

End Times Made Easy

Your servant in Christ,
Gary Wentz

End Times Made Easy

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Preface

After some 20 years of studying the End Times, I've decided to try to make this subject something that anyone can grasp without spending as much of their life in it as I have.

Early on, when I was a young man, I found out that what I was being taught in church about the End Times was not what I was reading in the Bible. It was a bit upsetting. So I set out to learn what the Bible actually says about this with only my Bible, my wits, and the Holy Spirit. I quit listening to contemporary pastors and authors and stuck to the scriptures. I let the Bible lead the way – and only the Bible.

We're going to zip through these things pretty quickly and not dwell too much on the small details that are not important to an overall understanding of these End Times, or Last Days, or what we call *Eschatology* (literally, study of the last things).

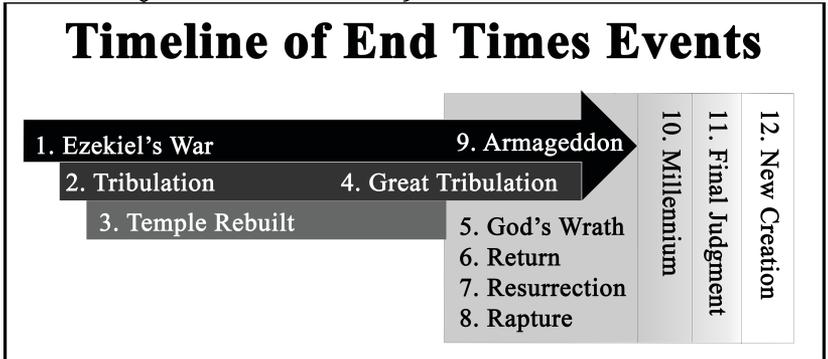
If you don't already know, pretty much all of the subjects we're going to study contain, or are, areas of contention among believers. That's too bad, because we really should be able to understand what the Lord has told us in His Bible about these last days. If you already know that you hold a different view than my position on something that we look at here, please stay with us until you can see the entire discussion on the issue. Be patient and open-minded. Also, we should never break fellowship over the smaller things that have little or no bearing on our salvation.

Eschatology is an important area of study for the believer, since it includes what we should all believe – that Jesus will come again, and that He will be united with us forever and ever. These two statements should NEVER be disagreed upon by believers. They are core beliefs of the faith.

Introduction

In an effort to make a complicated study simpler and easier to follow, we're going to look at the issues in an organized manner, starting with a timeline of these events.

Here it is (*follow the numbers*):



If this timeline looks different than what you are used to, don't worry, it will all be explained with Bible verses so that you can clearly see how it was put together.

Each of the numbered items in the timeline will have its own chapter in the study. Even though Armageddon is the final battle of Ezekiel's War, it is significant enough to have its own chapter. This should help us keep things straight in our minds as we proceed chronologically (mostly). However, feel free to skip to a chapter that catches your eye. I'll try to write this in such a way as to make that possible, without getting you lost.

You may notice as we proceed that I am using a method of Bible interpretation (*hermeneutics*) that is known as the "plain meaning" method. We don't exactly take everything literally, but we don't allow everything to be symbolic either. Biblical authors use all kinds of methods for getting their story told: Metaphors, colloquialisms or figures of speech, poetry, societal references, juxtapositions, similes, historical references, and so forth. The list is long and it is

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up to us to try to understand what the author was trying to convey. Quite often, the words are to be taken literally. Our approach is to go for the most obvious meaning, however difficult to swallow. We do this by keeping everything in context with the rest of scripture.

So, as we go through this study, we are going to follow these simple guidelines:

1. The Bible is true and does not contradict itself.
2. The difficult, vague or unclear verses are interpreted or understood in light of the clear ones.
3. A “plain meaning” interpretation is favorable over all other approaches.
4. *Exegesis* over *eisegesis*, which just means that we are going to take the Bible for what it says, rather than try to force our preconceptions onto it.
(There is a GLOSSARY for some of the vague or difficult terms, beginning on page 207.)

All of the events that we study will be future events. This is known as the futurist model, or *futurism*. This just means that these things have not happened yet. For example: the destruction of the 2nd temple in 70 AD could not have been done by the antichrist (*since Jesus will kill him when Jesus returns*) and there must be another temple constructed in the End Times in which the antichrist reveals himself.

Another example would be that ALL of the events described in the *Olivet Discourse* (Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21) are also future events – not events that have been occurring over the centuries since the first advent (*appearing*) of Jesus.

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Also, my view does not see a distinction between Israel and the Church as believers. While I embrace that the Church is no longer Jew or Gentile (Gal. 3:28), I also acknowledge that the covenants made to Israel will be fulfilled as prophesied (*see Romans 11, especially verse 16: "And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their descendants will also be holy—just as the entire batch of dough is holy because the portion given as an offering is holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too."*).

I agree that the Church has been grafted in to Judaism (Rom. 11:17), but reject the notion of *replacement theology*, which claims the Church has replaced Israel as God's people.

The problem with many of these categories of doctrinal thought is that there is much confusion or obfuscation throughout most (*if not all*) of them. For this reason, one should know the positions in total before jumping onto their respective bandwagons. It may be that you only agree with part of a view, and not the whole thing.

It should also be pointed out that the "End Times" or "Last Days" began when the Lord ascended into heaven and will end when He triumphantly returns with His angel armies (Acts 2; Hebrews 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:1; James 5:3, etc.). This is the time called by some "The Church Age" or "The New Covenant Era". Some believe it began at Pentecost, with the giving of the Holy Spirit, while others, like me, say it began with the ascension of Jesus (*or end of the First Advent*). At this point, some two thousand years later, it makes no difference which beginning marker we use. And whether we pin it to the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit or Christ's two advents, the end of this time

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will be the same – when the Lord returns and establishes His millennial kingdom. (*However, I do not buy into the concept of a “Church Age”, since the term implies an end to it. The Church will never end. So it does not have an “Age”.*)

While the apostles may not have known that this age (*End Times*) would be as long lasting as it has been, they must have understood that it would end with the Lord taking His rightful place on the throne of Earth. I say this because of their question to Him on the Mount of Olives, “... what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Mt 24:3) His answer seems to confirm this interpretation, as He ends His *Olivet Discourse* with the Second Advent and the gathering together of His elect.

The Three-Fold Nature of the Jews

I think it may be helpful to understand the different ways to look at the Jews, Israelites, or Israelis (*however you wish to refer to them*).

1. The Jews are a RACE. They are descended from their father, Jacob, also known as Israel.
2. The Jews are a NATION with geographical borders, now called Israel.
3. The Jews have their own RELIGION. Judaism is arguably the only religion established by God (*with Christianity being a relationship, not a religion and as an addendum to Judaism*). God first offered a relationship to Abraham through faith (*and by extension to all others who believe*), and later introduced religion, through the Law of Moses, to show how much we need the relationship. Paul discusses this in Romans 4 and Galatians 3.

As we go through this study, it will become important to distinguish between these three natures of the Jews and

how each is treated by God in the Bible, specifically regarding prophecy.

For instance, as **a race**, the Jews still retain the covenants established between their forefathers (*the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*) and God. They will continue to be “His People” on into the millennium.

Ezekiel 39:

²⁵ “So now, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will end the captivity of my people; I will have mercy on all Israel, for I jealously guard my holy reputation! ²⁶ They will accept responsibility for their past shame and unfaithfulness after they come home to live in peace in their own land, with no one to bother them. ²⁷ When I bring them home from the lands of their enemies, I will display my holiness among them for all the nations to see. ²⁸ Then my people will know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them away to exile and brought them home again. I will leave none of my people behind. ²⁹ And I will never again turn my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit upon the people of Israel. I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken!” (NLT)

As **a nation**, certain events will come upon them, which will affect all inhabitants of their land.

Ezekiel 38: ⁸ “A long time from now you will be called into action. In the distant future you will swoop down on the land of Israel, which will be enjoying peace after recovering from war and after its people have returned from many lands to the mountains of Israel. ⁹ You and all your allies—a vast and awesome army—will roll down on them like a storm and cover the land like a cloud. (NLT)

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As *a religious body*, the Christians have been grafted-in to their number, though we do not use the sacrificial system nor depend on the Law of Moses for atonement.

Romans 11: ¹⁷ But some of these branches from Abraham's tree—some of the people of Israel—have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God's special olive tree. ¹⁸ But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root.

¹⁹ "Well," you may say, "those branches were broken off to make room for me." ²⁰ Yes, but remember—those branches were broken off because they didn't believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe. So don't think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. ²¹ For if God did not spare the original branches, he won't spare you either. (NLT)

Also important to their religion is how it was profoundly changed by Christ and His cross. The Law of Moses is no longer viewed as effective for the atonement of sin (*making us "right" with God*) by God's elect; only the cross of Christ is sufficient for that. Therefore, the current true Judaism is Christian, insofar as salvation is concerned. We gentile believers may not follow the law of Moses, but it still shows us why we are unable to earn salvation through observing it (*or through any other "good" works*). No religion can save you, not even Judaism. Only accepting the cross of Christ as a substitutionary atonement for your sinful standing before God can save you. And this must come with repentance and surrender to Jesus.

At the end of each chapter, we will have a few questions to ponder. This will also help the reader to consider some of the more important parts of the study and help to facilitate group discussions.

Here's an example for practice:

Questions to Ponder

1. Are we (*all believers*) saved by faith or by religion?
See Romans 4:4-5 and Galatians 3:11
2. Is there one saving faith for Jews and another for everyone else?
See Romans 10:4, 9-13 and Ephesians 4:4-6

Answers
1. By faith
2. There is only one faith for all people to be made right with God.

Chapter 1 – EZEKIEL’S WAR

Duration: 8 years (give or take a few months)

Timing: Unknown/Imminent (next)

Key Scriptures: Ezekiel 38, 39, Daniel 11:21-45; Matthew 24; Revelation 6 & 8

In this study, we will see how every event relates to the timeline given by Jesus to His closest followers: James, John, Peter and Andrew. This is because I believe that when Jesus talked with His followers on the Mount of Olives (*the discussion we now call **the Olivet Discourse**, which is found in Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21*) He gave us a timeline of all of the End Times events. So if we are to understand these End Times, we must always see how events fit into the Olivet Discourse timeline. Doing this will help make the End Times “easy” to understand.

However, to put these things together, we need to go to various scriptures and biblical authors to get the whole picture. To learn about Ezekiel’s War, we have to go to Ezekiel 38 and 39 and Daniel 11:21 – 45. Once we see what’s happening here, we can see how it fits in with Jesus’ timeline from the Olivet Discourse. There are other scriptures that discuss this war, but these verses are key.

After putting together Ezekiel and Daniel on this war, we see that Israel is overrun and a statue is set up in the temple of Jerusalem. When we understand this then we can look to the Olivet Discourse to see when this takes place.

When His friends asked Him about these End Times, this is how it went:

Matthew 24:³ As [Jesus] sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”⁴ And Jesus

answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

So here’s what He says that we can expect:

- **Deception** - “See that no one leads you astray.”
- **False Christs** - many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’
- **Much warfare** - you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom
- **Famines**
- **Earthquakes**

And all of these are just the beginning.

Unfortunately, the Bible doesn’t really cover the deception and false Christs in detail. But it does show about the wars. So all we need to do is see which wars in the Bible fit the narrative of this time. As we continue in the Olivet Discourse, we read the following:

Matthew 24:9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

So the next thing to look for is Tribulation, in the form of religious persecution against the faithful of Christ. In Matthew 24, verses 10 through 14, Jesus goes on to tell us the following details, which give us a better feel for all this:

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Matthew 24:¹⁰ "And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

As insightful as these details are, they don't really help us understand where these wars fit into the timeline. So we move on into the Olivet Discourse for something more concrete. And in fact, the very next verse of Matthew 24 gives us a crucial bit of information.

Mathew 24:¹⁵ "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

This verse is one of those special identifiers that helps us tie all of these events in with each other. That's what we're going to do now in this study.

Now that you have an overview of how I put these things together, lets get into the Word of God and see what it says about Ezekiel's War.

While Jesus mentioned deception and false Christs, there is nothing else (*that I know of*) that must take place prior to the events of and leading up to Ezekiel's War. That means that this war is "imminent". It could begin at any time now. (*Although, I hope that we have at least ten years from the time of this writing, which would have it starting in*

2029 or later.) But it's not our concern in this study to figure that out. Still, I really do feel like we are very close to it.

It's called "Ezekiel's War" because we read about it in the book of Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39. There are other verses from other prophets that will shed more light on what we get from Ezekiel, and we'll look at those as we come to them (*like Daniel*).

It seems that this war, prophesied by Ezekiel, will last for around eight years, give or take a few months. It is the beginning of the End Times events that we are studying, and it will continue all the way up to the return of Jesus (*the last thing in this age*). This means it starts just before the 7-year tribulation and continues through these events into God's wrath, and the return of Christ.

So, let's look at Ezekiel 38 and get started:

Ezekiel 38:¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech [¹] and Tubal, and prophesy against him..."

Right away, we see that Gog is a man; a leader (*prince*) of a place, called "Magog". I'll not provide any references for who Gog may be or where Magog could be located, you can search those on your own (*this is a quick study that doesn't go that deeply into the weeds*). But I've read in a few sources that Magog is considered to be located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, from northern Turkey (including the region south of the Black sea) up to and including

¹ Ezekiel 38:2 Or *Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech*

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southern Russia. So Gog could be a man from modern Russia, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, or Armenia (*maybe even Iran*). Magog could be any or all of those.

Also mentioned are Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. These could very well be in the same geographical area (*the Caucasus*). Again, nailing these down are too in-depth for us in this study. *I hope you don't mind that I don't show you everything.*



But here's something that I am pretty certain about: Gog is the one we call "antichrist". If you know that you disagree with this, please hear me out before you the toss the book. Otherwise, hang in there and I'll explain enough for you to either agree or disagree with this assertion. But for now, let's continue the study where we left off.

Ezekiel 38:³ ...and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech [²] and Tubal. ⁴ And 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 clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords. ⁵ Persia, Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; ⁶ Gomer and all his hordes; Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north with all his hordes—many peoples are with you.

So, whether Gog is the antichrist or not, he is certainly not on good terms with God is he? Also, Gog seems to have no choice in what happens to him here. God seems to be the One Who is forcing Gog to act. For now, all we know is that he becomes allied with a few nations for the purpose of making war (*against whom, we don't yet know*). A lot (*if not all*) of these nations are predominantly Muslim. Here are their modern names, as far as I know:

1. Persia = Iran
2. Cush = Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan (as a region)
3. Put = Libya, Algeria, Tunisia (as a region)
4. Gomer = Maybe Turkey, again
5. Beth-togarmah = Turkey again?

It's a pretty big alliance. It could even be a problem for the United States, under the right conditions (*especially if Russia is involved*). Some might call it a caliphate. Let's read some more before we get ahead of ourselves.

² Ezekiel 38:3 Or *Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech*

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Ezekiel 38:7 "Be ready and keep ready, you and all your hosts that are assembled about you, and be a guard for them. ⁸ After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years you will go against the land that is restored from war, the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste. Its people were brought out from the peoples and now dwell securely, all of them. ⁹ You will advance, coming on like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering the land, you and all your hordes, and many peoples with you."

Ah, now we can see that this army led by Gog is going to assemble and at some point go against Israel (*the land whose people were gathered from many peoples upon the mountains of Israel - the land that is restored from war*). It should also be noted that this could not have happened in any other time in history after Ezekiel wrote his prophecy.

This might be a good time to bring in some information that we get from Daniel. As I have already said, I think that Gog is actually the antichrist. It is widely accepted that Daniel 11, verses 21 to the end of the chapter, discuss the antichrist, so let's see how they fit together.

Daniel 11:²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. ²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. ²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. ²⁴ Without

warning he shall come into the richest parts [3] of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.

So this ruler in Daniel's prophecy is a contemptible man, who worms his way into power. He seems to be really successful in warfare. He's deceitful, and with only a few followers at first becomes very powerful. He shares the spoils of war with his men, which is a way to gain a strong following.

But we still have a lot more to learn about this man (*or these men, if you aren't with me yet on that*). Let's go back to Ezekiel and pick up where we left off.

Ezekiel 38:¹⁰ "Thus says the Lord God: On that day, thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme ¹¹ and say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates,' ¹² to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth. ¹³ Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its leaders [4] will say to you, 'Have you come to seize

³ Daniel 11:24 Or *among the richest men*

⁴ Ezekiel 38:13 Hebrew *young lions*

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spoil? Have you assembled your hosts to carry off plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to seize great spoil?"

So Gog definitely has his mind set on grabbing plunder from peaceful people. The only resistance he gets seems to be verbal questioning from leaders in a few countries. Sheba and Dedan, as well as Tarshish are among the complainers. These nations may very well be: Saudi Arabia (*and their close allies*), called Sheba and Dedan; and the European nations, here called Tarshish. Again, you can check into these nations on your own. Whoever they are, they aren't exactly putting their lives on the line for Israel. They seem to be a bit cowardly here, or at least somewhat disinterested.

This all seems like Israel may get hit by a massive surprise invasion from several Muslim countries when they are enjoying a time of peace with their guard down. Let's read on.

Ezekiel 38:14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord God: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, will you not know it? ¹⁵ You will come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army. ¹⁶ You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes."

So without a doubt, Gog is now attacking Israel with a huge force. They cover the land of Israel "like a cloud". And

God reminds us that it is **His** doing to have Gog do this – all for the glory of God. Let's go back to Daniel.

Daniel 11:²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. ²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.

Although it is God who is bringing Gog against Israel, Gog is still a willing participant. Indeed, Daniel shows us that antichrist is completely on board with God's plan, and even seems to be scheming in his own heart what he will do.

Daniel is using terms that are a bit confusing to us in this century. He seems to be calling the leader of Israel "the King of the South". As long as we understand his terms, we shouldn't get confused. Daniel is definitely talking about an invasion from a force from north of Israel that attacks them.

And I should also address the matter of terminology that both of our prophets are using. They are describing ancient weapons and modes of transport. Since they both received visions from God – which God would want them to understand – it would have probably been too much for them to see 21st Century aircraft, vehicles and weapons. So, it very well could be that God decided to let them see the closest thing to what we have with what they knew. For sure, we can read this and see that war is going on. We don't need to see actual horses and shields and swords or spears today to know how these prophecies are fulfilled.

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As I write this, Israel has a mighty army that is quite powerful. And no doubt they would be up to the task of beating off this invasion, if it weren't for the detail that Daniel gives us here: Plots are devised against the Israeli leader by his own people, maybe even his own family! (*Or, this could refer to the leader's own party in the Knesset, the governing body of Israel.*) So this is apparently too much for the Israeli forces and they lose a lot of troops. The battle is lost for them. The invasion is successful. For the first time since they moved to their ancestral lands as a nation after World War II, Israel is completely overrun.

Even at this point, I'm having a hard time believing that Gog and the antichrist are two different men, but let's read on and see what else we can glean from the scriptures.

Ezekiel 38:17 "Thus says the Lord God: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them? ¹⁸ But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord God, my wrath will be roused in my anger."

Ezekiel says something very interesting about Gog here. He says, "*Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them?*" This quote doesn't leave a lot of room for there to be two (*or more than one*) invaders during this time. Indeed, it just seems highly improbable that two or more men would be able to accomplish such feats in the same End Times. Remember that both of them are attacking Israel after the gathering in their ancestral home. After all, Ezekiel is clearly speaking of such a time, and the antichrist is known to be here at that

time (*as we'll see in a bit*). How can they be different men? But there's more to consider so let's not dwell too much on this right now.

Daniel 11:²⁷ And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed. ²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.

Here, Daniel is showing how the two leaders, antichrist and the leader of Israel, will come together at a conference table to negotiate. They are both lying to each other and seek each other's ruin. Antichrist will leave Israel and take some more of their stuff on his way out.

It isn't quite clear which "holy covenant" the antichrist is set against. It could be the agreement that he and the Israeli leader just made together, or it could be against the holy covenant between God and His followers. Or maybe it's both. I don't think we need to care at this point which it is.

By the way, I believe that it is at this conference table that antichrist and Israel agree that the Jews can rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. This is not specifically stated anywhere that I have been able to find (*and I've really searched for it*). But I say this out of pure logical conclusion. Look what Daniel said in another place:

Daniel 9:^{26b} And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its^[5]

⁵ Daniel 9:26 Or *His*

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end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one seven, and for half of the seven he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.

So, with this in mind, it seems that an agreement is made between them that has some element of seven years. This is one place where we get the idea of a 7-year tribulation. Notice that the 7-year term is violated after only 3-½ years pass. And just as importantly, if not more, antichrist puts an end to the sacrifices and offerings. If there is no temple, there are no sacrifices and offerings! This is why I believe that their conference table meeting includes the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. There's a lot more to this, and we won't cover it all, but we will come back to this a bit later in the study.

This is actually when the 7-year tribulation begins. But like I just said, there's more to this story. So I'd like to continue in this chapter and finish the story of Ezekiel's War. When we get into the chapters concerning the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation, we will take a closer look at other sources. For now, I just want to complete this line of thought concerning Ezekiel's God and Daniel's ruler (*whom we know to be the antichrist*).

Daniel 11:²⁹ "At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. ³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant.

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If I may, I'm going to take a little liberty with this text. I see that the antichrist attacked and left and then he comes back again. The first time, the weak Europeans and Saudis (*perhaps*) complained but did nothing. This time, it looks like a mighty navy shows up and scares him off. Who is this navy? Where are they from? Daniel says that they're from "Kittim" other translations say "ships from the western coastlands". Well, we don't have such a place that is called by that name these days with a mighty navy that would scare off this determined bully. What we DO have is the US Navy. Where was this "Kittim"?

Since the "New World", the Americas, were unknown to the Hebrews during the time of Daniel (*as far as we know*), it could be that God simply gave him a vision of a far off land in the west, which could have been either on the far reaches of western Europe or in the Mediterranean. Who knows? Is he trying to refer to an unknown navy from an unknown land here? Maybe. Does it really matter to our study? Not really. All we need to know is that antichrist comes back and is repelled by a mighty navy. As he leaves, his heart is really set against those who are of "the holy covenant". Again, it might be the agreement made with the Israelis or it might be something else (*probably faith in God, specifically, Jesus*). And the USA is still largely Christian.

What happens next? Daniel doesn't really give us any detail to go on. He just shows us how all of a sudden those warships aren't a problem anymore. Antichrist seems to come back with his army a third time and they successfully overtake the temple grounds without harassment.

Daniel 11:³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the

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abomination that makes desolate. ³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. ³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, ³⁵ and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

This passage above is describing the beginning of the Great Tribulation, which we'll cover in another chapter. For now, I just want to point out that when this invasion begins, it will continue without ceasing until the Lord returns.

Let's get back to Ezekiel and continue where we left off. In verse 17 we got a glimpse that Gog might be the antichrist. In verse 18 he begins to speak of God's wrath being roused by Gog and his actions. Now let's finish chapter 38 as we see what Ezekiel has next for us.

Ezekiel 38:¹⁹ For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, on that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰ The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. ²¹ I will summon a sword

against Gog [6] on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother. ²² With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. ²³ So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

So this final passage in Ezekiel 38 continues to speak of God's wrath upon the earth during this time. Although we aren't in the chapter on God's wrath yet, I'll just give a little spoiler here and say that God's wrath comes after the Great Tribulation. I'm also going to say that in chapter 39 of Ezekiel (*the very next paragraph*) we read that God kills Gog on the mountains of Israel during His mighty wrath.

