ days the two witnesses stand to their feet. A voice from heaven will tell them to "Come up here" and they will ascend up to heaven in a cloud while everyone watches. This causes great fear among the world because they thought that they had won, that they had defeated God and His people. But their victory was short-lived. God proves Himself, once again, to be triumphant.

Some who equate the two witnesses with the church claim that when they ascend up to heaven that this is the Rapture. They will usually say that this takes place at the exact midpoint of the Tribulation and thus indicate a Mid-Tribulation Rapture. But, as we have examined, it is very unlikely that the two witnesses represent the church.

11.3.17 The Third Woe and the Seventh Trumpet – Glory to God

Within the same hour as the two witnesses ascended to heaven there is an earthquake in Jerusalem and 7,000 people die. The unexpected result is that those remaining give glory to God. There is no indication that they repent but at least they finally recognize that God is truly Lord and King and can do whatever He pleases.

Revelation 11:15-18

15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God,

the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. 18 And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.”

The seventh trumpet sounds and a chorus of voices in heaven sang praise to God and announced that Jesus will be coming soon to set up His eternal kingdom.

Of course verse 15 is Handel’s Messiah chorus.

Some say that this seventh trumpet is the final trumpet spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15:52, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” and so this is the Second Coming. Two problems with that interpretation is, first, that Christ does not come back at this time. There is all of the Bowls left to occur. Second is that many consider 1 Corinthians 15:52 to be referring to the Rapture.

11.3.18 Events in Heaven and earth

Chapters 12 – 14 is a literary interlude. It shows us great events happening in Heaven and on the earth but are not necessarily chronological with the previous and following chapters in Revelation.

There are seven main characters in this section.

- 1) The woman who represents Israel
- 2) The dragon who is Satan
- 3) The child who represents Jesus
- 4) Michael the archangel
- 5) Israel
- 6) The beast out of the sea who is the antichrist
- 7) The beast out of the earth who is the false prophet

There will also be seven signs.

11.3.18.1 The Woman and Child – The First Sign

Revelation 12:1-2

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

The first sign is a woman who gives birth to a child.

The woman is generally considered to be a representation of Israel. The sun and moon seem to be a reference to Genesis 37:9 when Joseph was relating his dream to his family, “Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, ‘Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’” Here the sun and moon were Jacob and Rachel. Of course Jacob was renamed by God to “Israel.” The twelve stars likely refer to the twelve tribes of Israel. The child represents Jesus.

This is a reference to the Incarnation.

11.3.18.2 The Great Dragon – The Second Sign

Revelation 12:3-4

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. 4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

The Dragon is Satan. Here is he waiting for Jesus to be born so that he might destroy the child and prevent the salvation of millions of people throughout history. This event refers back to the Incarnation and not to the End Times but is probably here in Revelation to show what Satan's true plans and desires are.

The seven heads and ten horns refer back to the dreadful and terrifying fourth beast in Daniel 7:7-8 which represented Rome. When Jesus was born Herod was the Roman emperor who sought to have Jesus killed. Herod was an Edomite which means that he was a descendent of Esau. The Edomites were the traditional enemies of Israel. So we see that Satan and Herod both had the same goal: to kill the baby Jesus. And both were thwarted by the sovereignty and power of God.

Satan's tail sweeping away 1/3 of the angels indicates that when Satan rebelled and fell he took 1/3 of the angels with him. This is referring to Satan's initial rebellion and fall from heaven. These 1/3 are the fallen angels who became demons. Some of the demons were locked into the Abyss or Bottomless Pit and some are roaming the earth.

11.3.18.3 *The Child – Jesus*

Revelation 12:5-6

5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The woman from verses 1 and 2 gave birth to a son. He was to rule all nations but first is taken up to God and His throne. The rod of iron is a reference to the rule of Jesus in Psalm 2:9, "You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware." As we know, Jesus did not rule at all during His first coming. This will happen at His Second Coming.

Then Israel flees into the wilderness for 3 ½ years. This is not coincidentally the same amount of time as The Great Tribulation. In the first half of the Tribulation Israel is at peace because of the covenant that she signed with the antichrist. But at the mid-point the antichrist commits the Abomination of Desolation and attacks Israel. She is forced to flee into God's protection.

There is a several thousand year gap between verse 5 and verse 6 but that is not unusual in the Bible.

11.3.18.4 *Satan Cast out of Heaven*

Revelation 12:7-9

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

We see here that great battles occur in the supernatural realm. One example was in Daniel 10:13 when an angel appears to Daniel and says, "Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael,

one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.” The angel came to help Daniel but he battled a demonic angel called “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” for 21 days. Then Michael came to help and the angel was then able to come to Daniel. We have no idea of the spiritual battles that are occurring all around us.

Here in Revelation 12 we are told of a great war in heaven between Michael and the holy angels and Satan and his demons. How horrific or long this war was we are not told. But Satan lost and with his demons was thrown down to the earth. This is probably the event that, from a more earthly perspective, was described in Revelation 9.

Daniel 12:1 speaks of this time of the Great Tribulation, “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”

Again, though the Bible was written over hundreds of years it all ties together.

11.3.18.5 *Satan's Wrath*

Revelation 12:10-12

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. 12 For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.”

The main point to note here is that Satan knows that he loses in the end. He can read the Bible. If you were told that you only had a short time to live what would you do? You would probably spend as time as you could with your family and experience as much love and beauty as you could. What does Satan do when faced with the same predicament? He vents his anger and fury on people.

11.3.18.6 *Satan's Persecution of Israel*

Revelation 12:13-16

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. 17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Satan being cast down from heaven may be the halfway point of the Tribulation. Satan then takes full control of the antichrist and is what precipitates the antichrist breaking the covenant with Israel. The antichrist with Satan furiously attacks Israel. This may mark the beginning of the Great Tribulation. This is indicated by “time and times and half a time.” “Time” is one year, “Times” is two years, and “half a time” is half a year so this adds up to 3 ½ years or exactly the length of time of the Great Tribulation.

Some believe that the eagle that is mentioned is the United States since its symbol is the eagle and how the United States has been a great ally and protector of Israel. But though this could be true it is speculative.

11.3.18.7 *The Beast out of the Sea*

Revelation 13:1-10

And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. 3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; 4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" 5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

The beast here has two main interpretations both of which can be true.

One is that the beast is a revival of the old Roman Empire in the form of a European confederacy. The descriptions harken back to the beasts in Daniel 7 in which the last beast was the Roman Empire. The idea is that the antichrist will come from Europe.

The other is that this beast is an individual who is the antichrist who is coming out of a sea of people.

Both could be true if the antichrist arises from an alliance of Europe.

In verse 3 there is a seemingly fatal head wound. It will appear as though the antichrist is killed. But then it will appear that he will be brought back to life. The entire world will be amazed and follow after the antichrist. Notice how this will appear to be a resurrection. Just as Christ rose from the dead, Satan has his man appear to rise from the dead.

The antichrist will wage a terrible war against Christians all over the world.

We see that the world will be clearly divided into two peoples: those who follow Satan and have his mark and those who follow God and have his mark.

The antichrist will essentially establish a one-world government. That may seem unlikely today but remember that half of the world's population has been killed, most food sources have been destroyed, cities have been destroyed. The world is in chaos. In steps the antichrist who had previously conquered first peacefully and then through war. Now he is uniting people around the world albeit under hatred and murder.

11.3.18.8 *The Second Beast*

Revelation 13:11-18

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. 12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs

which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. 15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

This second beast is called the “False Prophet” in Revelation 19:20. He is a false religious leader. He see that in here:

- 1) Just like Jesus is the Lamb of God, this beast is said to resemble a lamb (verse 11)
- 2) He causes people to worship the antichrist (verse 12)
- 3) He performs signs (verse 13)
- 4) He is given what appears to be the breath of life (verse 15)
- 5) He is called a prophet (Revelation 19:20)

The thinking is that the antichrist and the False Prophet set up a unified world religion that they force everyone to join. The object of their worship is the antichrist, the resurrected one.