For now, let's just zone in on this one fact: Verse 20 above tells us, "*...all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence*". This detail is actually quite important in determining if Gog is or is not the antichrist. We've already seen a hint of them being one and the same person in verse 17. Now, we can know that it is during God's wrath, with Jesus here in person, that Gog meets his end. We know that Jesus kills antichrist by the power of His coming. In 2nd Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 8, Paul tells us,

"...the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming."

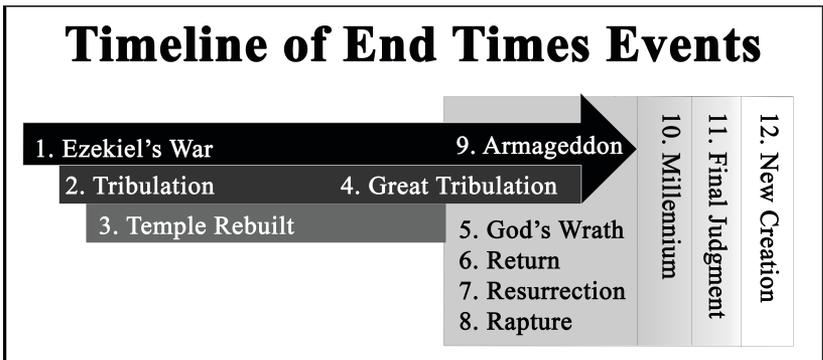
⁶ Ezekiel 38:21 Hebrew *against him*

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So we need to search no further to see that Gog is indeed the antichrist. And as I have just shown you, Daniel chapter 11 and Ezekiel chapter 38 work very well together to give us a good idea of what to expect when the tribulation comes to the world. And again, we'll revisit this when we get to the other chapters that deal with these important future events.

I'll not run the risk of boring you with a bunch of redundancy on this, any more than I've already given. As you have just seen, the war of Ezekiel 38 (*and 39*) is the first event in the sequence of the End Times events that we will cover in this study. We'll look again at Gog being antichrist in the chapter on ARMAGEDDON.

Ezekiel's War comes first and continues to progress as the Tribulation, Great Tribulation, God's Wrath, and the Return of Christ, along with Armageddon, all come to pass as well.



Questions to Ponder

1. What is the next prophetic event to hit Israel?
2. How will we know that Ezekiel's War has begun?
3. What End Times events will Ezekiel's War encapsulate?
4. What is the final battle of Ezekiel's War called?

Answers

1. Ezekiel's War – An invasion upon Israel from the north.
2. When Israel is invaded and overcome by an army from the north.
3. All of the following:
 - a. The Tribulation
 - b. The building of a new temple in Jerusalem
 - c. The Great Tribulation
 - d. The wrath of God
 - e. The return of Christ
 - f. The resurrection of the dead in Christ
 - g. The rapture of the living in Christ
 - h. The battle of Armageddon.
4. Armageddon.

Chapter 2 – THE TRIBULATION

Duration: 7 years

Timing: Unknown/Imminent (During Ezekiel's War)

Key Scriptures: Daniel 9:26-27; 8:13-14; 12:11-13; Matthew 24:3-8; Revelation 6:1-2

This event is a seven-year period of terrible trouble that comes upon the earth at the hands of Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet. It is the alarm clock that signals the beginning of the end. The end of what, you may ask? We could say the end of Satan's and mankind's 6,000-year rule over the earth. Certainly, it's the end of the age referred to by the apostles on the Mount of Olives in their question to the Master about His return and the "end of the age" (Mt 24:3). But the Tribulation is not the end; it's the signal of the beginning of the end.

The 7-year tribulation is broken into two contiguous halves, or 3½-year periods, the second of which being called the Great Tribulation. Because of this division, and much reference to the Great Tribulation, some believe that the Great Tribulation is the entire tribulation. This will be shown below to be a false view.

Many teachers say that the entire 7-year tribulation is God's Wrath. This, too, will be shown to be false in the course of this study (*see the chapters on the GREAT TRIBULATION and GOD'S WRATH for more on this*). The first half is a time of tribulation but is not nearly as bad as the second half. It may be more akin to a world war or other calamity caused by man and demons.

First Half of the Tribulation

As just stated, it is best to view the first half of the tribulation (*Early Tribulation*) as a time of war. It will be terrible, widespread war, possibly World War III, but it will not be as bad as what happens three-and-a-half years into it. And although it will be a world war, it begins with an attack on Israel from the north (*see EZEKIEL'S WAR*).

Daniel confirms how we'll know that the tribulation has started – there will be a new temple built in Jerusalem.

Daniel 9:^{26b} “And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its [or *his*] end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many [*the people*] for one week [or *seven*], and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”
[7]

Verse 26b begins with foretelling the destruction of the sanctuary, the Temple of God in Jerusalem. If there were no temple built, he couldn't say this. Although this occurred to the second temple in 70 AD, the one who destroyed it then was not the antichrist who will be destroyed by the second coming of Christ (*see 2 Thessalonians 2:8*). We know that this “prince who is to come” is the antichrist when we study other sections below that describe who he is and what he

⁷ I believe that the numeration of verse 26 should have been divided into two different verses.

Chapter 2 - The Tribulation

does. The temple mentioned, therefore, must be the 3rd temple, not the second temple destroyed in 70 AD. This 3rd temple will probably only stand a few years. It is interesting to note that the 1st temple, the one Daniel knew, was not in use when he penned his prophecy about the temple. Is it significant? Probably not; but it is interesting. See chapter 7 – THE MILLENNIUM for discussion on the millennial temple.

The next line in 26b tells that war will persist during this time until the very end.

Verse 27 shows us that there will be a covenant (*a treaty, a pact, a contract*) between this “prince” and “many” (*some versions say “the people”*). Since Daniel’s prophecy has been centered on the Jews, it is likely that the Jews are included in this treaty (as *The People*) – *also see chapter 1*. This prince may be of Semitic heritage or not. He may have Islamic ties or not. This is only mentioned because the Muslims desire to rid the earth of Jews more than anyone else does. Daniel 11:21-45 has more information about these two leaders, as we touched on in chapter 1. We’ll look at this more in chapter 6 – ARMAGEDDON.

The mention of this pact lasting one “seven” (*years*), which is divided into halves, gives us our timeline for this period^[8]. And because the sacrifices are put to an end at the halfway point into these seven years, I am convinced

⁸ There is much debate over whether the 70 weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 are consecutive or not. My view is that they are not. This is because the weeks are mentioned in groups: 7, 62, and 1 (*the last 1 being separated by the 62 by Christ’s first and second advents, in my view*).

that this treaty includes provision for the construction of a new temple. We can come back to this in the section on the temple (*Chapter 3, TEMPLE BUILT*).

Harmony of Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 & 8

Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are known as the *Olivet Discourse*. They recount a time when Jesus taught His four closest disciples – Peter, James, John and Andrew – on the Mount of Olives. His teaching was in response to their question in Matthew 24:3, Mark 13:4, and Luke 21:7.

Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 & 8 are actually parallel passages that discuss the same events (*to a great extent*) with some differences. These differences give us a more complete picture of this time. (*See Figure 2 – Harmony of the Olivet Discourse and Revelation’s Seals.*) They each have Jesus giving us a broad overview of the end times, from the Tribulation to God’s Wrath (*in Revelation*) and His return (*in the Olivet Discourse*). Let’s look at this parallel now.

These verses in the Olivet Discourse and the account of the seals are where we can build our timeline for these End Times events. Everything else that we read about this time can be understood better as we plug them into the timeline we get here. **This teaching provides the bones of our study, upon which all other things can be fleshed out.** If the student of eschatology does not use these passages as the basis for the timeline, the student will be left without a frame of reference, and will be tossed about by all kinds of speculation and confusion. So, at the very least, use Matthew 24 as a guideline in determining the sequence of End Times events. I cannot stress this enough with the

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reader. *THIS* is what makes understanding the End Times “easy”! So pay attention to the Matthew 24 timeline.

Olivet Discourse	Revelation's Seals
1. Many Deceived	1. Conqueror Bent on Conquest
2. Wars and Rumors of Wars	2. Peace Taken From the Earth
3. Famines and Earthquakes	3. Rider Holding Scales (Scarcity)
4. Great Tribulation	4. Death and Hades Kill 1/4 of Earth
5. Persecution of God's People	5. Cry of the Martyrs
6. Sun, Moon and Stars Darkened	6. Sun, Moon and Stars Darkened
7. Jesus Returns in Full View of All	7. God's Censer Hurlled to Earth 7 Angels prepare to Sound 7 Trumpets

Figure 2 - Harmony of the Olivet Discourse and Revelation's Seals

Matthew 24:³ As he [Jesus] sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴ And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.”

Matthew 24:3 suggests to me that the Tribulation begins with much deception and many false Christs. When we read the account of the seals, however, Jesus begins with

the four riders of the apocalypse. At first, these may not seem like parallel passages, but as we get deeper into them, it becomes more apparent.

Revelation 6:¹ Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!"
² And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

We could say that one way to conquer is through deception. This first rider could be the antichrist, or it could just be a symbolic figure. Certainly, antichrist uses much deception.

Matthew 24:⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

Here we know that the tribulation starts with war and uprisings – probably on a huge scale (*see chapter 1*). Remember, too, that Jesus is talking to His closest disciples – and through them, to you. He is telling *you* to not be afraid (*alarmed*). It is because of this parallel that I do not take the preterist view that verse 6 (*and following*) is merely describing events beginning in 70 AD and continuing up to now.

Revelation 6:³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"
⁴ And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that

Chapter 2 - The Tribulation

people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

For me, this rider illustrates that the warfare will continue to escalate more and more. At this time famines, pestilences (Lk 21:11), and earthquakes will take hold of the people.

Matthew 24:⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Revelation 6:⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A quart [*choenix*] of wheat for a denarius, [*a day's wage for a laborer*] and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!"

The third rider seems to illustrate how all the world will be in economic ruin. And how could it not be, with all of the war, rebellion, famine, disease and earthquakes? Does the prediction of earthquakes, famine and disease make this a part of God's Wrath? I don't think so, because we have those things occurring today – and I don't believe we are currently experiencing God's Wrath. Do you?

Could any of these things be direct acts of God? Sure. Could all of these things be ordinary, non-miraculous events? Absolutely. Are these indications of God's Wrath? I don't think so. When we get into GOD'S WRATH later, you'll

see that there are some very specific things that must happen. For now, I'll just point out that the only two things these have in common with God's Wrath would be the earthquakes and widespread warfare (Rev. 8:16). However, the earthquake in God's Wrath is the 2nd largest ever in the history of the world (*completely in a league of its own*) and the armies in God's Wrath are both demonically and angelically driven.

At the risk of muddying the waters, I should point out that the lines of these events are not quite as clear-cut as we would like. For example, in the Tribulation we will see a mighty army waging war on much of the world, but especially Israel. This war continues on into God's Wrath and terminates with the arrival of Christ and His millennial reign. In fact, this war is partly driven by Satan and his demons and partly driven by God and His holy angels. But this does not alter the fact that the Tribulation is one thing and God's Wrath is another. They should not be confused.

I have heard it said many times that these tribulation events are all just the normal events we've seen throughout history (*Preterism*). We have always had these things occurring in the world and they will continue to occur until the very end. While this is true, I still believe that Jesus begins His discourse with the tribulation and goes forward from there. I do not think that he is giving us a broad sweeping history lesson from His time on. I hold this view partly because of the context of their question to Him, "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" – not, "What will happen when you're gone?" Sure, He could have answered however he wished, but this is why I believe what I believe. This, plus the parallel with the seals,

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which are definitely (*or at least largely undisputedly*) from the beginning of the tribulation.

So, I believe that Matthew 24:3 begins His account of the Tribulation, as does Revelation 6:2.

If this is true, then the tribulation begins with deception and conquest. And if these verses are in concert with Daniel chapter 9, then we are seeing that the antichrist will deceive the people of Israel with a pact that will have a seven-year duration. We also see that he will be given the power to conquer. The deception is also mentioned in Daniel 11:21-24 (*He will slip in when least expected and take over the kingdom by flattery and intrigue.*)

Again, it is my belief that this pact will allow for the construction of the 3rd temple, which will be violated after 3-½ years from the date of the agreement. This is assumed, based on the Daniel 9:27 prophecy of putting an end to sacrifice and offering. Without a temple, there would not be any sacrifices or offerings by the Jews. And don't forget 2nd Thessalonians, 2:3-4, where Paul is talking about an actual, physical temple that a real person (*the antichrist*) enters.

2nd Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness [⁹] is revealed, the son of destruction, [¹⁰] ⁴ who opposes and exalts

⁹ 2nd Thessalonians 2:3 Some manuscripts *sin*

¹⁰ 2nd Thessalonians 2:3 Greek *the son of perdition* (a Hebrew idiom)

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himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

Questions to Ponder

1. Is the 7-year tribulation God's wrath or Satan's wrath? (*More will be seen in the chapter on GOD'S WRATH.*)
2. What is the key passage of scripture for understanding the End Times and making it easier to put it all together?
3. Are Matthew chapter 24 and Revelation chapters 6 and 8 (*about the 7 Seals*) parallel verses?

Answers

1. Satan's Wrath (see Revelation 12). According to Jesus in Mt 24, God's wrath comes after Matthew chapter 24 (along with the other Olivet Discourse verses – Mk 13, and Lk 21 – and the 7 Seals in Revelation 6 & 8).
3. It would seem so. They are both harmonious accounts of the End Times in a synoptical format from the same source - Jesus. Together, they form the basis for understanding the End Times more easily.

Chapter 3 – 3RD TEMPLE BUILT

Duration: 2300 days

Timing: 295 days after the “Covenant” between antichrist and the Jews

Key Scriptures: Daniel 8:13-14; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2

A very important piece of this End Times puzzle is this building that is erected in Jerusalem. It isn't important so much for religious reasons as it is for prophetic fulfillment.

Paul, the apostle, gave us a prophecy about this temple. In his second letter to the Thessalonian church he said that the Lord won't come back for His church until after the antichrist shows himself in the temple.

2nd Thessalonians 2:1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness [*sin*] is revealed, the son of destruction [*perdition*], 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

If no temple is built, then the antichrist doesn't take a seat in it. If antichrist doesn't take a seat in the temple, the Lord doesn't return.

End Times Made Easy

Unfortunately, this temple we are going to talk about is not a thing of unity and beauty. It isn't going to house the Spirit of God, as previous temples were made to do. Instead, this building is going to be more of a stage, or arena, for battle and blasphemy. It is really going to be a possession of Satan and the antichrist, more than the people of God.

I don't express these things with happiness at all. It is a sad state of affairs, indeed. Its presence is going to be a kind of last-ditch effort for demons and man to grasp at some sort of legitimacy in the eyes of the world. But also for the Jews it will be a final attempt at finding favor with God without the cross. It's all so empty and meaningless in this light.

Of course, it will really be a symbol used by God to show that His return is imminent (*AFTER it is built and the antichrist defiles it*). For when we see this temple being built, we can know without any shadow of a doubt that we are already in the tribulation period.

So let's just examine the temple for a little bit before moving on.

Today in Jerusalem there is the thing called "The Temple Mount". On the west side of it is what the Jews call "The Wailing Wall", where they go to be close to YHWH (G-d) and say their prayers. It's an ancient wall that is part of a huge foundation for a structure that was standing in the days when Jesus walked the streets of Israel.

In our study, we talk about the Olivet Discourse, where Jesus sat opposite the temple on the Mount of Olives and gave His friends a look into the distant future. Well, the

Chapter 3 - 3rd Temple Built

focal point of the discussion was initially the temple that they were gazing at.

Back then the temple area was very different from what we see today. In fact, it was not at all what the overwhelming majority of people living today suppose that it was. In the first place, this foundation that still exists was not built by Jews for their temple, it was the foundation of a Roman fort, called Antonia (*not the small structure on the NW corner now, which was wrongly named after it*).

The actual temple mount was located a little bit to the south of the current “Temple Mount”, on the hill known to be part of the old City of David, which is over the Gihon Spring. That spring is still there, gushing out water to this day. It’s the same spring that was used by the ancient Jewish priests in their temple rituals.

This Fort Antonia was later added by the Romans to dominate the city and show that they are the new power over the Jews. They only allowed them to have their temple so long as they were good Roman citizens paying taxes. In fact, they built a colonnade (*a raised bridge*) that stretched from the temple to their new fort, immediately north of the temple. Talk about a presence of intimidation!

So all of this talk about the huge stones of the Wailing Wall being left over from the temple is flatly wrong. In fact, there is really no reason why the Jews could not build their temple on the correct site immediately.

If people were paying attention to the words of Jesus (*and a first century historian named Josephus*) then they

would know that not one stone was left on top of another from the temple.

Matthew 24:²“Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!” (NLT)

Obviously, stones are still stacked up. Really big ones. According to Josephus, the southeastern corner of the temple reached all the way to the floor of the Kedron Valley [11]. This is not the case with the current remains of Fort Antonia.

Josephus also wrote that if he had not seen where the temple was with his own eyes before its destruction, then he would have never suspected that it existed at all. (*Since he saw the temple grounds before and after the destruction in 70 AD.*) Would he have written this if the so-called “Temple Mount” were the temple’s foundation? Not likely.

And getting back to the Gihon Spring, it’s still there – SOUTH of the so-called “Temple Mount”!! Completely south and not a part of the structure at all. Yet Tacitus told us in his work, *History*, V, 11-12 “[The temple] contained an inexhaustible spring”. Well, there is no spring in the limits of the so-called “Temple Mount” of today. Not even close.

Also, the City of David is to the south of the so-called “Temple Mount”. Well, the temples of Solomon and Herod were built ON the City of David, not north of it.

¹¹ *Antiquities* XV. 11.3

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So, the temple could be built right now without any conflict at all with that Muslim structure on top of the old foundation of Fort Antonia.

I recommend that you look into the writings of Dr. Ernest L. Martin (*now deceased*). Or check out his website where there is a very nice presentation on the true site of the temple. You can find the website at www.askelm.com. Or, look for his book called, *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, which is also available to read online for free through the web address above. You'll never see the Temple Mount the same afterward.

Getting back to our study, we can determine approximately how long it will take to build this 3rd (*unholy*) temple. It's really just a matter of plugging in some numbers into some very simple arithmetic.

In Daniel 9:27, we know that there is an agreement between antichrist and an Israeli leader that is supposed to last for seven years. That would be 2,520 days using the prophetic way of counting days (*30 per month*). Daniel says that halfway through this period, the temple is violated. $2,520 \div 2 = 1,260$ days. That's when the Abomination of Desolation occurs and the Great Tribulation begins.

In Daniel 8:14, we read that "the temple will be made right again" after 2,300 days. That seems like a happy thought in the midst of all this gloom and despair. Well, in Daniel 12:11-12 we get some more numbers. He says in verse 11 that the abominable statue erected in the temple will stand for 1,290 days. But in verse 12 he gives us another small tidbit of happy news. He says that after 1,335 days some people will be "blessed".

End Times Made Easy

Can the happy news of 8:14 and the blessing of 12:12 be the same event? I don't think anyone knows for sure, but let's just say that they are connected; that something happens on that day that has to do with the temple. If this is true, then we have some numbers to play with. Take 1,260 (*days from the beginning of the tribulation to when the statue is set up*) plus 1,335 (*the happy, blessed day*) and we get 2,595 days. Then we just subtract the 2,300 days for the temple to be made "right" again and we come up with 295 days. That's my best guess at how long it will take the Jews to rebuild their temple (*which won't really be theirs for long at all – 965 days in all*).

Again, this 295 days count may start when the two leaders sit at a table and try to deceive each other in Daniel 11:27. It looks like the deceitful antichrist is the craftier of the two. Plus, the Jews just don't seem to be paying attention to these prophecies about the temple and the antichrist and Armageddon and Jesus' return.

My guess is that the smooth-tongued antichrist very graciously tells the Jews that they can have their precious temple, knowing all the while that he will take it over in a very short period of time after it is constructed. This means that the temple will be his longer than it's theirs.

We can know for certain, according to scripture, that antichrist does go into a temple in Jerusalem and declares himself to be god (2 Thes 2). The false prophet, antichrist's right hand man, erects a statue of antichrist in the temple grounds, which everyone must worship (Rev 13). These things MUST happen before the Lord returns.

Chapter 3 - 3rd Temple Built

And that is why the 3rd temple is so important. It is a place where these things happen and where the Two Witnesses take the stage to proclaim the soon arrival of King Jesus, Lord of all creation. Even though antichrist outwits the Jews, God still makes antichrist's victory a little bitter for the villain by placing His Two Witnesses right there at ground zero where antichrist makes his big announcement (*though probably not right when he makes it*). They will torment him and his unholy followers for the entire 42 months of the Great Tribulation period. Yay God!

Revelation 11:¹ Then I was given a measuring stick, and I was told, "Go and measure the Temple of God and the altar, and count the number of worshipers. ² But do not measure the outer courtyard, for it has been turned over to the nations. They will trample the holy city for 42 months. ³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will be clothed in burlap and will prophesy during those 1,260 days."

Not everyone agrees that the temple just discussed is a real, physical building in Jerusalem. They wish to make the message of the temple a spiritual concept, saying that it represents the Holy Spirit in the Church and so forth. It isn't my place to conjecture as to why they say this, I can only tell them and you that the Bible seems to be pretty clear that this is an actual temple, as real as those of Solomon and Herod – the one that Jesus and His disciples gazed at from across the Kidron Valley from the Mount of Olives. Do we pull out a measuring stick to measure the Holy Spirit? No.

While it is made clear in Hebrews and other New Testament works that the Church is the new "temple of God", this truth does not seem to affect the Jewish people at

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this time. The Jews giving up on their temple rites is not laid out in scripture that I can find. In fact, they continue their temple rites on into the Millennium (Ezekiel 40-48). Therefore, I do not think that this condition will affect how the Jews live out their religion as a people in the last days. If the Jews are permitted to rebuild their temple, I think that they will do so. If we are to attempt to “spiritualize” these references to the temple, saying that it refers to the Church and not the Jews, then I believe we are at risk of misunderstanding the End Times – and the Millennium.

If God’s Word says that there is going to be a temple, I believe that there’s going to be a temple. If it’s a marker for us to know that His return is very close, then that’s the way I’m going to look at it. And if this thing must be built before His return, then I’m not going to agree that His return is “imminent” until it’s built.

If we are to believe those who say that this temple is the Church, then we must believe that the Church can be possessed (*entered*) by the antichrist and defiled. Naturally, the Bible squarely debunks this notion with the words of John, “...*He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*” (1 John 4:4)

The only way to make the End Times “easy” to understand is to take the Bible for what it says. We can’t be making stuff up as we go along. Or if we do, make sure that we aren’t playing with the cold, hard facts. It’s fun to embellish, I do it all the time, but changing the word to fit what we want it to say is completely another matter, and should be avoided completely.

Chapter 3 - 3rd Temple Built

Questions to Ponder

1. Is the return of Jesus imminent (*meaning that nothing prophetic must happen first*)?
2. Does the place called “The Temple Mount” in Jerusalem fit what Jesus said about it in Matthew 24:2?
3. Should we take the Bible to mean what it says about the temple (*a physical building with measurements, see Rev 11, that is inhabited by the antichrist, see 2 Thes 2*)? Or do we spiritualize the message in order for our own false stories to have validity?

<p style="text-align: right;">Answers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. No. Regardless of how many times the Bible discusses how eagerly we are to await the return of our beloved Savior, the prophecies say that the temple must first be built and defiled by antichrist.2. No, for at least 3 reasons:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Jesus said not one stone would remain.b. Josephus said the same thing and testified to it before and after.c. Gihon Spring is not under Fort Antonia.3. We should use Exegetics over Eisegetics every time. The End Times will never be “easy” to understand otherwise. Take the Bible at its word.
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Chapter 4 – THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Duration: 3-1/2 years (42 months, 1,260 days)

Timing: When the Abomination of Desolation is put in the temple and sacrifices and offerings are stopped

Key Scriptures: Daniel 9:26-27; Matthew 24:9-28; Revelation 12,13

Daniel 9:27 shows that antichrist puts an end to sacrifice and offering halfway through the seven-year tribulation. Matthew 24:15-22 (*part of our timeline*) shows that it begins the Great Tribulation. In Revelation, we get many more details of this time that provide much more insight and context. At the same time, some of the details can be a bit confusing if we don't pay attention to the entire message.

For example, in Revelation 12:1-6 (*shown below*) we get an account of a vision that is far reaching in its scope. It shows us a woman, which apparently represents the nation of Israel. Through her comes the Messiah (*the Child*). Then it shows us a dragon, which represents Satan. Now, verse 4 can be a bit confusing if we aren't keeping things in context. What this verse is telling us is that Satan is responsible for causing a third of the angels to rebel. What it is NOT telling is WHEN this happens, or when they are all finally kicked out of heaven. Nor is it saying that Satan is the one who casts them down. Remember, this is a *vision*, not a *timeline*.

It continues, and shows how Satan tried to defeat Jesus (*the Child*). Verse 6 gets confusing because it, again, is not giving us a timeline. While it may seem to be talking about the same time period, it is not. Verse 5 is discussing the time of Jesus' first advent; verse 6 is talking about the time of the Great Tribulation, which lasts 1,260 days (*time, times*

Chapter 4 - The Great Tribulation

and half a time – 3-½ years). Here are the verses just discussed:

Revelation 12:1 And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. 5 She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, 6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

If you see the broad, sweeping nature of this vision, you are less likely to be confused. The good news here regarding the Great Tribulation is that at least some of the Israelis are going to be taken to a safe location, where they will be safe from Satan and the antichrist. Verse 6 could very well be describing an airlift evacuation to escape an invading force.

Okay, so the account doesn't stop there, it goes on to give us some more details into the timing of these things. But we have to be careful how we interpret it.

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Moving on in Revelation 12, verse 7 says there was a war between the angels. When this occurs is not shown, only that Michael and the holy angels defeat Satan and the demons (*it's 2 against 1 after all*). In verse 8 we see who wins and that there is no longer any place for the demons in heaven. We still don't know when this is. Verse 9 makes the outcome of the battle crystal clear.

In verse 10, we start to catch a glimpse of the timing of this battle. It says, "the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God." Who are the brothers? Well, who's writing this book? John. Who are John's brothers? Christians? When is Satan accusing the brothers? After Jesus' death and resurrection. So, we can already tell that this battle occurs in the End Times (*the time between Jesus' ascension and return*). The demonic rebellion could have happened at any time – even before the creation of the physical universe – but here it seems to be that the demons are finally expelled from heaven during the Great Tribulation (*or perhaps this is what begins the Great Tribulation, which is Satan's wrath*).

If verse 10 gives us a peek, then verse 11 opens the door so we can see it more completely. Definitely, the brothers are Christians. Definitely, this battle (*for eviction from heaven*) happens in the End Times. Notice, too, that the Christians (*the brothers*) resist the devil *even unto death*.

In verse 12, we learn that the Great Tribulation period is not God's Wrath, but Satan's. In the End Times the devil is thrown down to earth and no longer allowed into heaven to accuse the brethren (*as he has been*). He immediately makes war (v. 13) with the woman (*Israel*) but when that doesn't work (v. 14-17), he goes after "her other [adopted]"

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children”, the Christians, who “**hold to the testimony of Jesus**”.

Therefore, the Great Tribulation period is actually Satan’s wrath for being finally banished from heaven and seeing that his time is short. Carefully read the text.

Revelation 12:7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ¹⁰And 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 brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

¹¹And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹²Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

¹³And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. ¹⁵The serpent poured water

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like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. ¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Going back to the Olivet Discourse, we see what his rage looks like when antichrist makes war against the believers.

Matthew 24:⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away [*stumble*] and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

This persecution might bring on the great rebellion that Paul speaks of in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Certainly, as Jesus just said, many will fall away from Him.

Jesus goes on to give an even more urgent and detailed warning.

Matthew 24:¹⁵ “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing

Chapter 4 - The Great Tribulation

in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³ Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

Verse 15 connects the 7-year period in Daniel 9 with the tribulation. When Jesus says, "let the reader understand", I think He is telling us to not confuse this temple of Daniel's prophecy with the temple of Jesus' day (*the one destroyed in 70 AD*).

The above verses are warning of a vicious attack upon both Jews and Christians. Why both? Because in verse 16 He mentions Judea and in verse 22 he says for the sake of

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the elect, which refers to all believers in Christ, whether Jew or gentile (*see again Rev. 12:17 above*).

Verse 27 foreshadows His coming, but it will not happen until later (“*so will be the coming*”).

Revelation 6:⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!”⁸ And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

Here, “Death” may be the antichrist and “Hades” may be the false prophet. In the harmony of the Olivet Discourse and the seals, the parallel between Matthew 24:15-28 and Revelation 6:7-8 is striking. Let’s move on.

Revelation 7:⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,¹² saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

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- ¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” ¹⁴ I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
- ¹⁵ “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.
- ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.
- ¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

I placed the above quote here because it shows that a countless multitude of followers of Jesus are to die in the Great Tribulation. These are not merely Jews, but are from every nation on Earth (v. 9). So it is important to realize that Christians, believers in Christ, die in the tribulation. Also, the notion floating around that there are “tribulation saints” who are in a different category from the rest of the saints is not supported in scripture either.

Abomination That Causes Desolation

Now we get to the pivotal moment in the tribulation. According to Jesus, this is the thing that divides the Early Tribulation (*1st 3-½ years*) from the Great Tribulation (*2nd 3-½ years*).

Matthew 24:¹⁵ “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then

let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”

At this pivotal point 1,260 days into the tribulation, something like an animatronic statue is erected in the temple of God.

Revelation 13:¹¹ Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, [*on its behalf*] and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of [*on behalf of*] the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. ¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, [*bondservant*] to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. ¹⁸ This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666. [Some manuscripts 616]

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This statue is allowed to stand for 1,290 days.

Daniel 12:¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.

Another element to this abomination is the antichrist himself.

Revelation 13:⁶ It [the antichrist] opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, [*tabernacle – the temple*] that is, those who dwell in heaven.

Connecting the dots:

1. Daniel 9:27 says, “On the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says the antichrist “opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.”
3. Revelation 13:⁵ And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear: ¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

4. Jesus warned that when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, RUN!

The Two Witnesses

Although these two amazing individuals perform some outstanding feats, I do not consider their activities to be part of God's Wrath. However, I do believe that their activity occurs during the Great Tribulation.

Malachi 4:⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

The above verse, I believe, tells us that one of these two witnesses is Elijah, the prophet. I think that many commentators agree with this view.

As to the other witness, his identity is not as easy to determine. However, I think that we have enough biblical clues to come up with an educated guess.

1. Elijah was taken up into heaven while still living.
2. Enoch was also taken up into heaven while still living. No other people are mentioned as having this happen to them. (*Paul may have been for a short time, but even he didn't know if it was physical or spiritual. Plus, he returned and later died. Elijah and Enoch have not returned yet, that we know of.*)

Chapter 4 - The Great Tribulation

3. Hebrews 9:27 says that it is appointed to man to die once. Since the two witnesses are killed at the end of their ministry, it must be reasoned that they have never died before. (*While there are exceptions to this rule, like Lazarus and others whom Jesus or others raised from the dead, their deaths were temporary and they carried on with their lives, but then they all died again. I suppose that since their deaths were of a short duration, they are excused from holding to this rule?*) I don't believe that there is any biblical reason to think that Moses is the other witness, even if the apostles saw him in the transfiguration. Could Moses be the other witness? Sure. God can do whatever he wills, but if so, Hebrews 9:27 would be an enigma.

So, for now, I'm going with Enoch and Elijah as being the two witnesses – not that their identity matters to us yet.

Revelation 11:1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. ³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 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 would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.

⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may 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 kind of plague, as often as they desire. ⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit [*abyss*] will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically [*spiritually*] is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰ and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. ¹³ And at 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.

As interesting as the account of the two witnesses is, it has little bearing on the larger picture of these End Times events. Therefore, we will look no further into their story. Just understand that I consider them to be the prophets Elijah and Enoch, that they return during the Great Tribulation, and their works are not considered a part of God's Wrath.

Synopsis of the Events of the Great Tribulation

Chapter 4 - The Great Tribulation

1. Abomination of Desolation (*the signal of alarm*)
2. Sacrifices cease in temple
3. ¼ of earth's population dies
4. Great persecution against all, especially Jews and saints
5. The Two Witnesses preach
6. Many false prophets deceive many
7. Mark of the Beast forced upon the world
8. Many believers fall away (*maybe from the mark*)
9. Remnant of Jews saved in Israel
10. Cry of the Martyrs (*although this happens in the GT, it is covered below in the section on GOD'S WRATH, subsection **Justification**, page 86, since it is the reason for it*)

Objections to the Posttrib View of the Tribulation

There are a number of objections made by many teachers and preachers in the world against this posttribulational exposition. I could not cover them all if I tried, but I will try to hit the highlights for the reader as we progress.

Beginning here and continuing through chapter 5, each chapter will have objections to the posttrib view, where major objections are leveled.

First, it should be pointed out that of the five or so main positions on the timing of the rapture (*pretrib, midtrib, prewrath, posttrib, and no rapture*), only one can be correct, if any of them is. That means, by definition, that the others are false and should be rejected as being true. Therefore, we should take this very seriously. After all, truth matters, yes?

John 8:³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

1 Timothy 4:¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (NIV)

I'll not be specifically addressing the positions of Midtrib, Prewrath, or No Rapture. This is because my answers to the objections work for those positions as well; for once we see the truth in a matter the error becomes evident as well, whatever it is.

I. Olivet Discourse Not for Church

Some want to discredit the Olivet Discourse from referring to the Church. They say it applies only to the Jews because Jesus' hearers (*the 4 of them*) were all Jews. Well, if this is the case, then we might as well discard the entire Gospel! When Jesus said this:

“² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” (John 14:2-3)

He said it to the same apostles to whom He gave the Olivet Discourse, in the same week. In fact, when He was on the Mount of Olives, He was only addressing Peter, John, James and Andrew (Mark 13:3). Three of these men were identified as “pillars of the Church” by Paul in Galatians 2:9. All of whom were apostles of the Church, appointed by Christ.

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Such an argument also ignores what Jesus plainly said in the Olivet Discourse:

Matthew 24:⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.”

Mark 13:³⁷ “And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

Besides, Paul was an apostle to the gentiles and he also gave us the timing of the rapture: At the return of Christ, AFTER the dead in Christ are resurrected (1 Thess. 4:15) and after the antichrist is revealed in the temple (2 Thess. 2:3). Since there are Christians who die in the tribulation, it is impossible for their resurrection to occur before their time of death.

If this were a valid point, it would stand in stark contrast to every other teaching in the Bible on these matters.

II. 7-Year Wedding Feast

One argument comes from the traditions of the Jews in the first century. It says that the wedding would incorporate a week when the groom would take the bride and be alone with her to consummate their marriage. This week is then associated with the 7-year time of the tribulation, metaphorically, since the Church is the Bride of Christ.

It's true that we are the Bride of Christ. However, we are not to take the traditions of men over the clear teaching of scripture. Besides, in First Century Jewish wedding

ceremonies, the whole party would go out to meet the groom as he approached the house and usher him back in (*just as the posttrib view postulates*).

There is no Bible verse that alludes to the Church being removed from the earth for seven years before the return of Jesus – not in Matthew 22 or Luke 14; and not in Revelation 19 – not one verse. Also, the passage that discusses the wedding feast, Revelation 19, shows the feast occurring at the return of the Lord – an event that Jesus showed as happening AFTER the tribulation and God’s Wrath (Mt. 24:29-31).

III. Church and Holy Spirit Removed

There is an argument that is partly explicit and partly implicit. We begin with the explicit:

2 Thessalonians 2:⁶ And you know what is restraining him [the antichrist] now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

The argument says that the “he” who is restraining the antichrist is the Holy Spirit, and by extension, the Church. It says that the Holy Spirit will be removed from the earth and then the tribulation will begin.

This argument is ill conceived for several reasons.

1. The Holy Spirit is not mentioned. The “he” could be an angel, which is quite biblical. There are clearly saints in the tribulation (Rev.7&20). I do not believe that the Holy Spirit

Chapter 4 - The Great Tribulation

would leave His children for any reason. He was given to us until the Lord returns.

Ephesians 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

No. He will not leave us, nor forsake us.

2. This still ignores all of the clear scriptures that expressly show the timing of the events.
3. How is the Holy Spirit removed from anywhere? He is omnipresent.

“Ekklesia” Not Present

Another argument is the implicit thought that the Church is removed from the earth because a word sometimes translated as “church” (ekklisia) is not used in the book of Revelation after 4:1 in its discussion of these events (*although it is used in Rev 22:16*). This is perhaps the weakest of all objections to the posttribulational view.

The word translated as “church” occurs 113 times in the New Testament (English Standard Version).

Strong’s Concordance gives us the following information on this word:

ekklésia: an assembly, a (religious) congregation

Original Word: ἐκκλησία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: ekklésia

Phonetic Spelling: (ek-klay-see'-ah)

Short Definition: an assembly, congregation, church
Definition: an assembly, congregation, church; the Church, the whole body of Christian believers.

So, in essence, this word is used sometimes to denote the entirety of Christ's followers. Is this the only word or phrase that can be used for this? Absolutely not! "Elect", "Saints", and many other terms can be used interchangeably to refer to those who belong to Christ. For example, the word translated as "elders" is used 12 times in the book of Revelation. Since the position of elder is an appointment within the Church, it stands to reason that the rest of the Church will be where the elders are. Also, the word translated as "saints" is used 13 times in Revelation.

Also, and of great significance, is the realization that the Church does not need to be identified by a particular, single word. In fact, what we see in the book of Revelation is the believers being referred to in various descriptive phrases. Some of these phrases include:

- Those who call on the name of the Lord (Rev 6:14)
- Those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne (Rev 6:9)
- Fellow servants and their brothers (Rev 6:11; 22:9)
- Servants of our God (Rev 7:3)
- They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14)
- The Lamb ... will be their shepherd (Rev 7:17)
- Those who fear [God's] name (Rev 19:5)
- They have conquered [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb (Rev 12:11)
- Those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17; 14:12)

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- Those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus (Rev. 12:17; 14:12)
- Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (Rev 14:13)
- Those who had conquered the beast (Rev 12:11; 15:2)

Therefore, this argument is tantamount to saying that verses that refer to Jesus must use his common name “Jesus”, and any use of other titles or names do not count. Yeshua, Immanuel, Messiah, Christ, the Son of God, etc. are all different ways in which we refer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus. So using this line of reasoning, we could say that Revelation 5 is not referring to Jesus because it talks about the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and the Lamb of God!

That’s why this is an empty argument, without any merit whatsoever. Did you know that Matthew is the only Gospel to use the Greek word ekklesia (translated as “church”)? Mark, Luke and John don’t use it at all. In fact, many books of the New Testament omit its use (Mark, Luke, John, 2nd Timothy, Titus, 1st Peter, 2nd Peter, 1st John, 2nd John, and Jude).

Do we really want to throw out all of the solid, clear biblical teaching on this subject simply because a part of the Bible doesn’t use a particular word, when others will do? I hope not.

IV. Other Miscellaneous Objections

Church Kept From Hour of Trial

We will be “kept from the hour of trial”, taken from

End Times Made Easy

Revelation 3:10 “Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.”

They seem to overlook that part that says, “to the angel of the church in Philadelphia” (Rev 3:7).

This is not expressly for the end times Church; it’s for the church in Philadelphia. Whatever it means, it cannot mean that the rapture occurs before the tribulation – that would be inconsistent with scripture.

However, I don’t ever want to be one who does not attempt to apply the whole message of the Word to our daily lives and to see what it says that we can apply to our own situation, whatever that may be. So, for argument’s sake, let’s go ahead and assume that this message is for the End Times church. What is our Lord saying to us?

To be clear, this passage of scripture is taken from Revelation 3:7-13. In it, The Lord is telling us a few things:

1. I [Jesus] have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. (v. 8)

The offer of salvation is open to anyone who would simply walk through the door of faith. No one on earth, not even Satan, can keep you from receiving salvation. Also, no one and nothing can come between you and your Savior. Not torture, not deprivation, not persecution of any kind can separate you from your Lord.

Paul talked of this in Romans 8:

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Romans 8:³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

So, the first point He makes is that no one can close this door that He has opened. He is powerful to save.

2. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. (v. 8)

Here, Jesus is talking to the ones who remain faithful to Him and His message. He acknowledges our weakness (*even if we do not*), and drills into what is most important: staying faithful to Him and His word. During the tribulation, we know that deception, persecution and other horrific acts done by unbelievers will be worse than ever. Here, Jesus is letting us know that He pays attention to who remains faithful to Him and His word through it all.

3. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie— behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. (v. 9)

No matter how harsh our treatment may be; no matter how degrading and demeaning; no matter what suffering we face for being His faithful followers, He will turn the tables on our persecutors.

4. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. (v. 10)

Before we jump straight to the part we want to see, about keeping us from trial, let's first look at what He says before that, "Because you have kept my word about patient endurance..."

Why is He talking about patient endurance if we are to be pulled up out of the hour of suffering which requires patient endurance? For Him to merely mean that we have waited a long time for His arrival would be incongruent with the rest of the revelation of scripture.

Next He says that He will keep them [us] (literally, "you") from the hour of trial. What does He mean by "keep you from..."? Is He really promising to rescue His faithful out of the world and literally carry us, or catch us up from it all?

If this is what He means, then the Bible is inconsistent in its message on this. We already know that His faithful are killed during the Great Tribulation (Rev 7 & 20). We already know that He will gather his faithful at His return, which is after His wrath and after the tribulation. (Mt 24:29-31) So what does He mean by "keep you from..."?

Well, we know He doesn't mean rapture us out of the earth. Perhaps the answer lies in what follows His promise, namely, "the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth".

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Let's consider for a moment that His message is a unified whole. Let's assume that He means what He says, and says what He means. What has His message been so far in this passage?

1. He is powerful to save, when we are weak.
2. He notices our faithfulness.
3. He will bring justice upon our persecutors.
4. When the time comes, if we are faithful in our patient endurance, He will help us through our trials.

So, it would seem that He is telling us that He will be *with us* in our trials. And that the testing is for the whole world; those who dwell on the earth. I think He allows the tribulation, to show everyone just which side they are on.

But He continues.

5. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. (v. 11)

This is a little odd, really. But it can make sense if we pay attention to the full revelation of scripture. I mean, there are two things He says here that seem a bit confusing.

"I am coming soon," He says. Really? He said this, like, 2,000 years ago. What does He mean by "soon"? Well, all I can do is point to what Peter told us about the Lord's timeclock.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8)

Also, I could say that He means once these things come to be, His return is soon.

Next, He says, “Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.” But didn’t He just tell us that **He** is the one with the power to “open” and “shut” doors? So, what does He mean by **Us** being the ones to hold fast?

It is true that He is powerful to save; more powerful than any force on earth or in heaven. However, it is also given to us the ability to wreck our own salvation. Did you know that if you accept the Mark of the Beast in the last days, you will lose your salvation? It’s true. Look at Revelation 14:9-10:

Revelation 14:⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s Wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”

This is one way we can actually *lose* our salvation! “...so that no one may seize your crown.” Look, if you didn’t have the crown of salvation, no one could take it. You must already have the crown in order to lose it.

To me, this warning is to “hold fast” to your salvation and do not take the easy way out (*avoiding persecution by taking the Mark of the Beast*). Because if you do, you will lose it all!

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6. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (v. 12)

Again, “the one who conquers...” Jesus continues His theme of hanging in there when things get tough. If we are taken out of the world during the most horrific time of suffering known to Christians, why is He running this thought home?

The bottom line in this argument against the posttrib teaching is that it is vague at best, and at least is denying the continuity of scripture. In these remarks, Jesus can in no way be saying that He is going to remove the Church from the earth during this time of trial and testing. If anything, He’s saying to remain faithful to Him, endure persecution, and know that He is powerful to save – not necessarily save your mortal body from death, but to save your eternal soul from hell. And I think He is also reminding us to not take the Mark of the Beast (*in a very nuanced manner*).

Or, as I said from the start, we can just take this passage the way it is presented and apply it to a church that is no longer on earth. Either way, it falls far short from discrediting the posttrib teaching in the Bible.

Lot and Noah

“Lot and Noah were taken out, so the Church must be too.” Well, Lot’s wife wasn’t spared (*albeit through a different means*), and Noah was definitely in the flood – he was just protected. But what about the Jews who were in

Egypt when God let loose His plagues on them? They were there, but they were kept safe. But let's not get distracted; see the answer to "Not Appointed Unto Wrath" on page 108.

We Can Escape

"We can escape the things coming."

Jesus said in Luke 21:³⁶ "But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

If we are to stand, then we are not going to fall into the temptation to succumb to the wiles of the devil. This means that we are not going to accept the Mark of the Beast and therefore forfeit our salvation. And don't forget, this is from the very teaching where Jesus told us the timing of these things. He didn't contradict Himself, as this argument implies. We know that some people will be kept safe from the devil in the desert. Maybe He's saying we should ask for the same kind of protection.

No Encouragement

"What's encouraging about being in the tribulation?"

This question is a response to this:

1 Thessalonians 5:⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

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The encouragement doesn't come from being in the tribulation. It comes from joining the Lord and our fellow believers whether we live or die.

Questions to Ponder

1. Which Bible chapters make up the Olivet Discourse?
2. What event signals the beginning of the Great Tribulation, which is the second half of the 7-year tribulation?
3. The Great Tribulation is the result of whose wrath?

Answers
1. MT 24-25; MK 13; LK 21
2. The Abomination that Causes Desolation
(MT 24:15-16, 21)
3. Satan (REV 12:6, 12, 17)

Chapter 5 – THE WRATH OF GOD

Duration: At least 5 months | 150 Days (Rev. 9:5, 10)

Timing: Immediately following the tribulation (Mt 24:29)

Key Scriptures: Rev. 6, 8, 9, 15, 16; MT 24:29; Dan. 12:12; Joel 2; Micah 1:3-4; Habakkuk 3

As we go through this chapter on God's Wrath, it is important for us to recognize one vital distinction regarding God's Wrath. I say distinction, because there are apparently two kinds of wrath that God delivers: *Temporary* and *Eternal*.

This chapter will deal with God's *TEMPORARY* Wrath. By Temporary, I mean that the wrath event is for a period of time. This could be a short time (*and usually is*), or it could be for a long time (*as with the Jews being spread out around the world from the 1st century until the 20th century*).