This brings us to a sidebar of how Satan tries to imitate God.

God	Satan
God is a trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit	Satan has set up a trinity: Satan as the father, the antichrist as the son, and the false prophet as the holy spirit
God had temples in the OT and the church in the NT	Satan has established the “synagogue of Satan” Revelation 2:9 and 3:9
God has holy communion	Satan has established his own unholy table, 1 Corinthians 10:21, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”
God is light	Satan can appear as an angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11:14, “No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”
God gave Peter the keys to the kingdom, Matthew 16:19a, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”	Satan is given the key to the bottomless pit, Revelation 9:1b, “I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.”
God has his army of holy angels	Satan has his army of unholy angels: demons
Jesus suffered death at the crucifixion and then was actually raised from the dead	The antichrist has a seemingly fatal head wound and then it is made to appear that he is raised from the dead
Jesus’ church is His bride (Revelation 2:9)	Satan has his “great harlot” (Revelation 17:1)

Satan is constantly trying to obtain his goal of being God.

The mark of the Beast – 666

Why 666?

Some numbers have an interesting significance in the Bible.

Let us look at just a few numbers and their significance. The examples within these lists are by no means complete.

3 Signifies completeness

- God is a Trinity
- Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane – He was the complete sacrifice
- Jesus rose on the third day – Our sins were completely paid for
- Three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil – complete evil
- Three times in a row the Seraphim call God holy (“holy, holy, holy”) in Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8 – God is perfectly holy
- Jesus’ ministry lasted three years – it was a perfect ministry

6 The number of man and the manifestation of sin

- Man was created on the sixth day
- Jesus was accused of being demon possessed six times
- Six people proclaimed Jesus innocent during the Passion but did nothing to stop His crucifixion (Pilate, Pilate’s wife, Herod, Judas, the thief on the cross (not that he could be anything), and the Roman centurion)
- There are six New Testament references to people practicing sorcery
- The sixth clause in the “Our Father/Lord’s prayer” is “lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”
- Jesus was on the cross for six hours (3 to 9)
- Goliath was 6 cubits high (1 Samuel 17:4-7)
- Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide (Daniel 3:1)

7 Spiritual perfection and fullness

- In Hebrew the word “seven’s” root word means “to be full”
- God rested on the seventh day
- Seven Sabbatical years followed by the year of Jubilee
- There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
- It took Solomon seven years to build the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6:37-38)
- There are seven holy feasts days observed by Israel
- Seven covenants of God with man: Adamic, Noah, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Levitic, Davidic, Messianic or new
- Seven days was the usual time of mourning for the dead
- Seven of Jesus’ miracles were on the Sabbath
- There are seven churches in Revelation chapters 1 – 3
- Many sevens in Revelation: seals, trumpets, bowls, angels, hills, kings, and final visions (chapters 20 – 21)

12 God’s authority and government

- Twelve tribes of Israel
- Twelve Apostles
- Ishmael had 12 princes
- Twelve unleavened cakes of bread be placed every week in the temple
- In Revelation, 12,000 are called from each of the 12 tribes to be 144,000 witnesses

- The New Jerusalem will have 12 gates and its walls will be 144 (12 x 12) cubits high and will be 12,000 furlongs square
- Jesus' first recorded words were when He was 12 years old
- The Trees of Life in the new creation will bear twelve kinds of fruit (Revelation 22:2)

40 Testing, Trials, or Probation

- Jonah warned Nineveh for 40 days
- Ezekiel laid on his side for 40 days
- Elijah went 40 days without food
- Jesus fasted in the desert for 40 days
- Jesus appeared to His disciples for 40 days after His resurrection
- Israel wandered the desert for 40 years
- It rained for 40 days and nights for The Flood
- Forty days Moses was on Mount Sinai when God gave him the Law
- The spies were in Canaan for 40 days
- Forty years Israel ate manna

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11.3.18.9 *The 144,000 persevere*

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

In Revelation 7:4 we saw that God selected 144,000 Jews from the tribes of Israel to go and proclaim His Gospel. He put His seal on them to protect them from the catastrophes and persecutions of the Tribulation. Here we see that God was, as always, faithful. They are here at the end standing on Mount Zion having persevered.

11.3.18.10 *Judgment is coming swiftly and surely*

Revelation 14:7

7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Revelation 14:9-11

9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

We read here that God promises that His judgment is soon and then those who do not repent will be cast into Hell and tormented with fire and brimstone forever and ever.

Several points to note.

One, for those who say that life is not fair we see here that even though it is not fair here we can be assured that on the other side of eternity the scales will be balanced out. Yes, life is not fair. The rich, arrogant, and selfish live lives that seem easy. They enjoy the best life has to offer. They are never hungry. They have the best doctors. And at the end they die in peace. Psalm 73 says this.

3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat.
5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind.
6 Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them.
7 Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot.
8 They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high.
9 They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth.
10 Therefore his people return to this place, And waters of abundance are drunk by them.
11 They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?"
12 Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth.

Just like Asaph who wrote this Psalm we are prone to envy the rich. Most people are like verse 14.

14 For I have been stricken all day long And chastened every morning.

We want to conclude like Asaph in verse 13:

13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence;

Who hasn't thought at some point, "I go to church every week. I read my Bible. I try to be a good person and here I am struggling with finances, or health, or relationships. Look at that person. He is a lousy person yet he has it so easy. It just isn't fair. Why do I even bother?"

Verses 17-20 and 23 – 28 tell us why we should bother.

17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end.
18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.
19 How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!
20 Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form.

They may die peacefully and painlessly in bed surrounded by their family in their luxurious mansion but the second after they die--bam!--they open their eyes and their family is gone, their mansion is gone, their peace and painlessness is gone. They have awakened in Hell. "They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!" Do you envy them now?

But contrast this to the child of God.

23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand.
24 With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.
26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You.
28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.

God is with us! Both here and in eternity. Listen to this:

- 1) He is continually with us
- 2) He has hold of our hand

- 3) He counsels us
- 4) He will receive us into glory
- 5) He is the strength of our heart
- 6) He is our portion forever
- 7) He is near to us
- 8) He is our refuge

We have everything that we need. We have God. What is our hope, our attitude, and our mood is our choice. We can choose to complain. We can choose to be grumpy. We can choose to be miserable. Or we can choose joy. Joy is always our choice.

Circumstances may be tough. Choose joy.

Relationships may be tough. Choose joy.