As we study His acts of *Temporary Wrath* in this chapter, notice how each element is temporary in nature. And contrast these with His act of *Eternal Wrath*, which is meted out in the Final Judgment. Also, we are not going to look at all of His wrath events throughout time; just certain key events in the last days.

God's *ETERNAL* Wrath is initiated only once, but it lasts forever. It is performed by Jesus while He is on His Great White Throne of Judgment. When He finally judges the people who never accepted His plan of salvation and He proclaims them guilty, He will throw them into the Lake of Fire from which there is no escape for all eternity.

In addition to seeing how God's Wrath is split into these two types, it is also of note to see that He doles out His wrath on three types of recipients: Individuals; Groups or

Chapter 5 - The Wrath of God

Nations; or the Entire World. Since groups, nations, and the world are inherently temporary, any wrath poured out on these will necessarily be temporary as well. Only individuals will experience His Eternal Wrath. Just as eternal salvation is personal, so too is eternal judgment.

Temporary Wrath	Eternal Wrath
Individuals ✓	Individuals ✓
Groups or Nations ✓	Groups or Nations ✗
The Entire World ✓	The Entire World ✗

Note: Even though God permanently destroys the earth after the millennium, this is not considered wrath upon the entire world because by then many billions have been saved from His eternal wrath.

Another important point regarding God's Wrath is that His *Temporary Wrath* allows for repentance – and is usually designed to accomplish this. But His *Eternal Wrath* offers no repentance. By then it is too late to repent.

Lastly, the word “judgment” can be used for either temporary wrath or eternal, along with any of the other synonyms of wrath (*anger, rage, fury, indignation, etc.*).

Why this teaching regarding God's Wrath is not widespread is a mystery to me. It seems to me to be an important thing to keep in mind. Anyway, with the above important distinctions in mind, let's now look at God's Temporary acts of Wrath in the Last Days.

End Times Made Easy

Revelation 6:¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave [*servant*] and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

For many of us, it is difficult to think of Christ as raging against the nations in acts of unspeakable destruction. After all, when He arrived for His First Advent, He came as a baby, born of a teenage virgin. And apart from a few isolated displays of anger, such as in the temple and when arguing with the religious criminals, He presented Himself as extremely loving, peaceful and gracious. He miraculously healed people and brought them back from the dead. He showed us His loving side. However, when He returns for His Second Advent, He is going to show us His righteous side, with boiling righteous indignation at the incessant sin of man.

Already, most people in the world ignore Him on a daily basis, but when He shows Himself to the world, He will demand our attention. There will be no mistake that the calamities assailing the earth are at His hand.

Chapter 5 - The Wrath of God

At this point, I'd like to share with you a mental image I have in mind of what God's Wrath might look like. I see it, primarily, as a shotgun blast of stellar objects (*meteorites, meteors or asteroids*), which emit a caustic red substance that poisons water and causes painful sores on skin upon contact. These would also spread fire upon impact with land. Their barrage would send massive amounts of matter (*smoke, dust, debris*) high into the atmosphere, causing the sun, moon and stars to be blotted out (*obscured*). Then, to round it out, throw in a coronal mass ejection (*CME*), utter darkness over the seat of Satan's kingdom, locusts that are driven to attack only those who are not God's people, and a massive, worldwide earthquake that devastates even mountains and islands (*dare I add tsunamis and volcanoes, as well?*). Needless to say, all the people of earth will be in great dismay, if they see these events.

Also, everyone on earth will be able to see Him in full glory as He appears in the sky with His angel armies. But I'll talk more about this in the next chapter. For now, I'll just say that I don't know exactly when we will see Him in the sky. Will He send His barrage of asteroids and meteorites just ahead of Him? Will He get our attention with these flaming balls from outer space just before showing Himself to us? The Bible isn't clear on just when we will first see Him in the sky (*next to Pluto or above Jerusalem in the atmosphere*), but it definitely alludes to Him being present during His End Times wrath.

Zechariah 9:14 Then the Lord will appear over them,
and his arrow will go forth like lightning;
the Lord God will sound the trumpet
and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south.

End Times Made Easy

Many commentators express a belief that the entire seven-year tribulation period is a time of God's Wrath. I believe this position to be incorrect. As already shown previously in the Great Tribulation, there is a distinct and vast difference between the wrath of God (*on a global, celestial scale*) and the wrath of Satan (*in the form of war and violent acts of terror*). And while I don't consider the acts of the Two Witnesses to be God's Wrath, I do think that they and Christ are working together. I mean, this should be obvious by the supernatural nature of their abilities. But they will be acting, I believe, in the Great Tribulation. Perhaps they'll be the warm-up act, just before the main event (*Jesus Christ's arrival in full power and wrath*) is seen in the sky.

In the Olivet Discourse, our Lord presented the timing of the events of the last days. In His broad summary, He included the wrath of God by citing familiar prophetic phrasing that refers to that catastrophic sequence of events. Here is what He said (*note the correlation with Rev 6:12-13 above*):

Matthew 24:²⁹ "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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

This particular statement about the sun, moon, stars and powers makes an obvious connection to the Day of the Lord, which includes His wrath, return, millennial reign, and consequent judgment. To illustrate, if you heard the New York mayor talk about a "9/11" type of event, you'd know exactly what he was talking about due to the mental image it conjures in your mind. I think that the same is true

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here. Is it a direct statement that is literal in nature? No. Is it clear? Yes. Read these other references to the Day of the Lord to see how familiar this phrase would have been to the Jewish reader in the first century AD (*see Amos 5, Isaiah 13, 60, Joel 3, Ezekiel 32 (another act of God's Wrath), and Joel chapter 2*):

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

With the verses that describe the Day of the Lord as being a day of His wrath, the connection of these celestial events (*involving the sun, moon and stars*) to that day is virtually undeniable.

Also, the connection between God's Wrath against Egypt and these End Times events makes it clear in my mind that Jesus was alluding to God's Wrath in Matthew 24:29.

In Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost, he quoted the prophet Joel with a message that agrees with Christ's timing of these things. First the sun grows dark and the moon turns to "blood" and then the Day of the Lord is seen. Acts 2:21 is important to remind us that salvation awaits those who call upon the name of the Lord; not that we will be saved from the tribulation.

Therefore, it is obvious to me that in Matthew 24:29 Jesus is telling us that God's Wrath will occur IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING the seven-year tribulation (*not during it*). This is an important reason why the tribulation cannot be His wrath. This is reinforced by the descriptions of God's Wrath found in the book of Revelation:

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- The sun will be darkened – 1st and 4th Trumpets
Revelation 8:12
- The moon will not give its light – 4th Trumpet
Revelation 8:12
- The stars will fall from heaven – 1st, 2nd, and 3rd
Trumpets
Revelation 8:7-8, 10; 16:21
- The powers of the heavens will be shaken – 7th
Trumpet, 5th and 7th Bowls
Revelation 16:10; 11:15-19; 16:17-21

Will God's Wrath destroy the world? Is this the end of the world? If we are not careful about how we read the Bible, we might think so.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Peter here seems to be saying that the Great Judgment and the destruction of this universe will be after the Day of the Lord. And since the Day of the Lord includes His acts of wrath, which occurs prior to His millennial reign, the world will not be destroyed by his temporary wrath. It will not be until after the Great White Throne of Judgment that this happens. There will be more on this in the chapter on the Judgment.

Acts 2:19 "And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord

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comes, the great and magnificent day. ²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

In the excerpt above from Peter’s sermon at Pentecost, his timeline agrees with that of Christ. However, Peter seems to be saying that God’s Wrath precedes the Day of the Lord, while I’ve been saying that the Day of the Lord includes God’s Wrath. Well, could it be that Peter is more concerned with the Lord’s appearing in the sky than with His wrath? It’s because of Acts 2:19-21 (*and other scriptures*) that I think Christ will show up in the sky *during* His wrath. In other words, His wrath will have already commenced before we see Him above the earth. It’s this seamless blending from one event to another (*like God’s Wrath to the Lord’s Return*) that we begin to get confused about the timing of things. If we look at things in the big picture, perhaps we will start to see how it isn’t possible to show clear, distinct separations between events all of the time. And perhaps this is one reason why we have so many versions of End Times events among the believers.

Isaiah put it this way:

Isaiah 26:²⁰ Go home, my people,
and lock your doors!

Hide yourselves for a little while
until the Lord’s anger has passed.

²¹ Look! The Lord is coming from heaven
to punish the people of the earth for their sins.
The earth will no longer hide those who have been
killed.

They will be brought out for all to see. (NLT)

End Times Made Easy

When we think back to the events of THE TRIBULATION (chapter 2), those events, in contrast, did not involve acts of God as described here. They were acts of warfare and terror, or their effects. Additionally, those events were attributed to Satan and his followers in Revelation.

Revelation 12:¹¹ And they [the brethren] have conquered him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death... ¹⁷ Then the dragon [Satan] became furious with the woman [the Jews] and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus [Christians]. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Revelation 13:⁵ And the beast [antichrist] was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months [1,260 days]. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints [Christians] and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

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So, the main points here are that:

- The Tribulation is not God's Wrath
- God's Wrath immediately follows the Tribulation

A clear understanding of the part that Christians play in the Great Tribulation makes any attempt at a pretribulational rapture of the Church spurious, no matter how many ways it is explained. Likewise, a clear understanding of the nature of God's Wrath makes any attempt to show the Great Tribulation as an act of God's wrath just as lacking. It is recommended for the reader to allow the Word of God to speak – without muddling it with the din of men, who may wish to explain away that which frightens them.

We should also see that the Wrath of God is actually the Wrath of Christ. I am now of the opinion that the Lord returns in the very midst of His wrath; that the world will literally see with the naked eye Jesus Christ in the sky unleashing His fury at the unbelievers in the world who have persecuted His faithful and defamed His holy name.

I am NOT saying that His return to earth occurs at this time (*that is, His physical touching down on dirt*). I'm saying that He will be visible in the sky. For the purposes of this doctrine, "Return" means that Jesus sets foot on solid ground; not, being visible to the inhabitants of earth.

Habakkuk 3:12 You marched through the earth in fury;
you threshed the nations in anger.

And we will hear Him as well as see Him (*along with His angel armies*).

Joel 2:¹¹ The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

His angels are also shouting to the world below:

Revelation 14:⁶ And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this world—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷“Fear God,” he shouted. “Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water.”

⁸Then another angel followed him through the sky, shouting, “Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen—because she made all the nations of the world drink the wine of her passionate immorality.”

⁹Then a third angel followed them, shouting, “Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand ¹⁰ must drink the wine of God’s anger. It has been poured full strength into God’s cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹ The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name.”

Chapter 5 - The Wrath of God

Duration

Now that we know when God's Wrath starts, and that it is not during the tribulation, we should wonder how long it will last. To find this out, we look to the prophecies of Revelation. Of all of the events of God's Wrath recorded by John (*hailstones, meteors, atmospheric obscurations, sea life dying, etc.*), only one has a clear-cut duration. This is the account of the locusts in Revelation 9 – the 5th Trumpet.

Revelation 9:5 “They [*the locusts*] were allowed to torment them [*the people who do not have the seal of God*] for five months...¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails.”

None of the other events is presented with a length of duration. Plus, there is no reason we should not expect some of the events to be simultaneous or overlapping.

For the longest time, I viewed the End Times events as being neatly contained within blocks of time. The Early Tribulation, 3-½ years, the Great Tribulation, 3-½ years, each event was a stand-alone event with a sharp delineation between it and the others before and after. God's Wrath, in my mind, had to end before His arrival to the earth. But now I see things differently. There is no clear distinction between Christ's wrath and His return. After all, Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour of His return (Mt 24:36). My view keeps this teaching pure.

I now see a merge, a gradient if you will, where it is impossible to see where Jesus' wrath ends and His arrival begins (*at least, until He sets foot on the ground*). However, I do think that we have a clue as to how this will all play out.

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As I've already mentioned, I think that everyone on earth will see Jesus in the sky when He unleashes His wrath upon them. For most people, that will be a terrifying sight indeed. But for those who are to be saved from their sins, it will be a glorious sight. And the climax of it all will be when He pulls His faithful up into the clouds to be with Him, safely above the continuing calamity on the surface (*Armageddon*).

I don't mean to get ahead of myself here, since these things are discussed later in this study, but I just want to mention that Daniel has a clue for us to look at. In Daniel 12:12 we read the following: "Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days."

We've already seen how many days the tribulation lasts. Its total duration is 2,520 days, or 7 years according to Daniel. We also saw how the Great Tribulation will begin at the 1,260th day and continue for the remaining 1,260 days. Now here's our clue: beginning at the same day that the Great Tribulation starts, we count 1,335 days for something that will be a blessing. Keep in mind that this is during the 5 months or more of God's Wrath. 5 months, using the prophetic way of counting days (*30 per month*) would give us 150 days of wrath. If we subtract 1,260 from 1,335 we get 75 days. Interestingly, 75 is half of 150. Looking at our clue with this in mind, we see that halfway through God's Wrath we might have the blessed climax of our salvation: the glorification of the saints (*when we are transformed*).

Hopefully, this is not too much of a leap of logic for the reader. After all, Jesus told us in Matthew 24:29-31,

"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 heaven, and the powers of

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the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

I really don't want to cover the entire return of Christ, the resurrection and the rapture all at once in this discussion of God's Wrath, but I do want us to keep this in mind and see that God's Wrath may be in full swing when the saints are "blessed". I call this view the "Mid Wrath" view of the rapture. Still posttrib, but during God's Wrath.

Justification

God shows us the reasons why He inflicts His wrath upon the earth. Partly, He's doling out His vengeance on our behalf (*the Cry of the Martyrs*). But, of course, there are many verses in the Old and New Testaments that speak to His justification for punishing the world (*I'll just show a few*).

Revelation 6:⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants [*fellow bondservants*] and their brothers

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should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

So we see that the cry of the martyrs has something to do with why He sends His wrath. And in the next chapter of Revelation (*chapter 7*) we see a vast gathering of Christ's faithful who died in the Great Tribulation. Then in chapter 8 we read of John's vision regarding the commencement of God's Wrath. It would seem that it's on behalf of the prayers of the saints that he hurls His wrath upon the world.

Revelation 8:¹ When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, [*or voices, or sounds*] flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

And do you remember this verse?

Romans 12:¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

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And I also think that an argument could be made that He is both saving the Jews and punishing them with His wrath at his arrival.

Micah 1:² Hear, you peoples, all of you;
pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it,
and let the Lord God be a witness against you,
the Lord from his holy temple.

³ For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place,
and will come down and tread upon the high places of
the earth.

⁴ And the mountains will melt under him,
and the valleys will split open,
like wax before the fire,
like waters poured down a steep place.

⁵ All this is for the transgression of Jacob
and for the sins of the house of Israel.

That seems to make it pretty clear that God's Wrath is at least partly executed due to the sins of Israel.

But of course that's not the end of the story. When He returns to Israel and sets up His kingdom, He will protect His chosen nation from any and all threats upon them afterward. In this regard, the millennial kingdom is a kingdom of salvation; not eternal salvation, just salvation from oppression and war.

Zephaniah 3:¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O
Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of
Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel,

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the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the Lord.

And so God's Wrath is poured out on this rebellious planet for two main reasons: To punish a sinful human race; and to save His faithful followers. And Israel is embodied by both.

Trumpets and Bowls

In the book of Revelation, we see the accounts of John's visions of God's Wrath. These visions were given to him on the isle of Patmos by the Lord, Yeshua (Jesus). In the book, the visions of the trumpets are presented before those of the bowls, but there is no reason to deny that they are

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happening simultaneously or even in a different order.

If we approach the book of Revelation as a strict chronological timeline of the events shown (*as a whole*), we will come away very confused. Instead, we should see John's writings as they are – accounts of visions. Whether these visions (*and their events*) occur in the order that they are given to John is to be carefully scrutinized. For example, back when we read the accounts of the opening of the seals, we saw that the visions showed a broad overview of these End Times events. Obviously, the seals are not chronologically oriented with the trumpets and bowls, otherwise, there would be no hope of making sense of these things. Still, there are chronological elements to the visions.

For a chronology of the last days, we have two discourses from Jesus that pretty much lay everything out in order for us: The Olivet Discourse (Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21) and the Seven Seals (Rev 6 & 8). If you want a chronology of these events, those two passages are the best places to start. They both agree with each other but also show different details. The seals take us up to the beginning of His wrath and the Olivet Discourse takes us beyond the start of His wrath up to the gathering of the saints (*mid wrath*). When constructing a timeline, this is where I go first. It has served me well in understanding the timing of all of these things. This is key in making the End Times Easy to understand.

The prologue to the trumpets (*Rev. 8:1-5 above, under Justification*) is another example of how we will get confused by trying to force a chronological timeline onto these accounts of the end in Revelation. Notice that it appears prior to the prologue of the bowls of God's Wrath

in the book, yet the bowls of God's Wrath actually occur prior to the return of the Lord (*according to the Olivet Discourse*). Do we really want to believe that the Lord's return precedes God's Wrath?

Likewise, when we read the visions of the trumpets and the bowls (*below*), we should carefully consider their relationship with each other. We should not automatically assume a strict chronological timeline that these events fall neatly into. Neither should we automatically deny it.

Instead, we should think about what is actually happening in the vision. What does it look like to you if seen in a plain-meaning fashion? We are modern people with millennia of history and knowledge at our fingertips. We have scientific means of observing the world and the cosmos. We should use all of the tools and knowledge available to us in this modern age to consider what we are being shown in these visions that were given to a man in the first century. We also recognize that it is nearly impossible to capture into words the timeline and intricate relation of certain strange visions that are of a spiritual nature, yet signify real world events. Especially to the mind of the early prophet or even the first century apostle.

As we go through each of these visions, the text may be best served, at times, by seeing the trumpets as *heralding* the events of the bowls, and the bowls *completing* the trumpets. Now, this will not work with all of the events, but some of them work quite well when we follow this rule. This is certainly a better approach than putting all of the trumpets before the first bowl, which is how they appear in the book. With this in mind, let's now look at the events of God's Wrath in His Revelation.

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We will start with the prologue to the bowls of God's Wrath. Although it is given before the accounts of the bowls (*after the trumpets*), it works well with the trumpets too.

I'll not comment on every detail. Otherwise this study would zoom to twice its intended volume. I'll just show most of the text and only comment very sparsely.

Revelation 15:¹ Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

² And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. ³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! ⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

⁵ After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent [*tabernacle*] of witness in heaven was opened, ⁶ and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. ⁷ And 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, ⁸ and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and

no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

First Trumpet / First Bowl

Revelation 8:⁶ Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

⁷ The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Revelation 16:¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

If the 1st bowl is a completion of the 1st trumpet, then we could surmise that the 1st trumpet describes a truly massive meteor shower upon the earth, unlike any ever seen before. These meteorites would have the following properties: fire (*which of course is associated with all meteors, however is spread upon impact here*); a reddish composition, which may be flammable and caustic. I say caustic because of the 1st bowl – "sores came upon people" – and because of what will follow.

Now it should also be observed that the sores only broke out on those who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. This tells me that the Lord will protect

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His people from at least that property of these meteorites. (And by extension, perhaps the fire and impact – perhaps.)

Just because God's people will be present on earth during these cataclysmic events does not *necessarily* mean that they will suffer from them. Nor does it mean that they will not. For now, at least, God's people will not suffer from the sores that come upon the skin. Also, in this first barrage, it may very well be that the trumpet's hailstones and the bowl's sores are not directly connected.

Second Trumpet / Second Bowl

Revelation 8:⁸ The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹ A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Revelation 16:³ The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

In this pairing of God's Wrath between the trumpet and the bowl, it seems very likely that the vision of the trumpet shows what causes the vision of the bowl. As modern folks, we can see this as a large meteor impacting the ocean somewhere. Again, its composition would include a substance that is red in color and caustic to life forms. One thing it does not tell us, but that we may assume, is that massive tsunamis would impact shorelines on at least two continents. Indeed, in Luke 21, one of the companion passages of the Olivet Discourse, we read the following:

Luke 21:²⁵ “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of *the roaring of the sea and the waves*,²⁶ people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

Sounds like massive tsunamis to me. And this is in concert with Matthew’s account of God’s Wrath.

Third Trumpet / Third Bowl

Revelation 8:¹⁰ The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

Revelation 16:⁴ The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.⁵ And I heard the angel in charge of the waters [*angel of the waters*] say,

“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.

⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink.

It is what they deserve!”

⁷ And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”

Once again, the parallel between the trumpet and the bowl is compelling. Also, the large meteor in this vision seems to be just like the other one that hit the sea. Only this

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time it impacts the land and possibly poisons the fresh water.

While it may seem incomprehensible that such a thing could happen from a meteor, just imagine that it is very large and its plume of debris is far reaching. If that debris is caustic (*like acid rain*), it very well could affect a huge area (*1/3 of the world?*).

Fourth Trumpet / Fourth Bowl

Revelation 8:¹² The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.

Revelation 16:⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire.
⁹ They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed [*blasphemed*] the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

Here, the bowl does not complete the trumpet; it is a separate event. But they very well may happen simultaneously, making them connected in time.

However, it would follow that if the first three trumpets were a massive meteor shower, then the fourth trumpet could simply be the atmospheric obscuration that would result. Also, just because these events are given one at a time does not mean that they cannot be happening simultaneously in reality. This is why I envision a single,

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massive meteor shower striking a 3rd of the earth and the resultant obscuration blotting out the sun, moon and stars over one 3rd of the earth (*maybe the 10-40 window?*). Also, we don't know if the 1/3 refers to land area or population.

This account of the 4th bowl affecting the sun sounds very much like a coronal mass ejection (CME). But the trump also harkens back to the 9th plague of Egypt (Ex. 10:22).

The 4th Bowl reminds me of the warning issued in Revelation 7:¹⁶ “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.”

Will God's people feel the heat of His wrath? Will it be as severe as what the godless suffer? We can only wait and see. To me, it is no enigma that God's Wrath would strike His followers as well as the unrepentant, since we are ALL under the curse of sin and deserve punishment. The difference is in how we will be reconciled with Him or not for all eternity. Remember the difference between God's *Temporary* wrath and *Eternal* wrath.

Let's pause right here and reflect on something. Jesus' chronology in the Olivet Discourse said that “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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Perhaps these events of God's Wrath (*sun and moon growing dark and stars falling*) are all that must

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take place before the world sees our conquering Savior in the sky. Perhaps it is at this point in time that He calls His faithful into glorification (*Posttrib/Midwrath*).

This hypothesis may be supported (*loosely*) by Joel 2. I'm convinced that Joel 2 and Revelation 9 both talk about the same campaign of locusts in the 5th trumpet. In **Joel 2:11** we read,

“The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?”

If the world hears His voice, then maybe, just maybe, they'll be seeing Him in the air as well. And before moving on, I just need to add a couple of quick comments.

The darkness, meaning the sun, moon, and stars giving no light is something that continues from this point on into and through the millennium. So, while it might be partially the result of some kind of atmospheric obscuration, it most definitely is continued as long as this Earth exists.

By this time, Jesus is the undisputed Ruler of the earth. It is His light that shines and lights up the world.

Isaiah 60:¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
² For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.

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³ And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

During His millennial reign there will be no light but the light that comes from Him. (See Revelation 22:5; Isaiah 13:9-11; Ezekiel 32:6-8; Matthew 24:29-30; Zechariah 14:6-7)

Isaiah 60: ¹⁹ The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give you light;
but the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
²⁰ Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.