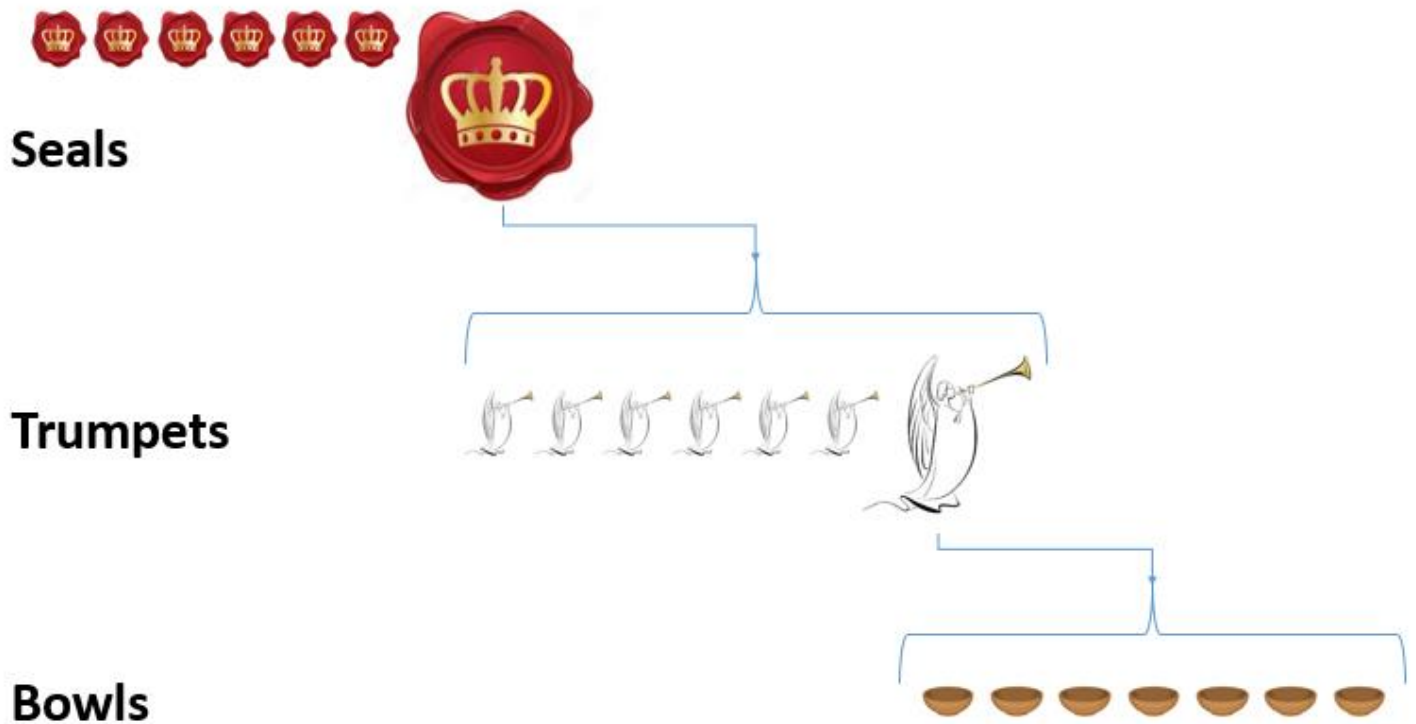
Health may be tough. Choose joy.

Our boss may be tough. Choose joy.

Our children may be tough. Choose joy.

11.3.19 The Seven Bowls or Vials

Revelation 15 introduces the seven vials. The seven vials are contained in the seventh trumpet and the seven trumpets are contained in the seventh seal. So all of the judgments in the seven trumpets and vials are the seventh seal. At the completion of the seventh vial we see the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.



The seal is from https://www.123rf.com/photo_6353891_crown-wax-seal.html.

The trumpeter is from <http://www.christian-miracles.com/revelation2013.htm>.

The bowl is from <https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/big-bowl-icon-cartoon-style-vector-11250148>.

Here is another way to try and show that the seven Bowls are all within the seventh Trumpet and all of the Trumpets are within the seventh Seal but it is mostly a fail.



Chronologically, chapter 15 follows after the second half of chapter 11.

Revelation 15:1-2

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. 2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

In Revelation 4:6 the sea is described as “and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal.” The sea, which reflects the glory of God, is like crystal which is reflecting His holiness.

But in Revelation 15:2 it reads, “And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire.” Here the same sea now has fire which is reflecting God’s wrath. God’s holiness is taking action.

But notice that saints who were faithful to God are standing on this sea with fire but are not being harmed. God will always protect and shield His children from His judgment. Once in Christ we are eternally safe. Even in the midst of God’s wrath we will be unscathed.

Revelation 15:5-7

5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, 6 and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes. 7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.

Then picture this scene. The temple opens up and out come seven angels dressed in bright robes. Then one of the four living creatures hands them each a bowl full of God's wrath. Earth watch out.

The Trumpets and Bowls are very similar in their action.

Trumpet	Bowl	Focus
1	1	earth
2	2	Sea
3	3	Rivers and fountains of water
4	4	Sun
5	5	Darkness
6	6	Euphrates River
7	7	Lightning, thunder, and a great earthquake

But they are not the same. As we shall see, they are different in scope.

11.3.20 The First Bowl – Sores

Many think that the seven bowls come extremely quickly, more like weeks or just a few months.

Revelation 16:2

So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

Those who have the mark of the Beast are afflicted with loathsome and malignant sores or ulcers. The Septuagint uses the same word as the boils that afflicted the Egyptians in Exodus 9:9-11. For those who will want to attribute this as being a natural phenomenon will have to explain how it bypasses all of those who serve God.

11.3.21 The Second Bowl – Life in the sea dies

Revelation 16:3

3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.

Something poisons the sea causing it to turn red and all of the creatures in the sea die. This is similar to the first of the ten plagues of Egypt where the Nile turned to blood (Exodus 7:20-25).

11.3.22 The Third Bowl – Life in rivers die

Revelation 16:4-7

4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it." 7 And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

Now the rivers and springs are poisoned and, presumably, all life in them also dies.

We see this was the consequence of persecuting and martyring Christians.

By now all sea life and water has been destroyed. The only water left would be that which is stored.

11.3.23 The Fourth Bowl – Scorching sun

Revelation 16:8-9

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. 9 Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

The heat and rays of the sun are intensified so as to scorch those who are with the antichrist. The result is not begging for mercy or repenting but, rather, it caused them to blaspheme God even more. This suffering would be amplified since the water supply had been nearly destroyed by the previous two bowls. So people are excruciatingly thirsty but water is hard to find.

For those who today wonder why God doesn't do more to cause people to be saved we see here that even in extreme judgment that is obviously from God, people still refuse to acknowledge God as Lord and Savior.

11.3.24 The Fifth Bowl – Darkness

Revelation 16:10-11

10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

The sun goes from scorching to darkness. And the sores from the first Bowl intensify.

But they continue to blaspheme God.

11.3.25 The Sixth Bowl – Preparation for Armageddon

Revelation 16:12-16

12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.") 16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

The result of this bowl is that many nations gather to fight a war. Since there is a one-world government under the antichrist then how is there such division that armies will be gathered to fight against one another? This Bowl is being poured out at the very end of the seven-year Tribulation. In that time resources have been depleted, great numbers of people have been killed, and the world is in chaos. The government of the antichrist is falling apart. In a grab for other countries' resources such as water and food nations will go to war.

We also see that this bloodlust is provoked by three demons that go out of the antichrist, false prophet, and Satan.

Where these armies gather is the Mount of Megiddo. Some of the Old Testament battles were here: Barak versus the Canaanites in Judges 4 and Gideon versus the Midianites in Judges 7. Saul was killed here.

To show how quickly the Bowls are poured out, one of the armies that is gathering is the 200 million man army that is unleashed in the sixth trumpet. This indicates that the Bowls are poured out over perhaps weeks rather than months or years. All of these judgments come like a trip-hammer one right after the other: Bowl 1, Bowl 2, Bowl 3, Bowl 4, ...

Of course all 200 million men and the other armies do not fill the plain of Megiddo; that would be impossible. Megiddo is the central point. The gathered armies will be spread out over hundreds of miles.

The battle of Armageddon is the final act before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel 38 – 39 gives details of this battle.

Zechariah 14:1-2 gives an overview.

Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

We see agreement in Revelation 16, Ezekiel 38, and Zechariah 14 in that all of the nations will gather against Jerusalem. Scripture always agrees with itself.

11.3.26 The Seventh Bowl – earthquake and 100 pound hail

Revelation 16:17-21

17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done." 18 And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. 19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

The Times of the Gentiles comes to an end.