I believe that His blotting out the sun, moon, and stars, and also shaking the powers of the heavens (*which probably refers to demons going to the abyss*) is His way of removing all things that are worshipped besides Him. Since people worship the sun, moon, stars and demons, He will completely remove them from the peoples' sight when He returns. This is just one more way that He establishes His authority over His creation. To the praise of His glorious Name!

Fifth Trumpet / Fifth Bowl

Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit [*the*

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abyss]. ² He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. ³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. ⁶ And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

⁷ In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon. [*Abaddon* means *destruction*; *Apollyon* means *destroyer*]

Revelation 16:¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

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The fifth trumpet is obviously a stand-alone event (*at least from the meteoric events just seen*), as is the 5th bowl. These locusts, as mentioned already, have the *power or potential* to harm for 5 months. The “star” of Revelation 9 is most likely an angelic being.

Although this Trump and Bowl seem to be independent of each other, it could be argued that the darkness of the bowl is resultant from the darkness of the locusts swarming (*coupled with the atmospheric obscuration*). I personally do not hold this view. I think that the darkness is more akin to the darkness that struck the Egyptians in Exodus 10. One other possibility is that the sun, moon and stars literally go black, or disappear altogether. If this is the case, then the earth’s light would be from Christ, Himself (*as just mentioned*), and He could easily deny it to anyone.

Since we have been counting the duration of the wrath of God based on this event of the locusts, and since they only attack certain people (*who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads*) and not all people, it may be reasoned that the locust attack happens closely on the heels of the meteor barrage in the earlier trumps and bowls, while the saints are still on earth. For example, could it be that the meteor barrage lasts for 24 hours or less and the locusts appear the next day? We’ll have to wait and see.

Also, since “the Lord utters His voice before His army” of locusts (Joel 2:11) and He will be marching through (*perhaps above*) the earth in fury (*Habakkuk 3:12*), I do not think it unreasonable to say that the inhabitants of earth will see Him in the sky, especially since He will be displaying His full glory and light. Just as the sun can be viewed behind the clouds, His glory should be seen behind

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the obscuration of smoke, dust and debris. Matter does not block God's glory like our physical light does.

I also suspect that it is at this point that His departed saints appear with Him in the clouds and His faithful on the ground are caught up to be with them. Again, the precise timing of these things is not given to us and we are left to speculate about it. But very soon from here in the timeline things are going to get even more dangerous for us mortals and if anyone would repent of their sins at this point it would be the saints. At any rate, I do not see any reason why this could not be the time of the rapture – just after the locust attack. Now, I'm not going to be dogmatic about this hypothesis but I will say that this timing is extremely more likely than the notion of a pretrib, midtrib or prewrath rapture. This is after the tribulation and in the middle of God's Wrath. Also, don't forget about Daniel's 1,335 days, which would take us to halfway through the 150 days (*5 months*) of Christ's Wrath.

And my last little point on this is that we have seen that God's Wrath is partly to pay back the worldly wicked for all of the evil done to His faithful by them. Well, as we are about to see, the efforts of the antichrist and his followers is about to peak (*in the march to Armageddon*). What better time to pull us up than right here – just as the enemy is about to do his worst? Also, some of the following events, like the devastating earthquake will be too huge to imagine many surviving.

But as I've already said, it shouldn't matter if some of God's children are killed during His acts of wrath, since we are just as sinful as anyone else. But there are enough passages of scripture that denote His rescuing His faithful

to say that He will not subject us to the entirety of His vengeance. So I think that this posttrib/mid-wrath view is biblical—and most likely.

So, can it be that the meteorites and the locusts were to get the world's attention just before He appears above the earth? And could it be that right then He grabs up His beloved – just before things reach a crescendo?

Sixth Trumpet / Sixth Bowl

Revelation 8:¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. ¹⁷ And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming 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 with heads, and by means of them they wound.

Revelation 16:¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up,

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to prepare the way 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 demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵ (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) ¹⁶ And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

The 6th trumpet and 6th bowl are undoubtedly connected. These are two accounts of basically the same event: the gathering of a huge army for the battle of Armageddon. (*We’ll see this more completely in the ninth chapter, ARMAGEDDON.*)

Now, the trumpet also adds significant details (*perhaps of nuclear weapons*) that are separate but most likely occur at the same time. But this does not mean that the method is flawed. In fact, it works quite effectively with these events.

The trumpet shows God working through holy angels; the bowl shows Him working through demons (*Revelation 16:13 describes demons that look like frogs*). In both, the river Euphrates is mentioned. The trumpet describes what is most likely a nuclear holocaust, involving a huge army of 200 million (*which may very well include China*). The bowl shows a huge army from the east (*China again?*) marching across the Euphrates to the valley called Armageddon (*Megiddo*), driven along by demons. These, I believe are the

casualties mentioned at the Lord's return below (Revelation 19:21).

Revelation 19:¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army... ²¹ [they] were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

See the seventh trumpet and bowl discussed in Chapter 6 THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

We end this chapter with more verses about the Day of the Lord. As you read them, see if they emphasize His wrath, return, or judgment – all of which are part of the Day of the Lord. Remember, the Day of the Lord begins with God's Wrath and continues for a thousand years until the Great Judgment. Didn't Peter say: "But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2nd Peter 3:8)?

Also, see if the text is referring to God's *temporary* wrath or *eternal* wrath. You may have to see the verse in context to make this determination. And look at whether the wrath is toward an *individual*, a *group (as in a nation)*, or the *entire*

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world. I only mention this because some Bible commenters don't seem to see the difference.

Isaiah 13:6 Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.

Ezekiel 13:5 You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the day of the Lord.

Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.

Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

Joel 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near.

Joel 2:11 The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

Amos 5:18 Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light, ¹⁹ as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit

<h1>Trumpets</h1>	<h1>Bowls</h1>
<p>1st Trumpet: Hailstones, Fire, “Blood” 1/3 of the planet affected (Revelation 8:7)</p>	<p>1st Bowl: Skin sores on godless people who have the mark of the beast (Revelation 16:2)</p>
<p>2nd Trumpet: Asteroid hits the sea, turning it red and destroying 1/3 of sea life and ships (Revelation 8:8-9)</p>	<p>2nd Bowl: Sea turns to “blood”, killing ALL sea life (Revelation 16:3)</p>
<p>3rd Trumpet: Asteroid hits the land, fouling 1/3 of fresh water (Revelation 8:10-11)</p>	<p>3rd Bowl: Fresh water turns to “blood” (Revelation 16:4)</p>
<p>4th Trumpet: Obscuration blocking 1/3 of the sky over the earth (Revelation 8:12)</p>	<p>4th Bowl: Coronal eruption? (Revelation 16:8-9)</p>
<p>5th Trumpet: Demon named “Destroyer” leads locust attack (Revelation 9:1-11)</p>	<p>5th Bowl: Beast’s kingdom plunged into darkness; painful sores (Revelation 16:10-11)</p>
<p>6th Trumpet: 4 angels kill 1/3 of mankind – A mighty army set loose possibly nuclear holocaust (Revelation 9:12-21)</p>	<p>6th Bowl: Demonic activity; Euphrates dried up (allows army from the East to pass); Gathering for Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16)</p>
<p>7th Trumpet: Christ takes possession of the earth (Revelation 9:15-19)</p>	<p>7th Bowl: Lightning, thunder, hailstones and greatest earthquake ever (Revelation 16:17-21)</p>

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him. ²⁰ Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?

Zephaniah 1:¹⁴ The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.

Objections to the Posttrib View Regarding God's Wrath

I. Saints Not Appointed Unto Wrath

This seems to be a very popular objection. The argument goes like this:

“Since Paul told the Thessalonians that we are not appointed to suffer God’s Wrath (1Thess 5:9), we cannot be in the tribulation, which is God’s Wrath.” (*This may also be why there is a rapture position called “Prewrath”.*)

There are two looming problems with this statement:

1. The tribulation period is not God’s Wrath, but Satan’s (*see Revelation 12:6, 12, 17*)
2. The verse that they quote, 1 Thessalonians 5:9 does not say what they seemingly want it to say

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

If this verse were to mean that we will escape the tribulation, then Paul would be speaking out both sides of his mouth. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote to the same congregation and told them this:

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.³ Let no one

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deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness [sin] is revealed, the son of destruction [perdition],⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

Whether Paul understood what would soon happen to the temple or not is irrelevant; the Holy Spirit knew. Although the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, God's word still stands. Therefore, there must be a temple rebuilt for the antichrist to reveal himself in. And since this event signals the beginning of the Great Tribulation, where much persecution comes upon the Church, he could not have meant that the Church would escape tribulation.

And we know that Paul was talking about the antichrist because just a few words later he writes this:

2 Thessalonians 2:⁸ And then *the lawless one* will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

Whoever destroyed the temple in 70 AD was definitely not killed by the coming of the Lord!

What Paul *is* saying here is that we who are saved are not destined to be thrown into hell, which is the ultimate result of God's *eternal* wrath, not some *temporary* wrath event.

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Also, read verse 10 again: “*whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him*”. This, too, shows that there will be living Christians on earth when the Lord returns. That’s how he defined the rapture, we (*believers*) who are living when the Lord returns....

Let’s take a look at this in another way. God’s *temporary* wrath is a series of events that are cataclysmic and far-reaching. There will be hailstones (*meteors and hail*), tsunamis, earthquakes... all kinds of things we now call “acts of God”. These things happen already. How many Christians are killed around the world by earthquakes alone? How about hurricanes or tsunamis?

We cannot take this verse and twist it to mean something that it doesn’t. Death is something that comes to all mankind, saved or not. It is the result of sin in this fallen world, which we all have. If God wishes to rain down His wrath against this sinful world – of which we are all a part – then what does it matter if some of His children get killed in the process? They would die very soon anyway. And it isn’t the saving of the mortal flesh that matters; it’s the saving of the soul from God’s *eternal* wrath.

Do not confuse mortal death with spiritual death.

Therefore, this argument denies the reality of death and suffering that has come and will continue to come upon believers every single day. It also confuses the clear distinctions between the events of God’s Wrath and those of Satan’s wrath listed below

(Beginning on Next Page):

Chapter 5 - The Wrath of God

God's Wrath ~ 150 days

1st Trumpet: Hailstones, Fire, "Blood"

1/3 of the planet affected
(Revelation 8:7)

1st Bowl: Skin sores on godless people who have the mark of the beast (Revelation 16:2)

2nd Trumpet: Asteroid hits the sea, turning it red and destroying 1/3 of sea life and ships (Revelation 8:8-9)

2nd Bowl: Sea turns to "blood", killing ALL sea life (Revelation 16:3)

3rd Trumpet: Asteroid hits the land, fouling 1/3 of fresh water (Revelation 8:10-11)

3rd Bowl: Fresh water turns to "blood"

(Revelation 16:4)

4th Trumpet: Obscuration blocking 1/3 of the sky over the earth (Revelation 8:12)

4th Bowl: Coronal Mass Eruption?

(Revelation 16:8-9)

5th Trumpet: Demon named "Destroyer" leads locust attack (Revelation 9:1-11)

5th Bowl: Beast's kingdom **God's Wrath (cont.)**

plunged into darkness; painful sores (Revelation 16:10-11)

6th Trumpet: 4 angels kill 1/3 of mankind - A mighty army set loose | possibly nuclear holocaust (Revelation 9:12-21)

6th Bowl: Demonic activity; Euphrates dried up (allows army from the East to pass); Gathering for Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16)

7th Bowl: Lightning, thunder, hailstones and greatest earthquake ever (Revelation 16:17-21)

7th Trumpet: Christ takes possession of the earth (Revelation 9:15-19)

Satan's Wrath ~ 3½ years

"Woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" (Rev 12:12)

The antichrist is allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. He blasphemes against God, makes war on the saints and conquers them. He is given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation. This calls for the endurance and faith of the saints. (Rev. 13:6-10)

Attack on Israel (Mt 24:15-22, Lk 21:20-24)

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Satan's wrath comes through acts of violence by men. God's Wrath is mainly through supernatural cataclysmic events (*as well as warfare*). Between the wraths of Satan and God, over one half of earth's population will perish, from just two events. After the totality of Satan's and God's Wrath has been completed, it's anyone's guess how many people will survive. I would not be surprised if only 1/7th of earth's population (*or less*) makes it through them both.

Isaiah seems to indicate that it will be much less. In his 24th chapter he tell us this:

Isaiah 24:¹Look! The Lord is about to destroy the earth
and make it a vast wasteland.

He devastates the surface of the earth
and scatters the people.

²Priests and laypeople,
servants and masters,
maids and mistresses,
buyers and sellers,
lenders and borrowers,
bankers and debtors—none will be spared.

³The earth will be completely emptied and looted.
The Lord has spoken!

⁴The earth mourns and dries up,
and the land wastes away and withers.
Even the greatest people on earth waste away.

⁵The earth suffers for the sins of its people,
for they have twisted God's instructions,
violated his laws,
and broken his everlasting covenant.

⁶Therefore, a curse consumes the earth.
Its people must pay the price for their sin.
They are destroyed by fire,
and only a few are left alive.

Chapter 5 - The Wrath of God

- ⁷The grapevines waste away,
and there is no new wine.
All the merry-makers sigh and mourn.
- ⁸The cheerful sound of tambourines is stilled;
the happy cries of celebration are heard no more.
The melodious chords of the harp are silent.
- ⁹Gone are the joys of wine and song;
alcoholic drink turns bitter in the mouth.
- ¹⁰The city writhes in chaos;
every home is locked to keep out intruders.
- ¹¹Mobs gather in the streets, crying out for wine.
Joy has turned to gloom.
Gladness has been banished from the land.
- ¹²The city is left in ruins,
its gates battered down.
- ¹³**Throughout the earth the story is the same—
only a remnant is left,
like the stray olives left on the tree
or the few grapes left on the vine after harvest.**
- ¹⁴But all who are left shout and sing for joy.
Those in the west praise the Lord's majesty.
- ¹⁵In eastern lands, give glory to the Lord.
In the lands beyond the sea, praise the name of
the Lord, the God of Israel.
- ¹⁶We hear songs of praise from the ends of the earth,
songs that give glory to the Righteous One!
But my heart is heavy with grief.
Weep for me, for I wither away.
Deceit still prevails,
and treachery is everywhere.
- ¹⁷Terror and traps and snares will be your lot,
you people of the earth.
- ¹⁸Those who flee in terror will fall into a trap,

and those who escape the trap will be caught in a snare.

Destruction falls like rain from the heavens;
the foundations of the earth shake.

¹⁹The earth has broken up.
It has utterly collapsed;
it is violently shaken.

²⁰The earth staggers like a drunk.
It trembles like a tent in a storm.

It falls and will not rise again,
for the guilt of its rebellion is very heavy.

²¹In that day the Lord will punish the gods in the heavens
and the proud rulers of the nations on earth.

²²They will be rounded up and put in prison.
They will be shut up in prison
and will finally be punished.

²³Then the glory of the moon will wane,
and the brightness of the sun will fade,
for the Lord of Heaven's Armies will rule on Mount
Zion.

He will rule in great glory in Jerusalem,
in the sight of all the leaders of his people.

II. God Loves His Children

Much like the above objection, this one says that, "If God loves his children, why would He let them suffer?"

If this is an objection of yours, then you need to learn about the suffering that has been occurring to the followers of Christ since the beginning. Even Christ suffered — most of all. Almost all of the apostles were killed, and even John was tortured. Remember Stephen? In fact, Peter tells us that

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we will grow closer to God through suffering (1st Peter 4:12-19, below).

Hebrews 2:¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Philippians 1:²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.

1st Peter 4:¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Revelation 12:¹¹ And they [the brethren] have conquered him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the

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word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death... ¹⁷ Then the dragon [Satan] became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus [i.e. Christians]. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Revelation 13:⁵ And the beast [antichrist] was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months [1,260 days]. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

This objection does not come from Bible study. It comes from a fearful heart and clouded judgment. We must not forget God's promise to wipe every tear from our eyes. However, God will wipe every tear from our eyes AFTER we die, not necessarily before.

Chapter 5 - The Wrath of God

Questions to Ponder

1. What are some differences between God's *temporary* wrath and his *eternal* wrath?
2. Is the book of Revelation given to us in a strictly chronological manner from beginning to end?
3. In Revelation, the visions of the Trumpets and Bowls depict God's *temporary* wrath upon the world, true or false?
4. The account of Revelation 20:11-15 depicts God's *eternal* wrath, true or false?

Answers

1. There is no offer of repentance in God's *eternal* wrath, like there is in His *temporary* wrath; His *temporary* wrath may be visited upon His own people; the cross brings salvation from His *eternal* wrath; etc.
2. No. It depicts visions of events, and the order of the presentation of the visions may be different than the order of the events they portray.
3. True
4. True

Chapter 6 – THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Duration: Unknown (A day? A week? Longer?)

Timing: During God's (Christ's) Wrath

Key Scriptures: Mt 24:29-31; 1 Thes. 5:1-11; 2 Thes. 2:1-12;

Rev. 8:1-5; 11:15-19; 16:17-21; 19:1-21

I'd like to remind the reader that when we talk of the "return" of Christ, we are talking about His actually setting down on earth, not His appearing in the sky. I make this distinction because it seems that the Lord will be visible and audible in the sky during His acts of fury and vengeance (*known as God's Wrath*) for up to several months, apparently, before He sets foot on the ground.

Just as God's Wrath is mentioned as a part of the Day of the Lord, so is His return.

There are three main conflicting doctrines about the timing of the Lord's return. They are:

1. Premillennialism
2. Postmillennialism
3. Amillennialism

Premillennialism is what this study shows. It is the belief that the Lord's return is before (pre) the millennium. I believe that this is the biblical viewpoint.

Postmillennialism says that the Lord's return is after the millennium. Amillennialism says that there is no millennium. Both of these views, while very different from each other and premillennialism, use a hermeneutic that is more dependent upon a metaphorical or figurative reading than a literalistic or plain meaning one. To me, these two views lack a certain measure of faith in the word of God; that He is unable to make things happen exactly as He

Chapter 6 - The Return of Christ

foretells — however miraculous the events may or may not seem. I'm not going to beat up on these views; I'll just move on without delving into them any further. However, I encourage the reader to study these two views for knowledge-sake. And realize that adherents of these views are just as Christian as the premillennialists (*just wrong*).

I've already shared my mental image of God's Wrath. Now I'd like to share how I envision the Lord's return.

I see the Lord coming into our solar system riding His white horse leading His angel armies, radiantly shining from their mighty glory, like a comet — only brighter. Entering our physical universe and solar system, they pass by Pluto, Neptune, Uranus and Saturn. The world sees the light coming our way. Perhaps as He approaches the asteroid belt He clears His path and hurls thousands of meteorites and asteroids on ahead of His angel armies, pummeling the earth and filling it with ash, smoke and fire.

After all of the calamities experienced by these astral projectiles, the whole world is turned to even greater panic. The report from the astrophysicists is that there are even more countless small objects heading directly toward our already reeling planet. These small "objects" are Christ and His angel armies. The time taken to arrive is anyone's guess. Did he show up first to be seen at the edge of the solar system and then send the meteoric barrage on ahead of his army? I don't know. But onward He comes, His radiance looming brighter and larger as He approaches.

The holy procession enters the atmosphere of earth and begins to orbit the rebellious planet. Christ is showing His full fury, just as He did in the temple when He cleared out

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the criminals from it. Do they follow the pattern of Jericho and circle the land they are about to inhabit seven times? Here is the parade of all parades and the conquest of all conquests — millions of mounted angels in full glory, led by the King of all Kings, coming to take back what is rightfully His.

Think of the contrast between this triumphal arrival compared to the child in the manger: the First Advent begins with a baby's cry; the Second Advent begins with shouts of fury, coupled with devastation upon the hostile planet. Angels are shouting with a loud call to those on the surface, "*repent, for the day of the Lord is here!*" (Rev. 14:6-11). The Lord utters His voice before His army, for His camp is exceedingly great; He who executes His word is powerful.

For the day of the Lord is great and very awesome; who can endure it? (Joel 2:11) Will He orbit the planet for nearly 150 days after His appearance? Will He call up His faithful to Him after 75 days?

A mighty trumpet blast is heard by all. It echoes across the cosmos and into the spirit realm. Angels call for the Lord's own to join them. The believers who have previously perished are raised to life in their new, glorified bodies and join the angelic host in the clouds. Now billions are flying through the air, dressed in white robes and righteousness, full of joy at the return of our blessed King. Is it the same orbit or a little later when those living saints on the ground are also caught up to join the royal spectacle above? Caught up and transformed in a blink, they too now have glory and perfection. The hope of their salvation is finally realized. The time has come. No more pain (*for them*). No more tears. No more death. No more sin to contend with. The earth

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quakes, as if with excitement at the return of its Maker. Mountains topple, islands sink into the sea, which is now tossing and churning. The clouds burst with hail and furious exhilaration. The very earth itself is jumping and spinning like a child at the return of its beloved father. After the seventh orbit, however many days it has taken to get here, after destroying the massive army assembled in the Valley of Megiddo, the holy host touches down on the ground, with the Lord touching down on the Mount of Olives, splitting it in two. Maranatha realized!

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Peter's message above covers the entire Day of the Lord; all thousand years of it. Just as a thousand years are like a day to God, so the millennium is but a day (2 Peter 3:8). It is the time for Him to show us how life should have been. Don't get confused by Peter's words. He is not saying that the final judgment will happen immediately. There is much that will happen at that time: God's Wrath; the Lord's return; the resurrection; the rapture; Armageddon; the imprisonment of Satan; the millennial reign; the release of Satan; the final rebellion of man; the great judgment; the destruction of this universe; the creation of a new earth and new heavens.

Also, don't get too hung up on the saying that the Lord's Day comes like a thief in the night, as if the elect will not be prepared. Jesus gave us a parable to show us that it will be the ones who are not looking for Him who are surprised

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(Mt 24:45-51). Paul also lets us know that if we are in the light, we will not be taken by surprise (*below*). This is why the Bible tells us to watch and eagerly await His return. Let this encourage you.

1st Thessalonians 5:¹ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Paul also tells us what to look for to know that our Lord's arrival is near. When you read the passage below, notice how Paul treats the return of the Lord and our being gathered to Him (*resurrection and rapture*) as a single event.

Chapter 6 - The Return of Christ

Also, it's important to note that the temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt so that the antichrist can reveal himself in it. As shown earlier, this is the Abomination of Desolation that ushers in the Great Tribulation. Notice, too, that the Lord kills him by the breath of His mouth upon His return.

2nd Thessalonians 2:¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶ And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, ¹² in order that all may be condemned who

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did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Did you notice the strong delusion mentioned above? Did you also notice that you should not allow yourself to be deceived in any way? Remember the great falling away warned about in the Great Tribulation. When the pretrib rapture does not happen, could it affect the faith of many? Will there be a counterfeit rapture (*great signs and wonders accomplished by the false prophet*)?

Matthew 24:³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

By now you should know that the above prophecy from Jesus is fulfilled during the wrath of God, which is after the tribulation. All the nations of earth will see His glorious return. There is no hint of two returns or a two-part return anywhere in the Bible, much less a definitive statement that contradicts the clear teaching we've seen so far.

I now believe that the great and furious acts of Jesus shown immediately below happen while He is orbiting or hovering over the earth. I haven't read anything to contradict this belief. As you read the following passages, try to vividly imagine in your mind's eye what's happening. Better yet, pray that the Lord would show you how it will look.

Chapter 6 - The Return of Christ

Seventh Bowl

Revelation 16:¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into 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, rumblings, [or *voices*, or *sounds*] peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. ¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. ²¹ And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds [*a talent in weight*] each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

Seventh (Last/Final) Trumpet

Revelation 11:¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, 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 shall 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 thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

¹⁸ The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, [or *voices*, or *sounds*] peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

The above passage is a bit confusing. We don't know WHEN this takes place. Is this a flashback to just before God's Wrath? Is it a combination of events prior to and after God's Wrath? Does it cover the entire Day of the Lord — all 1,000 years of it? Spiritual visions like this can be extremely difficult to discern accurately. Perhaps we should simply take the clear meaning of this passage and see it as a proclamation of Christ taking possession of the world.

Revelation 19:1 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

³ Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."

⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" ⁵ And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the

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sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,
“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty
reigns.

- ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
- ⁹ And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”
- ¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The Rider on a White Horse

- ¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in [*sprinkled with*] blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

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¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence [*on its behalf*] had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

You just read all of Revelation, chapter 19. It’s a grand vision of spiritual and physical elements that come together to give us a picture of a very pivotal time in earth’s history: the changing of ownership of earth, from man and Satan to God and His Christ. It’s the end of this age and the beginning of the next. I’m not going to attempt to pick through this amazing scene in this little study. Our study here is one of large, broad strokes; not the precise, detailed parsing of such a difficult to explain account as this chapter.

The last paragraph in this chapter will be discussed in our study of Armageddon, a little later. And just like with Revelation 11, we can’t use this chapter as a hard and fast timeline — it’s too vague and difficult to discern in that way.

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I think that for now we should just grab ahold of the hope and inspiration provided by its depiction of our being included in His grand scheme and our unification with Him, while we weigh the severity of His punishment of the worldly, wicked, and ungodly sinners for all they have done regarding the mistreatment of His faithful saints, and their rebellion against His holy ways.

In all of our study of the return of the Lord, has there been a single verse that so much as hints at the return of Christ being split into two parts? I haven't seen it. To the contrary, all verses seem to indicate that it is a single, one time event that is seen by all (*both dead and living; both angel and man; both saved and damned*).

Further, as I study these things, I see no need to try to force a double return of the Lord onto the text – other than my own fear of the enemy and a lack of faith in God's power to save (*if that is His will*). Also, along these lines, why would I want to adopt the attitude of the unsaved toward death? They are fearful of death and try all they can to avoid it. I have no such desire or fear. For me, death is the opportunity to rid myself of this sinful flesh and join the Lord in heavenly bliss. If I am killed by a tsunami, an earthquake, or any other act of God, what do I care? I will immediately be with the Lord! If I am killed by man or demon, that's on his head, not mine, and I still enter my full union and joy with Jesus.

Matthew 24:³⁶ “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son¹², but the Father only.”

¹² Not all manuscripts contain *nor the Son*.

I think that the Lord was referring to His return when He said the above quote. Nearly all detractors of the posttribulational view have used this verse to discredit it. But, in fact, we can have this verse and the posttrib view too — and without making Daniel out to be a false prophet.

The simple answer is that Jesus said, “no one *knows*” (*not could know, or would know*). He also said that even *He* didn’t know (*according to some, but not all, manuscripts*). Of course, Jesus did not use His full divine abilities while in the mortal flesh. But after His resurrection and glorification, He most certainly again took up His omniscience. So He must surely know now when He will return. And if His statement was confined to the time that He made the remark regarding His own knowledge, why can’t it also apply to our knowledge? In other words, He said, “no one *knows*”, meaning that when He made the statement, no one knew — not even Himself. And indeed, no one could know, even after the abomination that causes desolation is revealed in the Jewish temple. Plus, I remind you of my earlier statements about Matthew 24:45-51 and 2nd Thessalonians 2, that we will not be in the dark if we are faithful to the Lord as to the approximate time of these things.

So, using a “plain meaning” hermeneutic, this verse does not negate the posttribulational view. Which is a good thing, considering the plethora of other biblical teaching that confirms it.

Also, if the Lord is in the sky during His fury, then we cannot possibly know exactly how long this will last. As I’ve said already, I think He will be visible beginning at some point during His acts of wrath. He may be in the sky for five

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months or more before He sets foot on earth. Certainly, we cannot say to the exact day or hour when He will touch foot to earth. But we do know it will be after the tribulation (*according to Jesus in Matthew 24:29-31*). So, the posttribulational view is not disturbed at all by Jesus' proclamation concerning the precise day or hour, especially since we don't know if He's referring to when He is first seen or when He touches down on earth.

Again, Daniel did not make it clear whether the "blessed" event of Daniel 12:12 was His first appearing in the sky, or the atmosphere, or His touching down on the Mount of Olives, or the joining of the saints with our precious Lord. We do not know how long His conquest will last during His Second Advent. Will He make one earth orbit, two, seven or some other number, or just move about randomly? How fast will he be traveling through space and the air? No one can say for sure. So since we do not have these details and Daniel did not provide them either, we can certainly say that no one knows the exact day or hour of the Lord's return (*onto the surface*).

So, Daniel is not a false prophet, and we don't know what other details are missing from our knowledge that would let us know the exact day and hour. This objection in no way discredits the posttribulational view.

Objections to the Posttrib View Regarding 2nd Coming

I. Two Returns of the Lord

In Christendom we use the word "advent" to refer to a physical coming of Christ to the earth. The First Advent was in the first century when He arrived as a baby, born of a virgin. The Second Advent will be when He returns as the

King of all kings and Lord of all lords to rule the earth with an iron scepter. There is no historic or biblical teaching of a third advent.

In the pretribulational doctrine, the Second Advent is taught to occur in two stages. While this may not be taught as a Second and Third Advent, per se, it has that practical result. While I would like very much to examine the biblical evidence for a splitting of the Second Advent into two stages, I am at a loss to find any biblical reference to such. All scriptural references I can find seem to point to a single Second Advent. Therefore, all I can do is point to some teachings from adherents of this position and then compare them to scripture.

In the pretribulationalists' exposition of their view, it is common for them to make a distinction between the rapture of the Church and the return of Christ. They attempt to portray them as separate events, which happen at different times. This is accomplished through an eisegetical approach of pointing out distinctions between various scriptures and attempting to present them as covering two separate events, rather than seeing them as two points of view, or a fuller revelation, of the same single event.

For example, Ed Hindson^[13] shows some verses that discuss the rapture and compares them with some verses

13 Edward E. Hindson, "The Rapture and the Return: Two Aspects of Christ's Coming," in *When the Trumpet Sounds: Today's Foremost Authorities Speak Out on End-Time Controversies*, ed. Thomas D. Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene: Harvest House, 1995), 157-159.

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that discuss the return of Christ. He then attempts to point out that the distinctions in the verses prove his case — that they are two separate events. This argument can take the following form:

- At the rapture, Christ comes *for* His own (Jn 14:3; **1 Thess 4:17**; 2 Thess 2:1)
- At the return, Christ comes *with* His own (1 Thess 3:13; Jude 14; Rev 19:14)

This parsing of the message can only come about by ignoring the full revelation of scripture. For instance, notice that 1st Thessalonians 4:17 is used as a proof text above. When we read the surrounding text of 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18, we see that Paul is clearly teaching that the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the rapture of the living in Christ happen upon His return. In Paul's clear teaching, he shows Christ as coming both *with* and *for* His own. To attempt to split these away from each other and separate them by a period of years seems to violate the text.

Reason would show us that the Resurrection of the dead is the saints coming *with* Jesus and that the Rapture of the living is Jesus coming *for* the saints. And since Paul shows these occurring together with the Return of Christ (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and elsewhere*), we can conclude very confidently that Jesus comes both with and for His saints at the same time. Not only is there no reason to split these events, but it is unreasonable to separate them.

Other pretrib expositors will say it is imperative to keep these two (*rapture and return*) separated from each other in one's mind. The first return, they will say, is solely to remove the Church from the earth so that we will not have

to go through the terrible times to come. After the horror is over, so they say, the Lord comes back with His Church to take back the world.

I recently read one expositor^[14] who wrote that there are three reasons it is important to keep these two returns separate. They are:

1. If the rapture and the second coming are the same event, believers will have to go through the tribulation (*1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10*).
2. If the rapture and the second coming are the same event, the return of Christ is not imminent—there are many things which must occur before He can return (*Matthew 24:4-30*).
3. In describing the tribulation period, Revelation chapters 6–19 nowhere mention the church. During the tribulation—also called “the time of trouble for Jacob” (*Jeremiah 30:7*)—God will again turn His primary attention to Israel (*Romans 11:17-31*).

So, in essence the argument is that “If we don’t separate them, then we’ll have to go through the tribulation and Jesus’ return wouldn’t be imminent”. That’s called circular reasoning (*or should I say wishful thinking?*). What they are really saying is that “we can’t go through the tribulation because we’ve said we can’t”. Or, “the Bible can’t teach it because we don’t teach it”. This is an eisegetical hermeneutic and is woefully flawed at its very core. No wonder they are confused.

¹⁴ <http://www.gotquestions.org/difference-Rapture-Second-Coming.html> (author’s name not provided)

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There is no verse in the Bible that even hints (*explicitly*) at the Lord's second coming being split into two parts, 7 years apart or 7 seconds. If this were the Lord's will, would He not have clearly told us so? (*See Amos 3:7*)

The biblical reality is that: There is only one second coming of the Lord taught, not two; His return is not imminent, as evidenced by all of these prophetic events that have been examined in this study; and the book of Revelation does indeed discuss the followers of Christ throughout its pages, just not with a particular word (*Ekklesia*) that this person was looking for. See the sections below for further discussion on "**Imminent Return**" and "**Church and Holy Spirit Removed**".

II. Day and Hour Unknown

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus told of many things that will come to pass during the tribulation and after. During His discourse, he said the following:

Matthew 24:36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." (Some manuscripts omit *nor the Son.*) He continues, 42 "Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."

Because of this statement, the argument goes, "When the antichrist is revealed, we will know to the day when Christ will return, according to Daniel." There are three responses to this objection:

1. Jesus said no one “knows” (*present tense*), implying that in the future we might know.
2. With the confusion concerning the Hebrew calendar and whether the plague of locusts will be cut short or not, it is difficult to know with certainty if the days of Daniel’s prophecy can be precisely counted (*not that they are wrong, just whether we can count them accurately*).
3. We don’t know if Daniel was referring to His appearing in the sky or His touching down on earth (*which could be different days*).

I have already addressed this issue in this chapter, so I’ll not belabor the point any further.

III. Imminent Return

There are many, many verses that speak to being eager, waiting, looking for, or watching for the Lord’s return. In fact, it very well may sound like He could come back at any minute. But, as already shown from Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians and Jesus’ Olivet Discourse, it is unbiblical to say that He could come back at any time other than what has been taught in scripture, such as specific prophecies.

However eager we may be for the Lord to return (*and Posttribulation adherents are just as eager as anyone else*), however watchful and expectant, we must acknowledge that He cannot come at a different time than when He and the Holy Spirit have said. If He did, then His word is not true and He has lied to us. That is not an option that I will entertain. Jesus said that He will come back when “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the

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heavens will be shaken.” And since this occurs, according to His same word, “Immediately *after* the tribulation”, there is no possibility that he will return at any time before that. You know, Peter told us that we’d get anxious about this.

2 Peter 3:⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

All of those verses that say “watch”, “be ready”, and whatever else conveys an eager expectation, were written about 2,000 years ago. It’s time we pay attention to the clearer verses that speak directly to the timing of these things (*as we have been doing in this study*).

As already shown above under “**Two Returns of the Lord**”, this doctrine of Imminent Return can only be postulated by forcing a divide between the return of Christ and the resurrection/rapture of His faithful. Both Paul and Jesus in their teachings on this show these three events as occurring jointly.

Questions to Ponder

1. What Bible verse clearly shows two returns or a two-stage return of the Lord?
2. Whether we will know the exact day or hour of Christ's return or not, we will know the approximate time, true or false?
3. What are some Bible verses that show the return of Christ happening in conjunction with the resurrection and the rapture?

Answers
1. None. (Carefully scrutinize any given.)
2. True. See Matthew 24:3-35
3. MT 24:30-31; 2 THESS 2:1; 1 THESS 4:13-17;
1 COR 15:23

Chapter 7 – THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD IN CHRIST

Duration: Instant

Timing: At the return of Christ

Key Scriptures: 1 Thes 4:15; 2 Thes 2:3-4; Mt 24:29-31; Jn 6:40

Reading the following verses, it should be very plain that the resurrection of the departed saints happens at the return of Christ. Notice that these make it obvious that they are discussing the resurrection of the dead in Christ; not the dead who are damned.

Matthew 24:³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

John 6:⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

1st Corinthians 15:²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Below is an interesting revelation. Like Revelation 7, it shows saints who die in the tribulation being raised as the first resurrection. If saints die in the tribulation, and the resurrection is at the Lord's return, then the resurrection MUST be after the tribulation. And just as Jesus said, His return is after the tribulation.

Revelation 20:⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was

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committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. 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 ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

The Mark of the Beast is only shown to be forced upon the world during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 13:16-17). Therefore, these saints die in the Great Tribulation. Since the dead in Christ are raised upon His return — and there is not one verse that shows His return to happen before the tribulation — we can only conclude that the resurrection (*of the dead in Christ*) occurs after the Great Tribulation. And this is indeed in concert with the full revelation of scripture.

I should note that some teachers of the pretrib view have come up with a special sect or group of believers called “tribulation saints”. Who these are exactly varies from one teacher to another. Some say they are only Jews, others don’t. However, the concept is completely flawed as it attempts to color these saints as being in a different category from the rest of the saints.

I don’t even want to go into all of the ways that this is unbiblical. I’ll just point out that one of the major themes of Paul is the unity of believers. Coming up with some sort of

Chapter 7 - The Resurrection

other class of believers is patently ridiculous — and not just unsupported by scripture, but contradicted by it.

A Question to Ponder

Since the return of Christ occurs after the Great Tribulation and during God's Wrath (Mt 24:29-30) and the resurrection occurs upon Christ's return (MT 24:30-31; 2 Thess 2:1; 1 Thess 4:13-17; 1 Cor 15:23), can the resurrection of the believers occur prior to the tribulation?

Chapter 8 – THE RAPTURE

Duration: Instant

Timing: At the return of Christ during God's Wrath, following and in conjunction with the resurrection

Key Scriptures: 1 Thes. 4; 2 Thes. 2; 1 Cor. 15; Mt. 24:31

Let's now look at the rapture.

There are 5 main views on the timing of the Rapture:

1. Pretrib — It happens before the tribulation.
2. Midtrib — It happens at the transition into the Great Tribulation (*midway through the tribulation*).
3. Prewrath — It happens before the Wrath of God.
4. Posttrib — It happens after the Tribulation.
5. Never — There is no Rapture.

IF any of these views is correct, only one can be the truth. Since truth matters, we should take this very seriously and rightly divide the Word of God.

With all of these conflicting views, a lot of believers simply give up on trying to understand this issue. Others take a stand based on who teaches it. Unfortunately, some are very militant about it and refuse to fellowship with others who see things differently. But we should NOT give up on understanding this, because it can be understood. We should not blindly follow ANY teacher, especially if that person's teaching contradicts the Bible. And we should NEVER deny fellowship to any believer based on a different view on a position that does not really matter in the long run. This subject has nothing to do with our salvation or the nature of God and should therefore not be divisive.

My own position is what I call "*Mid Wrath*" – that it happens after the tribulation (*posttrib*), while Jesus is still

Chapter 8 - The Rapture

executing His great wrath upon the earth (*prior to setting foot on the Mount of Olives*). As we saw in Chapter 5 on THE WRATH OF GOD, His wrath could very well last for at least five months. I believe that He will remain in the air for the duration of His wrath events (*which are numerous*) and that He will call His faithful to Himself just before the great earthquake that levels mountains (*see Rev. 6:12, 11:16, 16:18; Eze. 38:19*). I do not mean that it will be exactly mid-way into his wrath (*75 days*), but that it will be during His wrath. It could be toward the beginning, middle or end.

The following passage is the clearest teaching known to man about the thing we call the rapture. Notice how Paul is very pointedly putting this whole thing together for us.

1st Thessalonians 4:¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left 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 cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

End Times Made Easy

Now, you might be thinking that you did not read the word “rapture” there. If so, you’d be right. Rapture is the name of the event (*the doctrine*), not how it’s printed on the pages of our Bibles. Here’s how the word “rapture” came to be used for this doctrinal event (*as far as I understand it*).

In verse 17, Paul’s word is translated as “will be caught up” in most English versions. He says the living believers will be caught up to meet the just resurrected believers in the air with the Lord. Since Paul wrote in Greek, we look to the Greek version to see what word he used.

When we go to a Greek Interlinear Bible (*and everyone should have one*), we see this Greek word: ἀρπαγησόμεθα, which is transliterated (*sounded out*) as harpagēsometha. Then we go to a concordance (*which everyone should have also*) and look up that Greek word. When we do, we see that the root word is ἀρπάζω, which is transliterated as harpazó. Harpazo is a verb, which means to seize, catch up, or snatch away. In our verse, it is in the future tense. So it speaks to a sudden act of grabbing all believers who are still alive on earth at Christ’s return.

The way we came to this word has a few steps:

Greek (*original*) = Harpazó

Latin Vulgate = Rapiemur (*root word Raptus*)

Middle French = Rapture

English = Rapture

Since English and French are based on Latin, the word Rapture has stuck and became the word used for the doctrine. Now it is widely used to identify this doctrine.

Chapter 8 - The Rapture

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth in his first letter, he described the transformation that must occur to both living and dead believers at the return of Christ:

1st Corinthians 15: ⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in 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 shall be changed.** ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

So putting these together we see that the rapture involves changing our mortal flesh into immortal flesh, and that it happens very quickly, as we are being “caught up” into the sky (*the physical atmosphere of earth*) to join with Jesus as He returns to us. And this happens at His return, which is after the tribulation (*see Mt 24:29-31, here*).

Matthew 24:29-31

²⁹“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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, **and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**”

Going back to 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 15 is quite emphatic. We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have died. The same is true for verses 16 and 17.

Here's what he is saying:

- The Lord returns
- The dead in Christ are resurrected, receiving their new glorified bodies.
- Immediately and concurrently, the living are transformed and join the lord and the others in the air (*literally, the atmosphere*).

Here's how the Lord put it:

Matthew 24:³¹ And he [Jesus] will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Earlier (*chronologically*), Jesus said it this way:

John 6:⁴⁰ "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Paul told the Corinthians that this will happen at the last trumpet (*7th Trumpet of God's wrath*), and that the transformation will be instant. Again, he has the dead raised first and then the living. We saw earlier that the seventh (*and last*) trumpet accompanies the Lord's return.

Chapter 8 - The Rapture

These verses make a pretribulational, mid-tribulational, or pre-wrath rapture absolutely impossible (*as well as the belief that there is no rapture*).

1st Corinthians 15:⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep [*die*], but we shall 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 shall be changed.

To think that there will be a rapture prior to the resurrection of the dead in Christ (*which includes some believers killed in the great tribulation*) denies what Paul taught about the rapture. Namely, that the dead in Christ MUST be raised first (*the resurrection*), and then the living must be raised (*caught up*) and transformed as well (*the rapture*).

Not only does the Bible NOT show that the rapture occurs before the tribulation, it shows that it occurs AFTER the tribulation. This is why it occurs POSTtrib (*after the tribulation*).

To hold to a PREtrib view is also inconsistent with many other revelations in scripture (*such as the unity of the Church, for one*).

We know that there is only one Church, one Bride of Christ, and that she is awaiting her Groom to come and be with her. So when we read that some (*actually a huge number of*) believers are killed in the Great Tribulation, we can know for certain that the resurrection of those dead will be after the Great Tribulation.

There is no biblical reference for splitting the Church into different groups, where some are on earth and others are not. Therefore, the term and notion of “Tribulation Saints” should be vigorously denied. It has no biblical foundation at all.

Objections to the Posttrib View Regarding the Rapture Rosh Hashanah Portrays the Rapture

This argument is fairly complicated to explain, only because there is much detail in the symbology associated with the Seven Jewish Feasts. So, I’ll begin with a very quick overview of these seven feasts.

In the Bible, seven feasts are decreed to take place throughout the year. These are God-ordained feasts for the Jews. The first four feasts take place in the spring; the last three take place in the fall. The first four pertain to the First Advent of Christ (*when He first came to earth*); the last three pertain to His Second Advent (*when He comes again at the end of the age*).

Here are the names, dates and meanings of these feasts:

1. Passover (Pesach) – Nisan 15 – pictures the death of Jesus Christ (Exodus 12)
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot) – Nisan 15-22 – pictures the burial of Jesus Christ (Exodus 12)
3. Feast of First Fruits (Reishit Katzir) – Nisan 17– pictures the resurrection of Christ (Leviticus 23)
4. Pentecost (Shavuot) – Sivan 6 – pictures the descent of the Holy Spirit & the birth of the Church

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5. Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah/Yom Teru'ah) – Tishri 1-2 – awakening to judgment; God's Wrath; Jewish New Year
6. Feast of Atonement (Yom Kippur) – Tishri 10 – Second coming, Israel's national salvation, judgment
7. Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) – Tishri 15-22 – restored fellowship with the Lord

(Due to the differences in the Jewish and Gregorian (the one we now use worldwide) calendars, the Gregorian dates are different each year.)

Since the first four feasts are not contended and do not address the End Times, let's just look at the last three feasts. This will be a very brief overview. For more on these, personal study is encouraged. However, as you do so, it is important to not overlook the totality of revelation on the End Times, and always remember that the Word of God is always consistent with itself and truth.

A. Rosh Hashanah

(Literally, "the Head of the Year")

Leviticus 23:²⁴ "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation."

Falling on the first two days of Tishri (*usually in September or October*), it is to be 10 days of prayer, self-examination and repentance. These 10 days are called "the days of awe" (Yamim Norai'm). It also commemorates the creation of the universe.

The reference to the trumpets shows an apparent connection to the wrath of God, which is heralded by the trumpets in Revelation. Therefore, the Feast of Trumpets could be tied prophetically to the Wrath of God. The Jewish customs of prayer, reflection, and repentance during this time are appropriate habits to form in preparation for the difficulty that will be forced upon us during the future time of testing and approval. This is also a good practice to prepare us for such fierce trial as we will see in the tribulation, which immediately precedes God's Wrath. That these days are called "the days of awe" is most telling of the display of God's awesome power in His plagues of wrath.

To attempt to explain this feast as foreshadowing the rapture (*prior to the tribulation*) shows a misunderstanding of the meaning of the symbology portrayed in its practice. The trumpets' heralding, the call to repentance and solemnity, and the "awe" of it all should be obvious references to the events of God's final outpouring of calamity and suffering, which is designed to call sinners to repentance. I can see no correlation to a snatching away from peril in these symbolic descriptions. Yom Kippur and Sukkot, however, speak volumes to our union with Christ.

B. Yom Kippur

(Literally, "the Day of Atonement")

Leviticus 23:²⁷ "Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the Lord.

²⁸ And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you

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before the Lord your God. ²⁹ For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. ³² It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath.”

Held on the tenth day of Tishri, this feast symbolizes the second coming of Messiah; the restoration of Israel; and judgment of the world; on the heels (*or in conjunction*), by the way, of the wrath of God.