The greatest earthquake the world has ever seen occurs. The great city is split into three parts. The identification of "the great city" is debatable. Some say Rome or Jerusalem. Others say Babylon since it is mentioned in the next verse. This might be a rebuilt Babylon.

The topography of the earth is changed. Islands disappear either by flooding over or sinking into the ocean. And mountains are leveled.

Then come hailstones that are about 100 pounds each. These could be literal hailstones or they could be bombs dropped from planes or are ground based. John would not know what a bomb or missile is so him seeing large objects falling from the sky would be, to him, hailstones.

11.3.27 Revelation 17 Ecclesiastical Babylon

In Revelation 17-18 we break away from the chronological events so that John can be given an explanation of two aspects of Babylon. Chapter 17 is the religious Babylon and chapter 18 is the political Babylon.

The antichrist and the false prophet establish a worldwide counterfeit religion which is associated with Babylon.

In Genesis 11 the people built a tower in rebellion against God. God confounded their language. This was later called Babylon. The wife of Nimrod founded the city and was associated with secret religious rites and the worship of idols. According to extra-Biblical material Nimrod's wife's name was Semiramis and was a high priestess in one of these idol worshipping religions. She claimed to have conceived miraculously and then gave birth to a son who was considered to be a savior of his people in fulfillment of the promise to Eve. I.e. he was a false messiah. Idols of Semiramis as the queen of heaven holding the baby are found throughout the ancient world. Her son was supposedly killed by a wild beast and then brought back to life. The child's name was Tammuz and is mentioned in Ezekiel 8:14 - 15, "Then He brought me to the entrance of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and behold, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. 15 He said to me, 'Do you see this, son of man? Yet you will see still greater abominations than these.'" Jeremiah 7:18 talks about making cakes to the queen of heaven, "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods in order to spite Me." This "queen of heaven" is Semiramis.

It appears that in the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation the antichrist sets up his one-world government and one-world ecumenical religion and will allow religious freedom to everyone else. This is how the Jews are able to rebuild the Temple and reinstitute sacrifices.

But at the mid-point the antichrist does not need or want any other religions including his own world-wide ecumenical religion and so he destroys his ecumenical religion and sets himself up to be worshipped. He then persecutes all who will not worship him. We see this in Revelation 13:8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." We also see this in Daniel 11:36-39, "Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. 37 He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. 38 But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. 39 He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price." Content to no longer merely be the head of an ecumenical religion, the antichrist must be worshipped as god.

But God is not fond of blasphemy and idolatry and so destroys this system.

11.3.28 Revelation 18 Political Babylon

Whereas Revelation 17 represented the religious aspect of Babylon, chapter 18 is the political and economic aspects of Babylon. We see in 18:11 that merchants are weeping and mourning.

The call to separation in verses 4-5 is prior to the seven Bowls as evidenced by them being spared the plagues.

We see in verse 8 we see that the great empire that the antichrist built up over seven years is destroyed by God in one day. All of the antichrist's political and economic might, all of his alliances are suddenly destroyed.

In verse 9 all of the kings of the Earth will weep and lament over the fall of Babylon.

The antichrist is no longer in control. God is now in control. As a result in verse 20 we read that there will be great rejoicing in heaven, "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."

In Genesis 11 the people tried to create a single religion and world government by uniting the world around a tower that reached to heaven. God thwarted that attempt by confusing their language and scattering the people.

Then in Revelation we see the antichrist uniting the world around a single, ecumenical religion and a one-world government. He then destroys that religion and sets himself up to be worshipped instead. Both his self-religion and one-world government are destroyed by God in a short and devastating amount of time. Apparently we do not learn from our history.

11.3.29 The Second Coming

Some might say that Revelation 19 is the pinnacle of world history. It is when God makes clearly visible His sovereignty and reign over all of creation. Many Biblical prophecies will find their fulfillment in this chapter.

Here are a few.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. 6 "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'"

Job 19:25

As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

Zechariah 14:3-4

3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Isaiah 66:15-16

15 For behold, the Lord will come in fire
And His chariots like the whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For the Lord will execute judgment by fire
And by His sword on all flesh,
And those slain by the Lord will be many.

Daniel 7:13-14

13 "I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
14 "And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.

Joel 2:1-2

Blow a trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm on My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
For the day of the Lord is coming;
Surely it is near,
2 A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness.
As the dawn is spread over the mountains,
So there is a great and mighty people;
There has never been anything like it,
Nor will there be again after it
To the years of many generations.

Malachi 4:1-3

For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the Lord of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." 2 "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. 3 You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the Lord of hosts.

11.3.29.1 *The Announcement*

Revelation 19:1-6

After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; 2 because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." 3 And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever." 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" 5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." 6 Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

Alleluia is the Greek, Hallelujah is the Hebrew.

The word has two parts. The first part—hallelu—means "joyous praise in song." The second part—jah—is a variant of Yah which is a shortened form of YHWH which is the name of God. YHWH is called the Tetragrammaton which means "four letters." So "Hallelujah" is a joyous praise of song to God. All four mentions of Hallelujah in the New Testament are in this chapter.

This scene comes after the catastrophic judgments from the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls. Billions of people died. Many more were injured or lost their homes or were starving. People who are not part of God's family would call God "cruel and unloving." They would say that God is the opposite of kind and gracious.

But notice what those who are close to God say about Him:

- Salvation – We are delivered from the just penalty of our sin
- Glory – God is infinitely above us in majesty, holiness, honor, and everything else that is good
- Power -- God is the sovereign king who created all things and holds all things together
- True – God keeps all of His promises and He is without sin
- Righteous – Sin is punished either by the person them self or by Jesus Christ and His free gift of forgiveness

And through it all four times they sing praise to God—Hallelujah.

The closer we are to God and to understanding His character and ways the more likely we are to praise Him for Him that He does. The wicked are far from God and so their response to God's ways are to either deny/ignore Him or to blaspheme. Through Bible reading, prayer, worship, fellowship, meditation, and study we should throughout our lives strive to draw closer to God and to know Him better. If you doubt God, then draw even closer to Him. You will change your mind for the better.

11.3.29.2 *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*

Revelation 19:7-10

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." 10 Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he *said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

This is the marriage of Jesus to His bride, the church.

The church is never explicitly called "the bride of Christ" in the Bible but here in Revelation 19 and in Ephesians 5:25-32 it is strongly implied.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

We also read in 2 Corinthians 11:2, "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."

The marriage customs in the ancient world usually had three steps:

- 1) The marriage contract which was arranged by the parents. This usually required a dowry and meant that the two were now engaged.
- 2) At a later time when they had reached a suitable age and were more financially stable the bridegroom accompanied by his friends would go to the house of the bride and escort her back to his home. This is the symbolism of the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

- 3) Then they would have the wedding feast with many guests. An example is the wedding feast in Cana in John 2:1-12.

We see these steps paralleled with Christ and the church.

- 1) The marriage contract was determined by the Father before time existed. Ephesians 1:4 tells us, “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”
- 2) At the Rapture, Jesus will come and bring us back to His home.
- 3) These verses in Revelation 19 are the wedding feast.

The church has made herself ready for her marriage to the Lamb through her “righteous acts.” This is not the righteousness found in Christ through justification. This is our good deeds produced from our sanctification.

This is the ultimate marriage ever: God with His church. It will be a feast of limitless joy and celebration and all the while honoring the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

11.3.29.3 *Jesus returns*

Revelation 19:11-16

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

We see this same event in Matthew 24:27-31.

27 For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. 29 “But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

This is one of the most glorious passages regarding Jesus Christ found anywhere in the Bible. Here He is coming in all of His glory, majesty, and power.

The Fifth Bowl is darkness which covers the whole earth. Then out of this thick darkness there is a flash like lightning traversing the entire sky splitting through the darkness. But this is not lightning. This is Jesus Christ coming back with power and great glory! His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems. He is on a white horse and He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood. And behind Him is His army of saints riding white horses and clothed in fine linen, white and clean. All all on Earth will see Him.

The same event is described in Zechariah 14:1-5.

Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. **3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.** 5 You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!**

In Zechariah we see that Jesus will step down on the Mount of Olives. This is the same spot from which He ascended in Acts 1:12, "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away." As He touches down the mountain will split in two.

This is the answer to Isaiah's plea in Isaiah 64:1-2.

Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, That the mountains might quake at Your presence—2 As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil—To make Your name known to Your adversaries, That the nations may tremble at Your presence!

"His eyes are a flame of fire" tells of His righteous judgment that has been happening and now will come with great fury.

"On His head are many diadems" reminds us that He is King of all.

"His robe dipped in blood" symbolizes His sacrifice on the cross for our sins.

"He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God" refers to Joel 3:13, "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great." Sin has overflowed throughout the earth. Judgment is here.

He is "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Many kings, dictators, and presidents throughout history have exalted themselves. They treat their people and subordinates with disdain while treating themselves to the best of everything that they can get their hands on. But they are fooling themselves. They are in the position that they are in only because God allowed it. God is the only "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." And yet in contrast to the world's rulers we read in Psalm 138:6, "For though the Lord is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar."

This is fulfillment and promise of Psalm 2.

Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,
3 "Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"
4 He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
5 Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."
7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:

He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"
10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
11 Worship the Lord with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.
12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Notice the outline of the chapter:

1. The wicked rail against God and proclaim their emancipation from Him
2. God scoffs at them
3. Jesus is the one who receives the earth as His possession
4. God warns the wicked
5. The ones who draw near to God will be blessed

11.3.29.4 The defeat of the army of the beast

Revelation 19:17-19

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

An angel who is, most likely, standing in the rays of the sun beckons to the birds to eat the flesh of the army of the beast who will be killed at Armageddon. We see that there is no respect for wealth or power. God is not impressed by our bank accounts or our titles. Rather 2 Chronicles 16:9 tells us what does impress God, "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

11.3.29.5 The defeat of the beast and the false prophet

Revelation 19:20

20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

The antichrist (the beast) and the false prophet are seized and are the first people to be cast into Hell (the lake of fire). The rest of mankind will follow in Revelation 20:15. Right now no one is in Hell. Everyone who is not saved is currently in Hades.

11.3.29.6 The doom of the beast's army

Revelation 19:21

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

These are those who were not killed in the first part of the battle. They are the “rest.”

For those who think that God is only love, this passage amply demonstrates that God is also holy and just. He sent His only begotten Son so that whoever believes will have eternal life. But to those who spurn God’s free gift of salvation there is no scale that weighs sincerity or “good” deeds. There is only righteous judgment.

11.3.30 Events immediately following the Second Coming and the start of the Millennium

11.3.30.1 The Binding of Satan

Revelation 20:1-3

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

The bottomless pit is the same that is mentioned in Revelation 9:1-2, “Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.”

This is the same bottomless pit or abyss that is mentioned in Luke 8:30-31

30 And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. 31 They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

And Romans 10:7

“or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”

The popular picture is that Satan is the ruler of the underworld. We see him with his horns, pointy goatee, and red cape standing on a cliff overlooking the flames of the underworld. But the reality is that Hell is really Satan’s prison. Matthew 25:41 tells us, “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Hell has been prepared for Satan and his demons and it will not be a hotel; it will be the most awful prison ever. In Luke 8 the demons in the man beg not to be cast into the Abyss; they prefer being free.

The angel takes the same key as in Revelation 9 that Satan uses to open the gate but this time he uses it to lock the gate and imprison Satan. Satan will be imprisoned for a literal 1,000 years.

A seal will be placed on the entrance. This is similar to the seal that a king would use to seal an important document. Ancient seals were usually made of wax which would be melted onto the overlapping parts of a document. Then the king would use his ring or other instrument to press his signet into the wax. Once the wax hardened this would create an official seal which carried the full authority of the king. Everyone would recognize the king’s symbol and it could only be broken by the one for whom the document was intended. If anyone else broke the seal then the penalty was death. No one would challenge this seal by breaking it because that would be the same as directly challenging the king himself.

The Roman authorities used a seal to secure Jesus' tomb. Matthew 27:66, "And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone."

This is the same concept of believers being sealed in the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 tells us, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." And Ephesians 4:30 says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." The full authority of God the King has sealed us as God's for all eternity. No one nor nothing would or could dare break that seal. We are God's forever.

We also read in Numbers 31:50 that signet rings which were used to imprint the seal were considered valuable: "So we have brought as an offering to the Lord what each man found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord." They were used as an offering to the Lord.

Here in Revelation the demons are sealed in the bottomless pit and are contained by God's unbreakable seal.

11.3.30.2 *The resurrection of the Tribulation saints*

Revelation 20:4-6

4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

These are specifically referring to the Christians who were martyred during the Tribulation. We know that because it says that they did not worship the beast or receive the mark.

They will be resurrected to their glorified bodies and enter the Millennium where they will reign with Christ. This is the fulfillment of 2 Timothy 2:12a, "If we endure, we will also reign with Him."

This is the first resurrection.

11.3.30.3 *Satan freed*

Revelation 20:7-9

7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

We skip 1,000 years from verse 6 to verse 7. Those 1,000 years are called the Millennium.

Let's take a look at the Millennium.

At the Second Coming there are these groups of people/beings.

	People/beings	What happens to them when the Millennium starts
1	Fallen angels, aka demons, who are imprisoned in the Bottomless Pit (the Abyss)	They remain in the Bottomless Pit
2	Fallen angels—demons—who were free	Cast into the Bottomless Pit
3	Satan	Cast into the Bottomless Pit
4	All unsaved	Remain in Hades/Sheol
5	OT saved	Are resurrected and enter the Millennium in their glorified bodies
6	Church age believers	Were previously raptured and after the Marriage Feast of the Lamb return to the Earth with Jesus at the Second Coming and enter the Millennium
7	Tribulation believers who were martyred during the Tribulation	Are resurrected and enter the Millennium in their glorified bodies
8	Tribulation believers who lived through to the end of the Millennium	Enter the Millennium in their natural bodies; these are the ones who will have children in the Millennium

Herein is one problem with a post-tribulation Rapture. If all non-believers are killed and all believers were just raptured and return at the Second Coming then there will be no regular, non-resurrected, non-glorified people left to populate the Millennium and have children.

Many Old Testament passages discuss the Millennium. Generally they are the passages that talk about an extended and unusual peace or of the immediate presence and reign of God. We will look at a few.

Isaiah 2:2-4

2 Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

Jerusalem will be the capital of the world.

There will never again be war.

Isaiah 11:4-9

4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fating together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

It will be a time of peace and fairness and justice.

Since Jesus will physically reign on the Earth he will directly judge.

Even animals that normally are enemies will live in harmony.