It represents a day of deliverance and salvation, eternally delivered from the hands of our enemies. It marks the climax of Rosh Hashanah.

On Yom Kippur, everyone’s fate will be sealed (*no more chance of salvation if not already received*), at least until the final judgment.

It’s the holiest day of the year.

This will be the day that our salvation is realized. It will be the actual redemption of our eternal souls; the day we finally put on incorruption and the glory of our Lord and Savior. So much of scripture refers to this blessed event it would be a tall order to find all of the references to it. However, in keeping with the timeline of this thesis, we can simply look to 1st Peter 4 and see it in light of Leviticus 23.

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Leviticus 23:²⁹ For whoever is *not afflicted* on that very day shall be cut off from his people.

1 Peter 4:¹² Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³ Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.

And when is Christ's glory revealed to the world? Upon His return. And I'll remind you again what Paul said about this glorious day:

1st Thessalonians 4:¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left 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 cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

How can Paul say, "we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord", if we are removed BEFORE the coming of the Lord?

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C. Sukkot

(The Feast of Tabernacles)

Leviticus 23:³⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the Lord.”

Observed from the 15th to the 22nd of Tishri.

Commemorates the huts that the Israelites lived in during the 40-year sojourn in the desert.

This prophetically foreshadows the time when the Lord will once again tabernacle (*dwelt*) with His people here on earth during His millennial reign and after that in the new earth.

As you can see, the last three feasts portray the second coming of Christ in harmony with the teaching of Jesus, Paul, and John on the timing of the rapture of the Church, along with all of the other End Time topics.

Nothing about these three feasts speaks of a pretribulational rapture of the Church.

No, they quite clearly give us a foretaste of:

1. God's wrath
2. Jesus' return
3. His dwelling on earth with His people

In that order, to boot.

Questions to Ponder

1. In light of scriptures that depict believers in the tribulation (Rev 7:9-17; 12:17; 20:4), how can believers have been raptured prior to the tribulation?
2. In light of Paul's teaching that the Church is a single body (Gal 3:28; Eph 4:4; 1 Cor 12:12; Rom 12:4-5) how can the Church (*Bride of Christ*) be on earth (*suffering persecution*) and also in heaven (*being honored*) at the same time?
3. What passage of scripture is the clearest teaching on what we now call the "rapture"?

Answers

1. They can't. To say so is illogical and unscriptural.
2. It can't. To say so is illogical and unscriptural.
3. 1st Thessalonians 4:15-17

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Duration: Unknown

Timing: After the rapture and during God's Wrath

Key Scriptures: Ezekiel 38-39; Daniel 11; Revelation

16:12-16; 17:14; 19; Matthew 24:4-22

Armageddon is a battle, not a war. It is the final battle of the war. It's a battle where a gigantic army is assembled to fight against God Himself, Jesus, the returning Messiah, His angel armies, and His saints.

I can just imagine a vast host of hardened soldiers, gathered with all of their machinery of war, holding in formation at their appointed place, waiting for their enemy to arrive so that they can unleash their awesome firepower that has already laid waste to so much land and life. If they were amassed to fight against an army of men, they would be a formidable force indeed — perhaps the greatest ever. However, since they are there to fight against the God of all creation, the Almighty, it would be laughable, if not for the waste of humanity that will ensue. They will soon turn against each other, by the power of God, and annihilate themselves.

It's pretty much impossible at this time to determine exactly when this war, that Armageddon is the culmination of, begins. My feeling is that it begins around the same time as the tribulation, perhaps a little before. If this is so, it will last about seven and a half to eight years in all. This war already has a name given to it by Bible students, but when it happens it might be called "World War Three".

This war, presented in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, is known to most as "Ezekiel's War". Bible expositors are all over the place on when it might take place. Some (*like me*)

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say it's imminent; meaning it could happen at any time. Others say that it will occur during the millennium. And while I have joined Armageddon with Ezekiel's War, not all expositors are willing to do this. We will look into these things in the course of this chapter.

I'm sure that somebody somewhere tries to put this war into some point in past history, but the context of this biblical event does not allow this to happen. Neither does the text allow us to put this war in the millennium. But it will be in the future — perhaps the very near future.

Many, many students of eschatology attempt to determine exactly which nations are involved and who the leader will be (*or is*). Indeed, some of the nations are actually named in Ezekiel's prophecy. And while I'm guilty of doing this from time to time, the purpose of this study is to just show the basics, not the nitty gritty details. So, in this chapter we're going to see what the Bible actually says about this war and its final battle, and attempt to understand it in a plain-meaning, common sense, big-picture fashion.

In chapter 1, we looked at the books of Ezekiel and Daniel. We showed the similarities and connections between the main characters and how Gog is indeed the antichrist.

We could ask the questions, is Gog a metaphor, a symbol, a demon, or an actual person? If a living being, is it a single individual or a group of people? Is it a human or an angel/demon? Can we answer these questions? Let's see what we know.

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In the English Standard Version (ESV), the word “Gog” appears 12 times in the Bible. The first appearance is in 1 Chronicles 5:4, “The sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son”. This shows us that the word is used as a proper name at least once. Does this mean that this guy, Gog, is the same one that we see in Ezekiel? Do we take this person as a clue as to where the latter Gog lives? We’ll see as we move along. The next 10 appearances are in Ezekiel. We’ll look at these in a minute. The last one is in Revelation 20:8. Here is the passage:

Revelation 20:⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

We are going to look at the millennium in the next chapter. But for now, I’ll just say that this “Gog and Magog” in the millennium cannot be the same “Gog and Magog” in Ezekiel’s War, because one appears before the return of Christ (*in Ezekiel*), and the other appears at the end of the millennium, 1,000 years later (*in Revelation*) – that is, if Gog is a person. If Gog is a demon, then he *could* appear in both places. If Gog is a people group, then both may be possible as well (*but not likely*).

There are some very compelling reasons why Gog of Ezekiel is not the same Gog of Revelation:

1. Gog of Ezekiel experiences God’s Wrath (*here we are looking at the End-Times event that is temporary in nature; not His final, eternal wrath at the judgment*). As we saw in the chapter on GOD’S WRATH, it is a

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one-time event that lasts less than a year. Ezekiel shows us some of the things that happen that we know are associated with this very specific event:

- a. There shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel (Ezekiel 38:19)
 - b. The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. (v. 20)
 - c. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. (v. 20)
 - d. With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rains and hailstones, fire and sulfur. (v. 22)
2. Ezekiel's account says the following: "So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord." 38:23

This cannot be in the millennium because by then all people on earth have experienced Christ's personal rule for a thousand years. In light of this truth, it is silly to apply this verse to that time.

3. Likewise, Ezekiel 39:7 says, "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel..."

This, too, would be nonsensical in the context of the millennial reign of Christ, as EVERYONE on earth

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knows His name at that time (*they can visit Him*).

4. Conversely, Revelation's Gog is not the same as Ezekiel's because Satan is finally thrown into the Lake of Fire after the thousand years are completed.
5. Also, the Revelation account doesn't seem to allow for the seven months required to pick up the bones of the Ezekiel horde.
6. Lastly, in Ezekiel the attackers are killed and buried; in Revelation they are consumed by fire, which would not require burial (*and no bones would be found—just ashes*).

Another question we should be asking is who (*or what*) is "Magog"? Since they both appear together, we might be able to tackle them both at the same time.

In Ezekiel 38:2 we get our first big clue. But I'll include the rest of the paragraph for context.

Ezekiel 38:¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech [¹⁵] and Tubal, and prophesy against him ³ and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech [¹⁶] and Tubal. ⁴ And 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 clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords."

¹⁵ Ezekiel 38:2 Or *Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech*

¹⁶ Ezekiel 38:3 Or *Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech*

Here, Gog seems to be a person (*a prince*) and Magog seems to be a place (*some say Russia*). Is this assessment supported by the other verses? Other than Revelation 20:7, it would seem to be so. Gog is shown to have the following traits:

- Male (“prince”, not “princess”) – Ezekiel 38:2-3; 39:1
- Leader (“prince”) – Ezekiel 38:2-3;
- Knowledgeable – Ezekiel 38:14
- Mortal – Ezekiel 39:11

Can a real person’s name be used to refer to a group of people as well? Sure. It’s common to refer to the leader of a movement when talking about the entire group of that movement. Here’s just one example:

Ezekiel 38:21 I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother.

This verse seems to be using the name of Gog to refer to both him and his followers.

Perhaps, in the same way, the name “Gog” may refer to a person who represents Satan. I only throw this out there because the name is used for two people (*possibly*) who are apparently from two completely different epochs, separated by at least a thousand years (*not to mention the first Gog in 1 Chronicles*). In Ezekiel 38:16 the prophet talks of Gog coming against Israel in the “Latter Days”. This term (*Latter Days*) is usually used in conjunction with the *end of the age* that Jesus and His disciples talked about in the Olivet Discourse, but not the millennium. Also, Ezekiel 38:18-20 alludes to this occurring during God’s Wrath, which

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happens before the millennium, not during it. So, having this name refer to the same mortal individual in both Ezekiel and Revelation is not possible, especially since the Gog of Ezekiel dies (Ezekiel 39:4-5).

Therefore, I see the Gog in Ezekiel as being a mortal man. The Gog in Revelation 20:7, however, seems to be more of a metaphor or a figure that is to recall the vast horde that came against God in Armageddon 1,000 years earlier — meaning the final rebellion in Revelation will have some apparent similarities to Armageddon. In other words, Armageddon, the final battle of Ezekiel's War, happens once just before the millennium, and the final rebellion will occur a thousand years later and will resemble that earlier battle. However, I do not rule out a demon, named Gog, being responsible for both leading the army in Ezekiel and the rebellion in Revelation (*although the Bible does not say this at all, or even hint at it*). With that said, I lean more to the Gog in Revelation being a metaphor based on the earlier mortal Gog in Ezekiel. Especially since Magog in Ezekiel's account seems to be a specific place north of Israel and Magog in Revelation is from all over the world.

Not only does the reference to God's Wrath make Ezekiel's Gog distinct from Revelation's Gog, but it also shows when this war occurs. As we've already seen, God's Wrath happens "immediately following" the Great Tribulation, and begins before (*or upon*) the Lord's return (Matthew 24:29-31).

Ezekiel 38:¹⁹ For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰ The fish of the sea and the

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birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground.

To me, this passage is a clue that Gog might be the antichrist. Unfortunately, we do not have an overabundance of clues that show this. If we did, perhaps it would be common knowledge. As it is, though, we do have a few threads of connectivity between Gog and antichrist. This timing of God's Wrath occurring during Ezekiel's War is one of them. *(For the sake of allowing for these chapters to be independent references of study, I am repeating some information found in the first chapter.)*

One reason we can begin to think that Gog is the antichrist is that the antichrist has already assumed power during or just before the tribulation. This makes it extremely unlikely that there would be another vast army led by a world leader at the same time who comes against Israel. Especially considering Ezekiel 38:17 "Thus says the Lord God: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that I would bring you against them?"

One detail of antichrist's demise is, at first look, a difficulty for this joining of Gog and antichrist. In fact, there are many folks who cannot get past it and therefore refuse to allow Gog to be antichrist. It is found in Revelation 19:20:

"And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by

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which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.”

The difficulty here is that Gog is clearly killed, whereas this account of antichrist’s demise has him being thrown “alive” into the lake of burning sulfur. So how do we handle this apparent contradiction? Let’s see what else we can find about antichrist’s death.

Daniel 7:11 “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire”

Also, Paul says that Jesus kills the antichrist upon His return:

2 Thessalonians 2:8 “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.”

With all of the other verses that point to Gog and antichrist being the same person, it seems like more of a violation of the text to separate them on the basis of this one perplexing verse than to not. We know that the Bible does not always give us all of the details of an event in every verse that touches on a particular thing.

Here, we have a verse that discusses an event that is covered elsewhere in scripture. But it seems to say something different than the others. Sometimes, we can’t have a nice, neat, tidy cohesion of the various references

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that the Bible gives to us. This is one of those times. We are forced to reconcile this in our minds with what we have been given. Here is how I do it (*you can take it or leave it*):

I believe that the antichrist is killed, meaning his mortal body is vacated by his eternal soul (*as happens with all people upon death*). I then take what John has written as being somewhat truncated. (*Now, what he has written in Revelation 19:20 is what he has written and we should not add any words to it, so take this as intended — an interpretation; not an addendum; certainly not a correction.*) I think that he is leaving out the part where the antichrist and false prophet are killed and given their eternal, resurrection bodies before being thrown alive into the burning lake. Perhaps he was attempting to show how the antichrist and false prophet will go directly to the burning lake, rather than being held in hades for the thousand years. He may have been presenting an immediacy and finality to the fate of the two. Saying “thrown alive” could have been his way of achieving this.

We know that life never ceases, even upon death. So it is no contradiction to say that a person is thrown “alive” into a place of eternal suffering, even if that person first tasted mortal death of the flesh. His soul never dies, so he is thrown alive wherever he is thrown. But to be given his eternal, resurrection body first would only emphasize his condition. Still, regardless of the presence of a body, whether mortal or eternal, would be irrelevant. A person lives on, with or without a body. But since God is consistent, we can assume that the antichrist and false prophet will be treated the same as anyone else who is cast into the lake of fire — with their resurrected body (*see Revelation 20:5*).

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Now that we see that this war in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is happening during God's Wrath and that the antichrist might be the leader of the vast army, which is from the distant north and comprised of many peoples, and attacks Israel many times, we will be able to piece together the various accounts of antichrist and Gog and come up with a much fuller picture. We also will be able to tie off most, if not all, of the loose ends in our emerging picture.

Let's move on and see what other clues we can gather about both Ezekiel's War and the battle of Armageddon. Let's turn first to Daniel 11, which we can now say seems to be a (*somewhat*) companion passage to Ezekiel 38-39.

First, we should recognize that the villain (*the king of the north*) in Daniel 11 is the antichrist. We can see this through certain events in verses 21 through 45. For example, **Daniel 11:31** states, "Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the *abomination that makes desolate*." This is undoubtedly the same event described in numerous places of scripture:

- Matthew 24:15
- Daniel 12:11
- Luke 21:20
- Daniel 9:27
- Mark 13:14
- 2 Thessalonians 2:4
- Daniel 8:13

This is known as the "Abomination that Causes Desolation". It's the event that shows the commencement of the Great Tribulation. And as you now know, the Great Tribulation lasts for 3-½ years (*a time, times and half a*

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time; 1260 days; 42 months). So this places events in Daniel 11 in the Early Tribulation (*1st 3-½ years*) as well as the Great Tribulation (*2nd 3-½ years*). We know it's in the Tribulation leading up to the Great Tribulation because Daniel 11 describes the campaign leading up to the Abomination of Desolation. We also know that it continues through the Great Tribulation because of Daniel 11:40-43.

In Daniel 11:40-43, the antichrist slashes through Israel and continues his campaign into other nations, but in verse 45 he “shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.” This sounds very much like the battle of Armageddon. So much so, that it is partly what caused me to believe that Armageddon is the final battle of Ezekiel's War. But I can at least see that Daniel 11 is showing the antichrist, who we know is killed by Jesus at His return (*2 Thessalonians 2:8*). But is Ezekiel showing us the antichrist in this character named Gog?

Daniel shows us antichrist's activities but not his death. However, in other passages we can see antichrist's death. And if we can join his death with other activities, then we may have the nexus we need to determine without a doubt that the Gog of Ezekiel is in fact the antichrist.

And what is the death of antichrist like? Let's see. Again, Daniel does not tell us, but other writers do. In Revelation, for example, John tells us that the antichrist falls and his and his army's bodies are fed to the birds and beasts.

Revelation 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper

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of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.”

In Ezekiel, Gog and Magog are also fed to the animals upon their death.

Ezekiel 39:4 You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.

Is this merely coincidence? Well, how many great battles (*really great battles*) are going to happen during this time in Israel? How many leaders with the notable power of the antichrist will come upon the scene at the same time? I don't know about you, but the similarities and timing are too great for me to ignore.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

The threads are coming together to form a rope that binds Ezekiel's Gog with the antichrist in other passages. We can put together a bit about Ezekiel's War and we can put together some details about Armageddon. Once we understand that the antichrist is at Armageddon and we can see similarities between Ezekiel's War and acts of the antichrist, we can put it all together and see that Gog of Ezekiel 38-39 is indeed the antichrist. This leads us into understanding that the war lasts about 7 to 8 years,

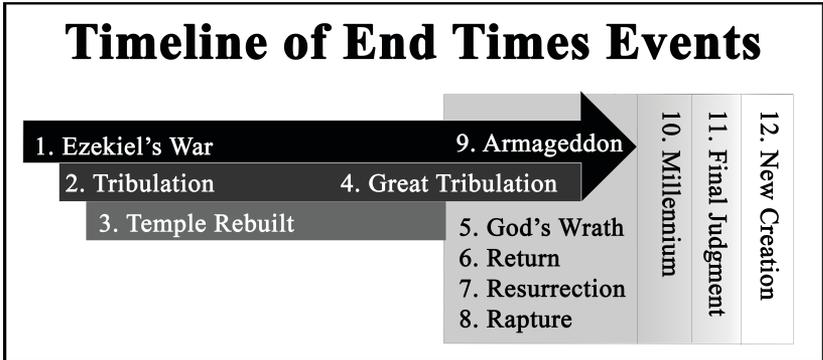
beginning just prior to the first of the tribulation and progressing on through the Great Tribulation into God's Wrath and Christ's return with the battle of Armageddon as the climax.

What are the crucial clues that take us to this realization? Let's take another look:

- The Abomination that Causes Desolation – this event is clearly the work of antichrist and his army spoken of by Daniel, Paul and Jesus (Daniel 8:13, 9:27, 12:11; Matthew 24; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20)
- This same antichrist is killed by Jesus upon His return, which is with much wrath and destruction. This happens at Armageddon. (2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 19:1-18; Ezekiel 39:4)
- The death of antichrist is shown to be the same as the leader Gog of Magog, which is in Ezekiel's War. (2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 19:1-18; Ezekiel 39:4)
- Ezekiel's War continues on through the full 7-year tribulation and into God's Wrath.
- Once we connect antichrist with Ezekiel's War and Armageddon, it all comes together for us.

Now we can see that Ezekiel's War is the dominant event of the last days (*at least in duration*). It begins before the Tribulation, continues through the Great Tribulation, into God's Wrath, until the return of Christ when it ends at Armageddon. Here is how it appears in the timeline:

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To me, it's interesting that this war is an instrument of both God and Satan. And it is enacted by both men and angels. It will truly be a war unlike any other. But then, we already know this from Christ's warning in the Olivet Discourse.

As a side note, the cleanup¹⁷ efforts listed in Ezekiel 39:11-24 give some the notion that this war might go nuclear; but this conclusion is not concrete. In fact, we know that they die at each other's hand — which makes a nuclear strike somewhat less credible; and birds and animals eat their corpses — which also makes it unlikely. This belief of nuclear weapons use seems to be tied to the 7 years of fuel that the weapons provide, and also the 7 months of cleanup performed by professionals. But this argument is not the strongest.

I think it's important to keep a clear “big picture” view of Armageddon. We tend to use the word “Armageddon” to give the feeling of some apocalyptic event that will ruin all of civilization. Really, we should see it for what it is: the final battle in an apocalyptic world war, where the forces of evil

¹⁷ “Cleanup” refers to picking up the weapons and the bones of the dead from Armageddon.

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are utterly destroyed by the coming of our precious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Will Ezekiel's War be apocalyptic? Absolutely, since Jesus told us that the Great Tribulation (*a part of Ezekiel's War*) would be "such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:21-22). So Armageddon is a picture of evil being smashed and finally destroyed; it's the death of antichrist and his army.

According to Daniel 11, the antichrist will attack Israel without warning the first time, and there will be a meeting between him and the leader of Israel (*cross reference with Daniel 9:27*). They will devise plots against each other but Israel will lose the first round. The antichrist returns to his land with many spoils of war. Later, he returns to attack Israel again but is repulsed by a mighty navy. This navy is said to be from Kittim, but some think it's really the US. Again, I'm not going to speculate on this. Whoever it is, they turn him away in this second attempt. He later returns a third time and is successful in routing and demolishing the Holy Land. I guess that Kittim wasn't around to help this time. Not only does he commit the Abomination that Causes Desolation, but he marches on into other lands, like Egypt, and attacks others as well.

This success of the antichrist is probably what prompts God to unleash His awesome wrath upon the world. Accounts of these events are seen in Revelation in the visions of the trumpets and bowls. One interesting aspect of this is that God is using Gog's mighty army and alliance to

Chapter 9 - Armageddon

mete out His wrath. Look again at the sixth trumpet and bowl:

Revelation 9:¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number (200 million).

Revelation 16:¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way 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 demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵ ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!") ¹⁶ And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

I believe that these forces, both angelically and demonically driven, are part of the alliance of the antichrist. I also believe that they are a part of Ezekiel's War and Daniel's account of his chapter 11 war. Daniel and Ezekiel mention the forces coming from the north. Revelation

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shows them coming from the east. Ezekiel also mentions nations in the alliance that are all around Israel, near and far. This alliance, therefore, is truly a world alliance. An army like the world has never seen (*and we've seen some big ones*).

Daniel 11:44 says, "But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction." My impression of this verse is that God's Wrath is sent upon "Magog" (*Ezekiel 39:6*), the northern homeland of the antichrist and also upon the land of his greatest ally (*likely China*) in the east. Meaning, this news is probably the destruction of his and his allies' homes. The very next thing to happen seems to be the gathering at Armageddon, where they meet their Maker and their doom. After all, going home is probably pointless if home is wiped off the earth.

To conclude this chapter, let me say that there are some very strong feelings about Ezekiel's War and Armageddon. Unfortunately, when the emotions get higher and higher, the thinking becomes more and more clouded. My assumptions and conclusions are the result of taking the Word for what it says and applying a little logic. In so doing, I have come up with a picture that is supported by the text. This is because I have allowed the Bible to lead my thinking process, rather than any particular teacher or assumption. I encourage the reader to do the same. But when you do, please ask the Lord to help you to conquer your fears so that your thinking will be clear and logical.

Here's a quick, final recap of the highlights of this confusing and terrifying topic:

Chapter 9 - Armageddon

- Ezekiel 38-39, Daniel 11:21-45, and Revelation 19:11-21 work together with other passages to give us a more complete picture of the war and the final battle
- This war spans 7 to 8 years (*more or less*) and is in conjunction with the Early Tribulation, the Great Tribulation, God's Wrath, the Return of Christ (*and the Resurrection and Rapture with it*), and ends with the battle of Armageddon, which are all before the Millennial Reign of Christ
- Good triumphs; evil is vanquished

Recommendations for further study

Rather than recommending other books, I encourage the student of eschatology to begin with the Bible. This is the method I use:

1. Make a list of events from the major Bible chapters shown here and look for more on your own.
2. Compare those events to get a better picture of the things that will happen.
3. If something looks like a contradiction, examine it closely to see if it really is contradictory or if you have been seeing things incorrectly. God's word does not contradict itself (*you might have to examine the original languages for this*).
4. Once you get into other books, take everything you read about this with a grain of salt. This means to examine the message of the teacher very closely and look into the scriptures for yourself to see if it makes sense or not. (*Like you should be doing with this study.*)

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5. Pray about this much. These things could begin at any time now. And once the end starts, it will forcefully continue until the millennium begins.