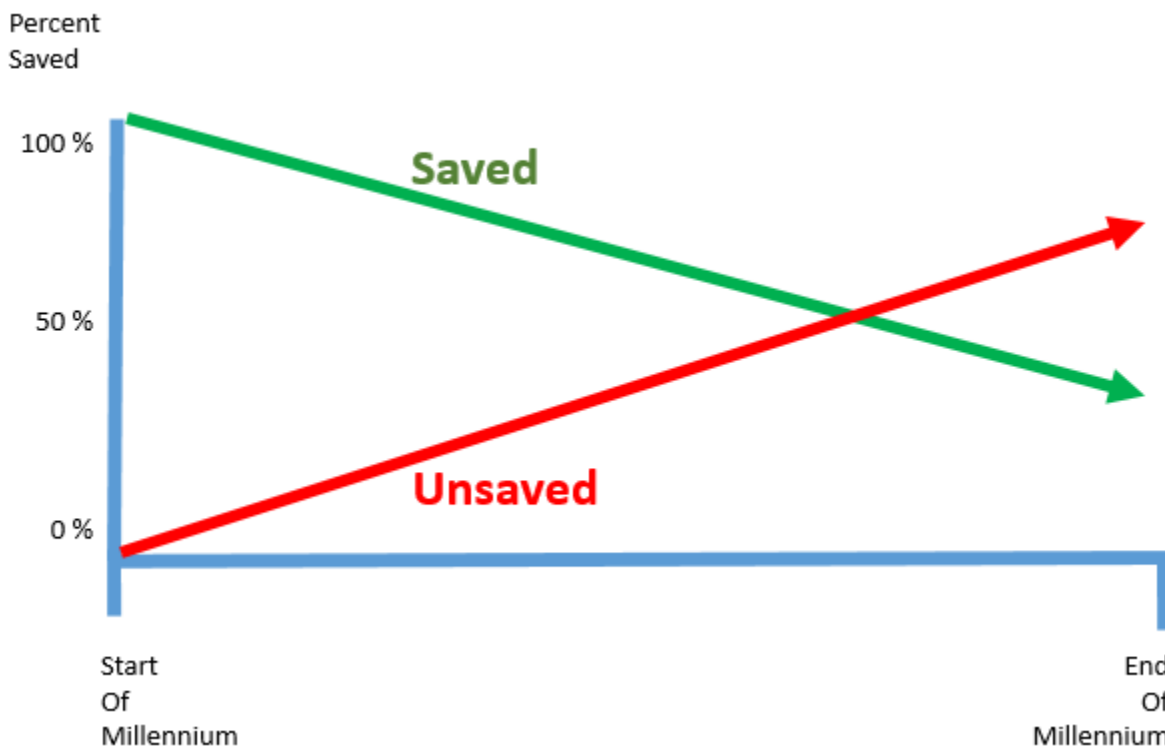
The knowledge of God will fill the Earth.

Psalm 72

There will be “abundance of peace till the moon is no more.”

Jesus’ reign will be “from sea to sea” and “kings bow down before him” and “all nations serve him.”

When the Millennium starts it will be populated only with believers. Despite the physical presence of Jesus as King, despite the great peace and justice, despite the longevity of lives, people will be born who will rebel and not believe. As time progresses through the Millennium the percent of unbelievers will increase. This shows that our hearts without grace are bent towards rebellion. It proves Romans 3 that our hearts are inherently evil.



Then at the end of the 1,000 years Satan is released. He will then pick up where he left off and deceive the nations. He will deceive many rulers identified by the symbolic word “Gog” and many of their people identified by the symbolic word “Magog.” These rulers and people will be from all parts of the earth. They will gather for war and march to Jerusalem. Their numbers will be like the sand of the seashore, i.e. innumerable. They will surround Jerusalem where Jesus resides with His saints. How long this occurs after Satan is released is unclear but the impression is that it is not a very long time. Obviously they learned nothing of the power and judgment of God from what happened in the Tribulation. This time God simply sends fire down from heaven like at Sodom and Gomorrah and everyone in this army is destroyed. Just like that. Man spends much time gathering resources, planning, and marching on Jerusalem and in a flicker they are all destroyed by God.

11.3.30.4 *Satan sentenced*

Revelation 20:10

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The end of Satan is to be cast into Hell, aka the lake of fire. He is not the ruler of Hell, rather it will be his eternal place of suffering.

Satan will join the beast and the false prophet who were sentenced there 1,000 years prior. Note the word “are.” There is no annihilation. The beast and the false prophet are still conscious in Hell even after 1,000 years and they will remain there for the next 1,000 years and forever after that. Hell is forever.

God and the Devil have both known about this outcome. Matthew 25:41 states, “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Yet despite this knowledge they still continued on their evil ways.

We may scoff at their stupidity but aren’t we very much the same? We have the promises of God and their subsequent blessings and yet we still do what we want and toss those blessings behind our backs. Rather than consider others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3) we consider ourselves as more important than anyone else. Rather than forgiving each other (Ephesians 4:31-32) we harbor bitterness and destroy our own lives. Rather than share the Gospel (Mark 16:15) we let people go to Hell.

11.3.30.5 *The Great White Throne Judgment*

Revelation 20:11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Now in Heaven John sees a Great White Throne with God sitting upon it. Since this is the final judgment more than likely this is Jesus who is sitting upon the throne.

John 5:22 tells us, “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.” Judgment is given to the Son.

The heavens and earth fleeing away may be reference to the creation of a new heavens and a new earth as spoken of in Revelation 21.

Before this throne is standing a great multitude of all classes of people. In a courtroom just before the verdict is read the defendant stands. In the same vein every one of this great multitude is standing. Their verdict is coming speedily.

There are two sets of books. The first is the singular book of life in which are written all of the names of the saved and only the names of the saved. Some people claim that God is optimistic and begins with everyone’s name in the book of life and they are erased when they die without salvation. Psalm 69:28 may indicate this, “May they be blotted out of the book of life and may they not be recorded with the righteous” as does Revelation 3:5, “He who overcomes will thus be

clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” If this is the case then when each person stands before God during this final judgment there will be a blank space where their name should have been.

The second is a set of books which contains each person’s deeds. It says that everyone will be judged according to their deeds. This judgment will determine the severity of their eternal punishment.

These people are then cast into the lake of fire (aka Hell). Hades is the place spoken of in Luke 16 where all of the unsaved dead have waited until this moment.

11.3.31 New Heavens and New Earth

Revelation 21:1

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

The phrase “passed away” is the Greek word *apelelutha* which means to “go away or depart” with the sense of “to discontinue as a condition or state.”

The most common interpretation of this is that because of sin and its effects, the heavens and earth will be destroyed and replaced with a new heavens and earth, ones without the corruption of sin. We have spent our entire human history living in a universe that has been corrupted by sin. We have no idea what it is like to be in a place that is pure and holy and pristine. Where there is no ugliness or horror. Even when we stand on a mountain and look out across God’s creation what we are seeing has been tainted by sin. What this new heavens and earth will look like is beyond our imagination.

2 Peter 3:10-13 is a similar passage.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Then we read verse 14: “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”

First God assumes that we ARE looking for these things. What God is going to do at the End Times is so spectacular and so glorifying to Him that we should have our eyes, our minds, and our hearts focused on these events.

Because the result will be peace, spotlessness, and blamelessness.

- Peace because we know that God is in control. If He can determine and steer the entire fate of the universe and every life in it then He can certainly steer our lives.
- Spotless because there will be justice and reward at the end. Do we want to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and have nothing good to show for our lives? Do we really want an eternity of no rewards?

- Blameless because how we treated others will matter in the end. Did we forgive? Did we stand with the oppressed? Did we sacrifice for others who could give back nothing in return? Being spotless is how our own lives are pure. Blameless is how we lived our lives before and with others.

What we do now matters and not just for now but for all eternity.

C.T. Studd, who was a Christian missionary to China, in a much longer poem wrote this as the last stanza:

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
 Only what's done for Christ will last.
 And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,
 If the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee.

If only we can be gripped by those words.

One aspect of the earth is that it appears that there will be no more sea. What that really means is anyone's guess.

There are a few allusions in the Bible to this new heavens and earth.

Isaiah 65:17-18

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.
 18 "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness.

Isaiah 66:22

"For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the Lord, "So your offspring and your name will endure.

Revelation 21:2

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:3-4

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Once again we see how the Bible written by many men across many centuries weaves tightly together.

Throughout history we see various degrees of God's nearness.

- 1) In the Garden God walked among Adam and Eve. We see close, intimate fellowship. They saw God in His glory.
- 2) Then they sinned and were cast away from God's presence.
- 3) Then God dwelt in the Ark of Covenant, but only the High Priest was allowed near it. When Israel was on the move it was carried in the middle but it was covered and everyone was at a distance. So God was present but at a distance.
- 4) Then in the church age Jesus walked among us so He was close but His glory was veiled.

- 5) In the Millennium Jesus once again is physically on the Earth but reigns from Jerusalem. There is no indication that He traveled around.
- 6) But finally in eternity we once again have God completely and closer to us in His full glory.

So we see our relationship with God's presence go full circle starting with His full, intimate presence and then ending the same way. In between we see God nudging close to us but sin always puts up a barrier. Once sin is gone there will be no more barrier. "God Himself will be among us."

Regarding God wiping away our tears some say that we will cry in heaven when we first get there because of regret over our sins and how we lived our lives. But this is not likely the meaning. It is saying that all of the tears that we shed while on earth will be gone forever. There will be no tears in heaven even when we first get there. How is that the likely interpretation?

- 1) Tears are linked with death, sorrow, crying, and pain. Clearly none of these will occur in heaven especially death.
- 2) The emphasis is on God's comfort and not on our remorse.
- 3) At the end of the sentence it refers to these as the first or former things and not as the current things.

Though "tears" is plural in most translations in the Greek it is singular. It is really "each tear." That better implies God's personal attention. He isn't going to wipe away everyone's tears all at once with one big swoop but each tear, each pain, each sorrow will be personally attended to by our loving God.

Revelation 21:15-16

15 The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

It is unclear if this represents a cube or maybe a pyramid. It is also unclear how people will live on this. Will we live on the sides? Will we live in the middle throughout? Will we fly on our own to get to our place?

Here is just one side.

$1,500 \times 1,500 = 2,250,000$ square miles. There are 640 acres in a square mile. So $2,250,000 \times 640 = 1,440,000,000$ acres.

If it is a cube and we live on all sides except for the bottom then this would be 7,200,000,000 or over 7 billion acres. This would likely be enough for every saved person to live on an acre. Just a fun speculation.

Revelation 21:22

I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; 26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The OT temple was a place where man could approach God in a controlled situation. In Heaven anyone can approach God. Therefore, there is no need for a temple for we will have God Himself. And His glory will shine forth so brightly and constantly that there will be no need for sun or moon. We will indeed see God in all of His unveiled glory for all eternity.

12 Summary

Let us add to John's request in Revelation 22:20, "Come, Lord Jesus."

13 Glossary of End Times Terminology

When we speak of the "End Times" we are describing the period of many years where the Bible addresses the return of Jesus Christ, the end of the world, and the creation of a new heavens and a new earth.

666

Revelation 13:15-18 talks about the Beast, who is the antichrist, who requires that everyone who wants to buy or sell must have a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. The Beast also has a mark and it is 666.

70 Weeks

In Daniel 9:24-27 there is a prophecy that many believe refer to the coming of the Messiah and the period of the End Times. It is divided into three time periods: seven weeks, 62 weeks, and one week. Each day represents one year. The first seven weeks is 49 years from the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild the temple until it was completed. The 62 weeks (434 years) is from that point until Jesus started His ministry. Then there is an undetermined gap with the final week (seven years) being the Tribulation. It splits the final week in half at which point the Abomination of Desolation occurs.

7 Years

This is the total time of the Tribulation. The pretribulation/premillennial viewpoint says that the Tribulation starts with the Rapture of the church. In all major views the Tribulation ends with Jesus' Second Coming.

Abomination of Desolation

In the exact middle of the seven year Tribulation, the antichrist (the Beast) will desecrate the Jewish temple.

Antichrist

The antichrist will become the most powerful ruler on the Earth during the seven-year Tribulation. At first he will sign a peace treaty with Israel and attempt to forge a one-world government but then at the three and a half year mark he will commit the "Abomination of Desolation" and turn against Israel. He will try to assume the position of a god. His other name is the "man of sin."

Apocalypse

This word means "Revealing" or "the lifting of a veil." "The Apocalypse" is synonymous with the title "Book of Revelation" because both refer to revealing of end time events by Jesus Christ.

Armageddon

Revelation 16:13-6. This is the great and climatic battle. The antichrist gathers the armies of the nations to war against Jesus Christ. This will take place around the "hill of Megiddo" which is what Armageddon means. Jesus Christ wins.

Babylon

This is the symbolic name of false religious systems. Also called "The Great Harlot."

Beast

This is another name for the antichrist. However, it can also be the name of the False Prophet depending on the context.

Dragon

This is another name for Satan.

False Prophet

A false religious leader who teams with the antichrist.

Great Tribulation

The last three and a half years of the Tribulation when the antichrist teams with the Dragon (Satan) and the Beast and brings great violence and wrath to the Earth.

Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:11-15. This is great and final judgment of God upon all of the peoples who ever lived. Those who are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life (not born-again or saved) are cast into Hell (Lake of Fire).

Lake of Fire

This is another name for Hell. Revelation 20:15 tells us, "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." At end of the world, anyone who is not saved will be cast into Hell.

Millennium

In certain End Times viewpoints, this is the thousand year reign of Christ upon the Earth. Meanwhile, Satan is bound up in an abyss.

Rapture

This event is when Jesus Christ will leave Heaven and come as far as the clouds and will remove all Christians from the Earth and bring them back to Heaven with Him.

Satanic Trinity or Unholy Trinity

Satan, who always wanted to be like God, sets up for himself his own trinity during the Tribulation. The Dragon is Satan who plays the role of the Father. The Beast is the antichrist and imitates the Son, and the False Prophet plays the part of the Holy Spirit. But whereas the true Trinity is holy and righteous; this trinity is evil and self-serving. Satan tries to imitate God in other ways. Jesus has His church; Satan has his "synagogue of Satan" (Revelation 2:9). Jesus' church is His bride, Satan has his "great harlot" (Revelation 17:1). Jesus has the cup of communion; Satan has the "cup of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:21).

Second Coming

The First Coming was when God was born as a man (Jesus Christ) in an event known as the Incarnation. The Second Coming is when Jesus comes back to the Earth with those who were Raptured and defeats all of the wicked and creates a new heaven and earth.

Tribulation

In certain End Times viewpoints, this is the seven-year period of God's judgments upon the Earth. It can also refer to only the first 3 ½ years.

14 Miscellaneous Notes

14.1 Ezekiel 38-39

Most of this was taken from Thomas Ice in a study found here:

http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=pretrib_arch

14.1.1 Timing

There are seven general views of when this battle will take place. Two are in the past and five are in the future.

14.1.1.1 Past

The preterists believe that this battle has already occurred. There are two views.

14.1.1.2 Preterist - Esther 9

This battle was fulfilled in Esther in the fifth century during the reign of the Persian King Xerxes I (486 - 465).

14.1.1.3 Preterist - Second century A.D.

This battle was fulfilled in the Second century A.D at the defeat of the Assyrian invaders of Palestine by Judas Maccabeus.

14.1.2 Future

The other major group are those who believe these prophecies will be future. They all believe in a seven-year Tribulation ending with the Second Coming. The issue is when this battle will begin and end.

14.1.2.1 Before the Tribulation

This view holds that this battle will take place before the Tribulation. It could even occur before the rapture, but more than likely will be immediately after.

The strength of this view is that the seven years in Ezekiel 39:9 corresponds to the seven-year Tribulation.

Also, if a Russian and Muslim attack on Israel fails then that opens up an easy door for rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.