Questions to Ponder

1. If Gog is not antichrist, who is he?
2. How can two world leaders be in the same place at the same time, if not the same person?
3. How can both of them be dispatched by Jesus at Jesus' return, if not the same person?
4. Do we really want to allow such a quandary to exist simply because we don't know for sure what John meant by "thrown alive"?

You'll have to come up with your own answers to these questions.

Chapter 10 - THE MILLENNIUM

Duration: 1,000 years

Timing: After the rapture and Armageddon, when Jesus sets foot on earth at the Mount of Olives

Key Scriptures: Revelation 20:1-10, Ezekiel 40-48

When we think about it, the millennium will be a very interesting and unique time in earth's history. It will be the true "post-apocalypse".

We'll have Jesus, the King of all kings, ruling the world with His holy, glorified saints. His angels will be here with Him as well. Also, the remnant of mortal man that survives the tribulation and God's Wrath will be living here as well. They are the "nations" that are ruled and who go up to Him — and procreate. It seems that Hollywood got it wrong when they came up with their "post-apocalyptic" earth. The apocalypse will be very horrific; but the time after it will be very nice for all — the best time on earth, actually.

Isaiah 2:² It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
³ and many peoples shall 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 his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,

and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

Zechariah 14:¹⁶ Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.

(See also Micah 4)

There seem to be four main reasons why the post-apocalyptic world will be so wonderful:

1. Satan is imprisoned
2. Jesus rules justly with His saints
3. All people will enjoy a long, happy life (*no infant mortality at all*); and
4. Nations will no longer war against each other.

However, the mortals who live in the millennium will not be perfect, and toward the end of the thousand years they will be fooled into rebelling against the Lord. This happens when Satan is again released from his confinement.

Revelation 20:¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I

Chapter 10 - The Millennium

saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. 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 ended. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

⁷ And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Since the glorified saints will in no way rebel against God, and will not marry or procreate, it is essential to understand that some remnant of mortal man will survive both the Great Tribulation and God's Wrath.

I believe that these mortal people will be those who neither worshipped the devil or the beast (*antichrist*), nor gave themselves to Christ, thereby entrusting themselves to Him for salvation. Neither will they have taken the Mark of

the Beast, which is forced upon humanity during the Great Tribulation. They are truly unaffiliated with Christ at His arrival. By the way, a good number of them will be Jews whom He has rescued from the apocalypse (*Revelation 12*).

Will these people have an opportunity to receive salvation during the millennium? They should, since Christ will be right here on earth. Will they be glorified after the Great Judgment? I don't know, but I hope so. I just know that there must be mortal people on the earth during the millennium who will rebel at the end of it and who serve as Jewish priests. Honestly, I think that once the saints are glorified, their number is sealed. I think there will be mortals in what we call "heaven"; millennial and New Earth.

I have found no hard and fast contradiction to this conclusion (*that mortals survive the events prior to Christ's return*). The closest thing that I can find is the following:

In Isaiah 13:9, quoted on page 98, it would seem that all "sinners" are killed by God's Wrath. However, if Isaiah were merely choosing a word to contrast with "elect", then it may be permitted to deny this as a contradiction to other verses that indicate some people surviving who are not God's elect. What I mean is that this verse may allow some people to survive who did not take the mark of the beast nor worship the antichrist, and who did not accept Christ as Savior either. In other words, Isaiah may simply be attempting to identify the ones who go beyond flatly rejecting God and His Christ, and even worship Satan, while not addressing those who remain unaffiliated. If we do not allow this interpretation, then we have a solid contradiction, which the Bible does not allow. Above, I have shown why it is important to allow Isaiah to be referring to

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a very specific group of unbelievers rather than to all unbelievers. After all, on the face of it, since believers are also “sinners”, and some of them clearly didn’t die from God’s Wrath, there must be some provision for others to live as well who could be called “sinners”.

If nothing else, we could simply take Isaiah’s prophecy literally, and have it apply strictly to Babylon (*as it says*). And in this way sidestep any contradiction, while still allowing other people in other parts of the world to survive God’s Wrath, even if not already pardoned through the cross of Christ. Or, we could dispute whether the word “all” should be applied to the verse at all (*as is the case with the quoted version, ESV*).

In the book of Ezekiel, we are presented with a temple that is unlike the other Jewish temples. Besides being larger (*1 square mile*), it will have the glory of God visibly seen and will allow for gentiles to visit the outer courtyard. This temple is believed to be present in the millennial kingdom (ISA 2:3; 56:6-7; 60:13; EZE 40:1-47:1; DAN 9:24; Joel 3:18; HAG 2:7-9; ZEC 6:12-15; 8:20-23) and the presence of God will be Jesus, Himself.

This appears to be a time when God presents Himself to mortal men as One Who is to be feared and respected by all. He will rule the nations with an iron scepter (REV2:27). It is very different from the Father-child relationship presented by our Savior. Indeed, if we accept the Lord now (*before His return*) as our God and Savior, we will not be subject to the ritualistic and ceremonious processes of worship and supplication, or the legal processes of hearing, judgment and penalty payment that are shown by Ezekiel. Ours will be a much more intimate and personal relationship. We will

not need His heavy hand, since we will already be unified as one with Him. In fact, we will rule the nations with Him (REV 20:4).

Interestingly, this authority we share will not involve the temple rites, as Ezekiel tells us who the priests are who perform the sacrifices. They are mortal men of the lineage of Zadok, a Levite. We know that they are mortals because of Ezekiel 44:22, which says of them, “They shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman, but only virgins of the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest.” This verse tells us quite clearly that the men are mortals. And we know that glorified saints will not marry at all (MT 22:30).

However, in Ezekiel we read about a “prince” who participates in the rituals. This intrigued me at first. I wondered who the prince might be. Well, my question was answered in Ezekiel 37:24-25:

Ezekiel 37:²⁴ “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes.
²⁵ They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever.”

Also, God has made provision for mortal gentiles to live among the mortal Jews during the millennium (EZE 47:22-23). So, not only are Jews saved through the tribulation and God's Wrath, but also gentiles.

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Not only will Jews and gentiles live together in peace during this time, but animals will also live together in peace with each other and with mankind.

Isaiah 11:⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's
den.

⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

As discussed above, this does not mean that there will be no death in the millennium, but that there will be peace on earth.

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

Death will obviously continue for the mortals. After all, they are still mortals. However, people will be able to live long, happy lives during this time.

Isaiah 65:²⁰ No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

And what will be the lifestyle of these mortals? Well, we will not know for certain until the time comes, but we do have various clues to ponder, such as the remainder of the above passage:

Isaiah 65:²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

²² They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their
hands.

²³ They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the
offspring of the blessed of the Lord,
and their descendants with them.

²⁴ Before they call I will answer;
while they are yet speaking I will hear.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent's food.

They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain,"
says the Lord.¹⁸

¹⁸ This is about the New Earth but applies to the millennium as well, I believe.

Chapter 10 - The Millennium

It sounds like a quiet life on the farm. But if farming isn't your thing, don't worry – there are cities as well.

Will there be automobiles, trains, ships and airplanes? What about telephones and computers? Is everything low tech?

There are many things we just won't know until we see how it will be. But since the nations (*or maybe delegates*) will go up to Jerusalem each year, I would expect some sort of modern transportation. Of course, this is just a guess. It could be that the nations will have to send out several teams of delegates, staggered in their trips, so that they don't miss a single year. In other words, if it takes a year (*or more*) to get to Jerusalem from where you are, you'd better send a second or third team of representatives a year behind the first team. But I'm hoping for some kind of planet friendly transportation that is fast, safe and easy. (*As for the holy saints who rule with Christ, we may either not need to go anywhere or perhaps we will simply apparate or teleport.*)

There will be no more objections presented throughout the remainder of this study, as this and the remaining topics are not largely disputed between pre- and posttribbers. The same goes for Mid-tribbers and Prewrathers. And I do not wish to go into Postmillennialism and Amillennialism, since these views do not honor the word of God by taking it for what it says (*they heavily spiritualize the text to the point that it means something completely different than a plain meaning interpretation would allow*).

Questions to Ponder

1. How do we know that there will be mortals and glorified saints in the millennium?
2. Why are there sacrifices in the millennial temple, wasn't Jesus the final sacrifice?
3. What is the relationship between saints and mortals during the millennium?

Answers

1. Because saints will never rebel against the Lord, but be with Him always; Isaiah and Ezekiel describe mortals living during the Lord's reign
2. The sacrifices are for mortals to pay a penalty for their sins. This is not the eternal propitiation that is the cross; it is a temporary atonement that is more like paying a fine for a speeding ticket. The mortals will still be judged in the Great Judgment
3. The saints will rule over the mortals. However, Jesus is the ultimate Judge and King. Most likely, the saints will simply enforce His will. But note that this view is not clearly laid out in scripture. I think of them as "first responders", and maybe "magistrates".

Chapter 11 - THE JUDGMENT

Duration: Unknown

Timing: After the millennium

Key Scriptures: Revelation 20: 11-15

After the final rebellion has been dealt with at the end of the millennium, the Lord will be ready to judge the nations one last time. This is the final judgment, when Christ will sit on His great white throne and finally give all sinners what they rightly deserve. This will include the ones who have rejected His plan of salvation for them. Oh, but for the grace of God, I would be one of them too.

The punishment that comes from this could be referred to as God's *eternal* wrath, which should not be confused with His *temporary* wrath, discussed above in *The Wrath of God*, beginning on page 73.

2 Peter 3:¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Revelation 20:¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had

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done. 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.

Isaiah 2:¹² For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low.

Obadiah 15 As you have done, it shall be done to you.

We should also note that Paul was referring to this *eternal* wrath when he wrote the following:

1st Thessalonians 5:⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

This distinction between God's *eternal* and *temporary* acts of wrath is important, given the use of this passage by many opponents of the posttribulational view to try to discredit it.

There is much that I can now say about this judgment and those who are judged. No saint will be judged by God (*see John 3:18*), so those being judged are not saints, nor will be. I now believe that this judgment will either send them to the Lake of Fire or to the New Earth as a mortal.

I now believe (*my new doctrine, actually*) that all who stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment will either receive grace or judgment, based on their works, not faith. I see this as a kind of consolation that shows the

Chapter 11 - The Judgment

incomparable mercy of our glorious Lord. I'll be writing another book about it in the near future, God willing.

This is not another gospel and it is not what we would rather have; but it is a way for God to be just and merciful to sinners—people who are mortal, not owning their lives like saints, and needing the Water of Life and fruit from the Tree of Life to sustain their mortal flesh indefinitely. BTW, there will be no more radiation decomposing their flesh either.

And New Earth will be as this Earth was in the beginning; perfectly suited for sustaining all life upon it (*see another book of mine, called This Broken Planet, due out in 2024, for more on the composition of this Earth before the Flood of Noah*).

It's all very interesting and we all have much to learn.

Chapter 12 - THE NEW CREATION

Duration: Eternity?

Timing: After the Judgment

Key Scriptures: Revelation 21

There isn't much to go on when we try to imagine the new earth and the new heavens.

Revelation 21:¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place [tabernacle] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Chapter 12 - The New Creation

When I imagine the New Jerusalem, it really amazes me. In the first place, the new city would be too large for our current tiny planet. Look at the dimensions of this city when you read it below.

Revelation 21:9-27

The New Jerusalem

⁹Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed — ¹³on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ¹⁶The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. [About 1,380 miles; a *stadion* was about 607 feet or 185 meters.] Its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷He also measured its wall, 144 cubits [*about 216 feet*] by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. ¹⁸The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the wall of the city

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were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

About 1,400 miles to a side. And each wall is just as high as it is long!! And a mere 200 feet thick (*that would be paper thin in scale*). Our space station orbits at about 250 miles above earth. That means that if you were as tall as the walls of the New Jerusalem, the space station would hit you below the knees! This tells me that the new earth is going to be huge — maybe as big as Jupiter? Certainly, if it were on this planet, it would make us wobble! And what about those walls? Gold as *pure* as glass (*not clear*)? Jasper as clear as crystal? And the foundation sounds like it is made of solid gemstones. Could they stretch a mile high or more for each color, making an enormous translucent rainbow of color 12

Chapter 12 - The New Creation

miles high (*or 120 miles*)? Gates of pearl? A single, solid pearl for each gate, three to a side? Like, what, every 500 miles or so? And are we talking about a regular sized pearl that we squeeze through, or a gigantic pearl? And what are these magnificent walls keeping out? Is this a world of gargantuan new creatures? Just as we were a source of amazement to the angels, will any new creatures be astounding to us? Just as He introduced our physical realm to the spiritual realm of the angels, will He make another dimension or realm altogether? It boggles the mind.

People who talk about heaven being boring and hell exciting are just uninspired. What a waste of humanity to fail to catch the glory and beauty of it all and let yourself reject the invitation of the Master to be a part of it all. For what? A party?

Chapter 13 – CONCLUSION

Why does this topic vex us so? There is a deep divide between the two major camps of pre- and post-tribbers. This should not be so. But then, we should all rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Tim 2:15). Still, I'd like to see folks handle themselves with a bit more love toward each other when things like this come between us.

John 13:³⁴ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

To me, this subject is simple and clear, more so than some of the major doctrines of the faith. Yet, here we are on page 193, because I have tried to be thorough (*and cover other subjects*), but I could have simply shown you the posttrib teaching of the Bible in just a few verses.

The Dead in Christ Rise First, Then the Living
1st Thessalonians 4:¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

To me, that says everything we need to know about the rapture. It happens when the Lord returns and when He raises the dead saints to life. But since this does not mention the timing of His arrival, we need only look to the Lord's teaching on the Mount of Olives.

Chapter 13 - Conclusion

It occurs after or during God's wrath, which is after the tribulation.

Mathew 24:²⁹ "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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

And there you have it. Those two passages say it all – the rest is just support. And much support there is, as I have (*hopefully*) aptly shown you here in this study. When you hear someone (*yourself maybe*) say, "but what about..." take a long, hard look at what comes next. I guarantee that it will not contradict what you have read in this study (*if it comes from the Word of Truth*). Whatever problem is perceived, it will be in the *interpretation* of it, not the text. For me, these verses are simply too clear to refute biblically.

Learn the difference between Eisegesis and Exegesis. The pretrib view can only work when using the flawed eisegetical approach.

If you still cannot bring yourself to accept this teaching from the Word, I recommend asking yourself "Why?" Is it because the prospect of the tribulation and God's Wrath frightens you?

End Times Made Easy

2nd Timothy 1:7 God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Do not fear. The Lord is with us.

If, on the other hand, you do not give yourself over to the Lord on a daily basis, then perhaps you *should* fear. If you have not had the Holy Spirit of God regenerate your soul and lead you into repentance and accepting the Lord's propitiatory sacrifice on your behalf, I have nothing else for you. Repent and believe; or die, I guess.

Lastly, we should not judge the Word of God by the men who teach it. If you highly regard a particular teacher who expresses a pretrib view, it doesn't mean he is a heretic or a false teacher per se. It just means that he has bought into the complex invention that the pretrib story is. In my opinion, the pretrib view can only come about through much indoctrination. It certainly isn't apparent in simply reading the Bible. In other words, we do not accept a doctrine of man over the clear teaching of scripture based on the one who expositors the doctrine. To do so would have us being tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. (*Eph. 4*)

And don't be fooled into believing what you WANT to believe. Paul warned us of this as well.

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Chapter 13 - Conclusion

Or put another way,

³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.

⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths.
(NLT)

Since the natural desire is to avoid pain and suffering, it is a great temptation to chase after those who teach a doctrine that sounds good to the ears. And between post- and pre-trib, the obvious choice of desire would be pre. Be courageous. Keep the faith. Stay strong to the bitter end.

And as I said in the preface, this matter should not be a dividing wall between the brethren. If we think of this timing issue as more important than our fellowship, then the devil has won a vital skirmish.

Christ be with you.

Gary

Chapter 14 - SUMMARY

For those of you who don't have time to read the whole thing, here is a quick summary of this study. Perhaps this chapter will help you to run all the points of the study home in your mind. It can also be a quick reference for the Bible verses that are used to put together the study.

1. Ezekiel's War Description

This is an 8-year (*or so*) war that will be the beginning of these End Time events. When we see a new leader from the Caucasus (*which includes the modern countries of Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey*) take power and invade Israel from the north, we will know that our time is short before the return of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Get your affairs in order. Get right with God. Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at the door!

Key Scriptures

Ezekiel 38 and 39; Daniel 11:21-45; Matthew 24:3-8; Revelation 6:1-2

Matthew 24:³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"⁴ And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

Revelation 6:¹ Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four

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living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

2. The Tribulation

Description

This is a 7-year (*2,520 day*) period of warfare and trouble on a global scale. Tribulation means Trouble. Anguish and horror will be the most prevalent circumstances in the world during these seven years. The tribulation is divided into two parts: The early Tribulation; and the Great Tribulation. They are consecutive, without a break in between. Each part will be 1,260 days in duration. It is best described as Satan's wrath upon earth at the hand of his antichrist and false prophet. It is not God's wrath. We will know that it has begun when we see the new leader from the Caucasus and the Israeli leader come to a conference table after Israel is invaded by the new leader from the north.

Key Scriptures

Daniel 9:26b-27, 8:13-14; 11:27-44, 12:11-13; Ezekiel 38 & 39; Matthew 24:7-8; Revelation 6:3-4

Matthew 24:7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Revelation 6:3 When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴ And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that

people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

3. The Third Temple

Description

Before the Lord returns, there must be a temple built in Jerusalem that will be the stage for the antichrist's greatest act of blasphemy.

Key Scriptures

Daniel 8:13-14; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11-12; 2nd Thessalonians 2:1-4

Matthew 24:¹⁵ "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

4. The Great Tribulation

Description

This is a 3 ½ - year period (*time, times, and half a time, 42 months, 1,260 days*) when Satan and his fallen angels are finally kicked out of the spirit realm and relegated to roaming the earth. Their fury boils over because they know that their time is short and they are helpless to stop the events prophesied by God. It will be the worst time of terror and testing the world will ever know.

Key Scriptures

Daniel 9:26b-27; Matthew 24:9-28; Revelation 6:5-8, 12, 13

Matthew 24:⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then

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many will fall away^[a] and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵ “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house,¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³ Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of

Man. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

Revelation 6:⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!"

⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!"⁸ And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

5. The Wrath of God

Description

After the tribulation, it's God's turn. Satan has had his time of temper tantrums and abuse poured out on God's people, and now it's time for Jesus to let His righteous vengeance be unleashed upon this rebellious planet. Jesus will not take seven years for His wrath to be complete. It will be a mere five months or so for the world tour.

Key Scriptures

Revelation 6, 8, 9, 15, 16; Matthew 24:29; Daniel 12:12; Joel 2; Micah 1:3-4; Habakkuk 3

Matthew 24:²⁹ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not

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give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

Revelation 6: ⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

6. The Return of Christ Description

This is when the earth changes hands from man and fallen angels to the Creator Himself. Much is happening at His return: His wrath, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, the rapture of the living in Christ, and Armageddon, the final battle of Ezekiel's War are all happening when He comes back to claim what is His. Everyone in all of creation will personally witness His triumphant return (*with the possible exception of those confined to hell at the time—but I think they'll see it too, from afar*).

Key Scriptures

Matthew 24:29-31; 1 Thessalonians. 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians. 2:1-12; Revelation 8:1-5; 11:15-19; 16:17-21; 19:1-21

Matthew 24:³⁰ "Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Revelation 8:¹ When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

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7. The Resurrection

Description

The dead in Christ who have passed away prior to His return (*however recent or distant*) will be brought back to earth and given their new, glorified bodies that will be sinless and immortal.

Key Scriptures

1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Mt 24:29-31; John 6:40

Matthew 24:³¹ “And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

8. The Rapture

Description

Immediately following the resurrection of the deceased in Christ, His followers who are still alive at His return will be caught up to meet Him and the others in the air.

Key Scriptures

1 Thessalonians 4; 2 Thessalonians 2; 1 Corinthians 15; Matthew 24:31

Matthew 24:³¹ “And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

9. Armageddon

Description

This is the final battle of Ezekiel’s War. It’s a last-ditch effort of God’s fallen creatures to attempt, I don’t know, a

coup? 200 million or more men are assembled upon the hills, valleys, and plains of Israel for a showdown with God.

Key Scriptures

Ezekiel 38-39; Daniel 11; Revelation 16:12-16; 17:14; 19; Matthew 24:4-22

10. The Millennium

Description

The hardship is finally over! Now everyone can relax and settle into a nice, quiet life of peace and love. For 1,000 years, the Lord of all creation will reign over the earth from His new temple in Jerusalem. A dress rehearsal for the New Earth.

Key Scriptures

Revelation 20:1-10, Ezekiel 40-48

11. The Final Judgment

Description

At the end of the millennium, Jesus will sit on His Great White Throne of Judgment, the Bema Seat, and judge all men who have not already joined Him as His holy saints. Some will go to everlasting life and some will go to everlasting misery. This is His eternal judgment, which will be final and irrevocable.

Key Scriptures

Revelation 20: 11-15

12. The New Creation

Description

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After all has been accomplished in this universe that God has predetermined, the only thing left to do is wipe the slate clean and make another domain. Similar, yet different.

Key Scriptures

Revelation 21

Appendix – GLOSSARY

- Amillennial, or Amillennialism – The doctrine that says there will be no millennial period, wherein Christ reigns over the earth from Jerusalem. The author does not believe this view is consistent with scripture.
- Eisegesis – Letting one’s beliefs affect the interpretation of the text.
- Eschatology – Study of the last things.
- Exegesis – Taking the Bible for what it says, regardless of what we want it to say.
- Futurism, or Futurist – Interpreting prophesies that have not happened yet to be in the future. This is the opposite of (or an answer to) preterism.
- Hermeneutical Method – (Hermeneutics) The manner in which one interprets the Bible.
- Midtribulational, or Midtribulationalism – The doctrine that says the rapture will occur halfway through the tribulation, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.
- Midwrath – My own view that the rapture occurs during Jesus’ return and acts of wrath upon earth. This view is posttribulational.
- No Rapture View – The view that there is no rapture taught in the Bible.
- Olivet Discourse – (Mt 24-25; Mk 13; Lk 21) Jesus’ teaching to his four closest apostles on the Mount of Olives, which discusses end times events.
- Postmillennial, or Postmillennialism – The doctrine that says the Lord will return after the millennium. The author does not believe this view is consistent with scripture.

Glossary

Posttribulation, or Posttribulationism – The doctrine that says the rapture of the saints will occur after the tribulation.

Premillennial, or Premillennialism – The doctrine that says the Lord will return before the millennium.

Preterism – The belief that all prophecies have been fulfilled already. **Partial Preterism** maintains that some prophecies are yet to occur.

Pretribulation, or Pretribulationism – The doctrine that says the rapture will occur prior to the tribulation.

Prewrath View – A doctrine that places the rapture between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God.

Rapture – The label for the doctrine that says believers will be transformed into glorified, spirit bodies.

Replacement Theology – Also called Supersessionism or fulfillment theology, replacement theology, is a Christian theological view on the current status of the Church in relation to the Jewish people and Judaism. Namely, that the Church has replaced the Jews as God's people.

Tribulation – Great Trouble. Suffering, distress, trouble, misery, wretchedness, unhappiness, sadness, heartache, woe, grief, sorrow, pain, anguish, agony.

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