14.1.2.2 Mid Tribulation

The battle will be around the middle of the Tribulation.

This view identifies the battle in Daniel 11:40 as one and the same as Ezekiel 38-39.

Also, when Israel is said to be living securely in Ezekiel 38:8 this could be because of the covenant of peace that the antichrist signed with Israel.

This is probably the most commonly held view.

14.1.2.3 Simultaneous with Second Coming

The battle of Armageddon and the battle in Ezekiel 38-39 are the same event and will be in conjunction with the Second Coming.

Ezekiel 38:8 refers to "the latter years" and Ezekiel 38:16 speaks of "in the last days." This is taken to be referring to the last days of the Tribulation and so right around the Second Coming.

14.1.2.4 Beginning of the Millennium

This battle will occur at the beginning of the Millennium.

The major argument for this is that Israel will be living securely in Ezekiel 38:8.

14.1.2.5 End of the Millennium

This battle will occur at the end of the Millennium.

Revelation 20:7-9

7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Since Gog and Magog are mentioned here they are equated with the Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38-39.

14.1.3 Players

Gog is most likely a person who is a leader or ruler who coerces other nations to join in battle to conquer Israel.

Magog is a group of peoples that most scholars trace to the Scythians. In the broadest sense these are people who live in the region stretching from Ukraine in the west to Siberia in the east.

Rosh is probably the hardest and most controversial to identify. They are generally thought to be today's Russians.

Meschesh is modern day Turkey.

Tubal is also modern day Turkey. Meschesh and Tubal constitute all of the nation of Turkey.

Persia is Iran. The name Persia was changed to Iran in March 1935.

Cush is northern Sudan which is south of Israel.

Put is Libya which is from the west.

Gomer is the people in west, central Turkey.

Togarmah is thought to be a district in Turkey. Realize that even though Turkey is mentioned several times here that it was not an entire country back then. It was a number of regions.

Sheda and Dedan are Saudi Arabia.

The merchants of Tarshish are probably the Phoenician maritime and trading peoples living in Spain around King Solomon's time. These people's became Spain, Holland, and Britain.

14.1.4 Events

Ezekiel 38:4

I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them splendidly attired, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them wielding swords;

God will put hooks into their jaws. This seems to indicate that it is God who is orchestrating this battle. It is God who is compelling the armies to come together and attack Israel. God in His sovereign powers and in fulfillment of prophecy can turn men whichever way He so chooses.

The Hebrew word for “splendidly” only occurs twice in the Bible. It probably means to be “fully clothed” or “fully equipped.” The idea here is that this army will have the most up-to-date equipment and armor available.

Ezekiel 38:9

You will go up, you will come like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you.

The word “storm” means “a storm that breaks out violently and suddenly.” This invasion will come up Israel very quickly and catches her unprepared.

The number of invaders will be so vast that they will be like a cloud covering the land. This army will be so innumerable and powerful that it will swept across the land like a cloud sailing across the sky.

Ezekiel 38:12

to capture spoil and to seize plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places which are now inhabited, and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.

The goal of this invasion is not only to destroy Israel but to seize plunder. To capture Israel’s technology, military, and other goods.

Ezekiel 38:18-19

“It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,” declares the Lord God, “that My fury will mount up in My anger.” 19 In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.

The Hebrew word for “anger” means “nostrils” in the sense of when an animal gets upset and snorts loudly and angrily through its nostrils. This anger will be like a blazing fire. This is how God’s anger will be against this army. It is the strongest possible description of God’s intense fury. In verse 21 God refers to Israel as “My mountains.” Israel is God’s people and He will never forsake them.

God will create a great earthquake and it will so shake and disorient the people of the army that verse 21 tells us that they will fight each other (“Every man’s sword will be against his brother.”).

Ezekiel 38:22

With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone.

God will then use disease, severe weather, molten rock, and burning volcanic ash to destroy the remaining troops. This will not be unlike the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Men will gather their greatest forces and people to march against God’s people. Then God will destroy them with a shaking of the earth and natural disasters. Israel will not have to do anything. God will fight for them.

Ezekiel 39:4

You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field. 5 You will fall on the open field; for it is I who have spoken," declares the Lord God.

Because of the tremendous amount of death God will send ravenous birds and beasts to consume many of the bodies.

Ezekiel 39:8

Behold, it is coming and it shall be done," declares the Lord God. "That is the day of which I have spoken."

This verse can be applied to any and all of God's prophecies. They "shall be done."

We may think that we are the ones who control history, but it is God who turns events and peoples whichever way He chooses. Psalm 59:8 says, "But You, O Lord, laugh at them; You scoff at all the nations."

Ezekiel 39:9, 12-15

9 "Then those who inhabit the cities of Israel will go out and make fires with the weapons and burn them, both shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears, and for seven years they will make fires of them.

12 For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. 13 Even all the people of the land will bury them; and it will be to their renown on the day that I glorify Myself," declares the Lord God. 14 "They will set apart men who will constantly pass through the land, burying those who were passing through, even those left on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. 15 As those who pass through the land pass through and anyone sees a man's bone, then he will set up a marker by it until the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog.

Even after the birds and beasts devour much of the dead it will still take seven months to bury the dead. This is not only because there will be so many dead but also because many of them will die upon the mountains. Finding bodies scattered throughout the crags and crevices of the mountains will take a while.

"All the people of the land will bury them." All of Israel will be involved in this process. Some will be designed as the finders. They will go through the land and when they find a part of a corpse they will put a marker by it so that the buriers can come and bury it.

This is to cleanse the land.

Then in verses 25 through 29 we read how Israel is restored. Verse 25, "Therefore thus says the Lord God, 'Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name.'" This is not just that Israel will be brought back to the land. That happened May 14, 1948. This is about Israel living securely with no one to make them afraid (verse 26). That is certainly not true today. Israel is surrounded by enemies. But after Armageddon all of Israel's enemies will be destroyed and she will finally live in peace.

Note that it is not the church who will be restored; it is Israel. This is more proof that the church does not replace Israel. Israel is just temporarily off the tracks of God's plans. But then, at the end, Israel will be restored. "Restore" means "to bring back into existence, use, or the like; reestablish." This is exactly what happens. The church has been Raptured; Israel will be restored. This is because Israel will acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah and God will no longer hide His face from them (verse 29).

So here we have Ezekiel writing down a battle through the inspiration of God that he had no idea what it meant. He had no idea that it was still thousands of years in the future. But he was faithful and did what God told him to do even though he did not understand. The result is that we are blessed by it today. Just because you do not understand something that God wants you to do, do it anyway. In the end both you and someone else will be blessed.

2 Corinthians 1:20 assures us, "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." God's plans and promises for Israel will be fulfilled just as He said. And, likewise, God's plans and promises for each one of us will also be fulfilled. We can trust God. He will come through in His timing and in His perfect way.

14.2 Isaiah 24-27 – The Mini Apocalypse

Isaiah 24-27 is oftentimes referred to as the "Mini Apocalypse" or "Isaiah's Apocalypse" or "The Little Apocalypse."

Here is a quick outline.

Chapter 24 – There is a judgment and devastation of the Earth including what is likely to be an earthquake, a curse, and a burning. All types of people will be affected: the servant and the master, the maid and her mistress, the buyer and the seller, the lender and the borrower, the creditor and the debtor. This echoes Revelation where the judgments will affect all.

Chapter 25-26:1-2 – This is song of praise to God that celebrates His sovereignty and greatness

26:3-4 – God promises perfect peace to the one who trusts in God

26:5-18 – God will lay low the arrogant but will bless those who trust in Him

26:19-21 – There will be a resurrection in the last days

Chapter 27:1-11 - Israel will be delivered and live in a fruitful land

27:12-13 – There will be a trumpet and Israel will be gathered